

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, November 9, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.**PETERBOROUGH SEWERAGE SCHEME.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works any further information regarding the possibility of a sewerage scheme being planned for Peterborough?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Contour surveys, and plans have been completed for a sewerage scheme for Peterborough. Estimates of cost, and financial statements have still to be worked out before a final report can be presented. Such final report is awaiting investigation by the Engineer for Water and Sewage Treatment in regard to the proposed treatment works. The work has not been expedited because, as stated in my reply to the honourable member's question on October 27, the first essential for a sewerage scheme is an adequate water supply, and until that is assured it would be futile to install a sewerage scheme.

GRASSHOPPER INFESTATION.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Can the Minister of Agriculture give the latest results of the measures being taken to destroy grasshoppers?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have the following departmental daily bulletin on the question:—

The weight of the grasshopper control campaign has now been shifted to mopping up the remaining large swarms in and around the fringe of the agricultural areas. All available equipment and personnel are being directed to the areas of highest concentration to give effect to this phase of the campaign.

The department has had on hire for about a fortnight three large boom sprays and one aerial spray, which covers about 100ft. in operation. These were concentrated in the Port Pirie and Port Germein areas where they treated 1,500 acres of heavy infestation, and effected a good clearance. This equipment, plus about 27 Army jeeps, and a number of departmental vehicles similarly equipped with exhaust sprays, has been mobilized and concentrated as the situation warrants in the areas of heaviest infestation. The bulletin continues:—

The cool weather conditions are helping by enabling efforts to be concentrated on locusts still in the hopper stage. Normal hot November conditions could well have meant heavy migrations of flying locusts entering the agricultural districts from the pastoral areas.

For this reason ground operations are continuing and the need for any large-scale aerial spraying has not yet developed.

We have had some criticism, mostly of course from armchair critics, that we should have concentrated long ago on aerial operations, but before we can operate from the air we must have a target. Hitherto there has been no real aerial target and we have been able to do more effective work by ground spraying. But for the success of these methods, as pointed out in the bulletin, we could have tremendous swarms of flying locusts. The bulletin continues:—

Every week, or every day, gained in this way lessens the overall risks of a plague. Work still remains to be done at Dawson, north-east of Peterborough, but this infestation will soon be under control. Additional ground spraying equipment is being sent to Koomooloo station and Newikie Creek, east of Hallett, to speed up mopping up operations in these areas. The results of ground spraying in the agricultural areas had been phenomenally successful. It is anticipated that large migratory swarms would soon make their appearance from outside areas.

The next phase of the grasshopper operation will be directed against them. We must bear in mind that the grasshoppers are still hatching. I personally have come across new plots of grasshoppers only recently hatched. That has been continuing all along, hence we have had the extra work of continuing to operate where we thought the grasshoppers had long since been exterminated. Every operation concentrated on these beds has proved tremendously successful, and if we can continue with ground spraying methods I think we can get the grasshoppers pretty well under control, particularly in the inside country.

SALISBURY CABIN HOMES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Premier any information regarding a report I noticed in the press a day or two ago regarding the possible purchase by the Housing Trust of what are known as cabin homes at Salisbury?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For some reason that I am not sure the Salisbury council decided not to pursue the matter after the Government had given an assurance that it would introduce legislation. Since then the Commonwealth Government has offered to sell the cabin cottages to the Housing Trust. The last information I had was that the trust was examining the position, but I doubt very much whether it will spend its money on acquiring the houses. The trust is short of money and desires to build to the utmost limit of its resources and

the Government, of course, is giving it all the money it can spare for a continuation of its building programme. The purchase of the cabin homes at Salisbury would not make available additional houses but only take some of the trust's resources in the purchase of existing houses.

SUBSIDIES FOR SCHOOL AMENITIES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I understand that the Education Department restricts subsidies to school committees for the provision of certain amenities, and I am concerned about the provision of refrigerators. The Henley Beach school committee has amassed some money for this purpose and desires to equip the school with a refrigerator, mainly for the purpose of protecting foodstuffs belonging to the staff and also to some extent the milk that is unconsumed in the morning period of the school day. I understand that the department has advised the committee that refrigerators are not in the list of items for subsidy. Will the Minister consider including them?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes, but it is not the department's policy to subsidize the purchase of refrigerators except in a few isolated areas where the climate is very hot.

CREDIT RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. STOTT—The Premier is aware of the Commonwealth Government's policy regarding restriction of credit. The Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer both told a deputation that waited on them in Canberra recently that representations had been put before them that these restrictions did not necessarily apply to advances to primary producers if they would encourage exports. The Premier will realize that if credit restrictions are imposed to increase our overseas balances it would be a stupid policy to restrict primary production that would help to increase exports. The Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer said that they would notify the banks of this position. I have had representations made to me on several occasions since returning from Canberra, and this morning I was told that one farmer, whose titles are held by his bank, wanted an advance of £400 to put down an extra bore because with extra feed he wanted to increase his stock, but the bank refused to advance him another penny. Another man with a property worth over £40,000, on which the bank holds the title, wanted an advance of up to £3,000 to purchase sheep, but the bank refused him another penny. Will the Premier write to the Prime Minister or the Federal Treas-

urer and ask that the banks be circularized that such restrictions are not in accordance with the Commonwealth Government's policy and that the banks be advised to carry out their usual advances to primary producers in order to save the national economy?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Without knowing the circumstances of each case that the honourable member has mentioned it would be impossible to draw any conclusions. The amount of previous advances, the equity in the property, and other factors, all have a bearing on advances. As I understand the position, the Commonwealth Government has asked the banks to reduce their overall lending by a certain amount and has indicated that it does not desire additional loans to be made for certain purposes. It is true, as the honourable member said, that there has been no suggestion to restrict credit for primary production for export under the Commonwealth's direction to the banks, but where the question is more difficult is that if the bank already has a relatively bad liquid position it may not be in a position to consider any advances whatever. If the banks have over-lent in relation to their assets they cannot blame the Commonwealth Government, or anyone else, for the policy of restricting advances. A number of banks have recently taken up financing hire-purchase on a big scale. If they lend money for hire-purchase they cannot lend the same money for rural advances.

Mr. Quirke—Hire-purchase pays them better.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It pays a higher rate of interest, but if the honourable member for Ridley will give me the facts of the cases he mentioned I will examine them and see what conclusions can be reached. It would be futile for me to send his question to the Prime Minister as it is because he would undoubtedly reply that these advances have never been involved in any Commonwealth direction.

RECRUITMENT OF NURSES.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked last month when I suggested a recruitment campaign for nurses?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Since the honourable member asked his question there have been some negotiations with the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service. The shortage of nurses is not a problem peculiar to South Australia, and it seems from the negotiations that it will be possible to conduct an Australia-wide campaign that will have the support of the Commonwealth and State

Governments to enlist adequate nurses in the various States and to ensure that girls will realize the possibilities of this distinguished profession. As soon as any conclusion is reached I will advise the honourable member.

Mr. Lawn—Do those negotiations include the consideration of wages and conditions?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Those matters are looked at from time to time. One of the difficulties in providing medical assistance for many people arises because ill-informed comments are frequently made which have no bearing upon facts but which would lead one to believe that the nursing profession was overworked and badly paid. That has a detrimental effect upon recruitment.

MILLCENT BROAD GAUGE RAILWAY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Yesterday in reply to my question on notice, the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, said the Government did not intend to arrange for an official opening of the broad gauge railway to Millicent similar to that at Naracoorte, because criticism had been expressed by the Opposition to that ceremony on the ground that it was held prior to an election. In view of the strong representations by the Millicent district council and other interested organizations, as well as by local residents, will the Government be big enough to rise above political considerations and reconsider its decision in this matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It is not for the Government, as suggested, to rise above political considerations: it is for the Opposition to repudiate what it has said about the opening of the broad gauge to Naracoorte.

Mr. O'Halloran—What Opposition member referred to Naracoorte?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—On July 22, 1953, the then Acting Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Frank Walsh), referring in the Address in Reply debate to the broadening of the gauge to Naracoorte, said:—

I need hardly remind honourable members that the project has been the means of political exploitation of the worst kind that the Government has ever indulged in. With what a great flourish was the official opening of the line to Naracoorte celebrated, just before an election! That was three years ago, and in the meantime only another 50 miles or so have been completed.

There is still some work to be done, and I suggest that members opposite iron out the matter among themselves, and then make a request to the Government for an official opening.

NEW TOWN NEAR SALISBURY.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say whether Cabinet has approved the name for the new town near Salisbury, and if so, whether Government departments have been notified of the name, and what it is?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Not to my knowledge.

TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

BUSINESS OF HOUSE.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) moved:—

That Orders of the Day: Government Business—be postponed and taken into consideration after Orders of the Day: Other Business.

Motion carried.

DEMOLITION OF DWELLINGHOUSES CONTROL BILL.

(Continued from November 2. Page 1355.)

The House divided on the second reading—

Ayes (14).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Fletcher, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Riches, Stephens, Tapping, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

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

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Hutchens and Dunstan. Noes—Messrs. Travers and Millhouse.

Majority of 6 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived.

INDUSTRIAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL (GENERAL).

(Continued from November 2. Page 1360.)

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Section 63 of principal Act amended."

The Committee divided on the clause—

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

Noes (17).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Michael, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, and White.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Hutchens and Dunstan. Noes—Messrs. Travers and Millhouse.

Majority of 1 for the Noes.

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 4—"Section 146 of principal Act amended."

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—In the second reading debate the Premier opposed this clause because, he said, it would impede Government representation on wages boards, etc., and might also impede the proper representation of employers on those tribunals. Mr. Fred Walsh indicated that the only desire of the Opposition was to ensure that in future representatives of employees on the tribunals not engaged in the industry would be *bona fide* representatives of an industrial organization. We have no desire to circumscribe the representatives of the Government or the employers. Section 146 deals with members of the Board of Industry. Subsection (5) says:—

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (3) and (4) of this section one representative on each side may be appointed who does not hold the beforementioned qualifications: provided that no such representative shall be a member of the legal profession.

I proposed to move to delete "does not hold the beforementioned qualifications" and to insert "shall be a *bona fide* representative of a registered industrial association or of a branch within the State of an association registered under the Commonwealth Arbitration Act," but the Premier opposed it, and I am inclined to agree with his view, because it would affect the representation of employers and perhaps the Government on wages boards. I now move—

To delete "striking out the words 'does not hold the beforementioned qualifications'" and to insert "adding at the end of"; to delete "and inserting in lieu thereof"; and after "words" insert "And provided further that any such representative of the employees appointed in accordance with this subsection."

I do not propose to interfere with the provision in section 146 which has stood the test of time in relation to representatives of employers not actually engaged in the industry, but I want to ensure that the representatives of the workers not engaged in the industry shall be *bona fide* representatives of a trades union or

of a branch within the State of an association registered under the Commonwealth Arbitration Act. The arbitration machinery depends for its success and smooth working on the goodwill of industrial organizations. In the case of representatives of employees not actually working in the industry, who could be better fitted to represent them than the nominee of the industrial organization concerned?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—Earlier I opposed this clause for a number of reasons. One point I raised has been met by the amendment but it does not take away all my opposition to the provision. In many industries there are industrial organizations and some, not all, consist of a majority of the workers in those industries. In one industry only 20 per cent of the workers would come within the present proposal, and unless the industry were registered in the Arbitration Court no recommendation regarding an appointment could be made to the Minister. Several organizations are not registered in the Industrial Court, and I know the Leader will say that under the Industrial Code the court can have no knowledge of them.

Mr. O'Halloran—Is there any reason why they should not be registered?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—They are not registered probably because they do not desire to be, and we should not try to force any people to join industrial organizations. Furthermore, in many industries there is no organization covering employers. Under those circumstances I cannot accept the amendment or the clause. I was Minister of Industry for many years and only on one occasion were representations made to me about an appointment to an industrial board. A certain person had been recommended for appointment by the Industrial Court, and when I looked at the facts I found that the President had good grounds for his recommendation. He recommended the appointment of one union representative and one person who was not a union representative, but I think about 80 per cent of the employees in that industry were not members of the union. The Industrial Code enables workers to put a case before a wages board, but it was not designed to ensure that employees' representatives on boards must come from registered unions.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I cannot follow the Premier's reasoning. I appreciate the point he raised during the second reading debate in respect of the Government's representatives on wages boards, but that is taken care of in another section. It states:—

"Employer" includes the Public Service Commissioner, as regards any Public Service employees; the Railways Commissioner, as regards any railway employees; the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board; any district council; the Fire Brigades Board; the council of any municipality; any other person, firm, company or corporation, in respect of whom both Houses of Parliament pass a resolution approving their inclusion in this definition; the Board of Trustees of the State Bank of S.A.; and the Board of Trustees of the Savings Bank of S.A.

It can be seen that the Industrial Code covers many organizations of employers as well as employees. The trades unions are officially recognized as the representatives of employees and the Code recognizes the principle of employer and employee organizations. The Premier said that the President of the Industrial Court on one occasion recommended the appointment of a person to a wages board who did not represent a trade union, but such persons do not represent anybody. The person appointed would not be responsible to anybody. He would be a member of the board and could express only his personal views. It was in order to correct that state of affairs that the Leader of the Opposition moved this amendment. It can do no harm to anyone, and it does not raise the question of forcing anyone into joining a trade union.

Amendment carried.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I move:—

To strike out "and inserting in lieu thereof," and after "words" to insert "And provided further that any such representative of the employees appointed in accordance with this subsection."

I have already explained the purport of these amendments and I commend them to the Committee as part of a scheme to improve section 146.

Amendments carried.

The Committee divided on the clause as amended:—

Ayes (17).—Messrs. John Clark, Coreoran, Davis, Dunstan, Fletcher, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Noes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, the Hon. Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Michael, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, and White.

Pair.—Aye.—Mr. Huthens. No.—Mr. Travers.

Majority of 1 for the Noes.

Clause as amended thus negatived.

Clause 5—"Section 167 of principal Act amended."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Section 167 relates to the jurisdiction and duties of industrial boards. At present they are not permitted to make a determination providing for wages or remuneration of more than £20 a week. The Bill provides for a limit of £33 in order to provide a safe maximum to stand for all time without the frequent amendment that has been necessary in recent years. The Premier said £25 would be a useful compromise. There is no magic in the figure of £33, and it was included only because it happened to be the limit provided under which workmen could claim compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act. I felt it would be reasonable in this case, but as I am satisfied that £25 will adequately cover all awards and determinations applying to workers covered by the Code I am willing to accept the suggestion. It has been further stated that shearers may earn more than £30 a week, but although that may be true, shearers in this State are covered by a Federal award and are not likely to be covered in the future by the Industrial Code. I therefore move—

To strike out "thirty-three" and insert "twenty-five."

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 6—"Section 176 of principal Act amended."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The principle in this clause has already been rejected in clause 3 and I do not propose to persevere with argument on it.

Clause negatived.

Clause 7—"Section 186 of principal Act amended."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—This is another clause on which I accept the Premier's suggestion. It provides that boards shall have the power to make determinations retrospective to the date on which they first took cognizance of the matter, but the Premier said the term "first took cognizance" was too wide, and although I do not agree with that statement, I am willing to meet his wishes. Therefore I move—

To strike out the words "first took cognizance" and to insert "commenced the hearing." A board will then have the power to make a determination retrospective to any date not being prior to that on which it commenced hearing the matter.

Amendment carried.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—During the second reading debate the Premier expressed doubts about the wisdom of using the words "right, fair and

honest." The use of the word "honest" was not intended to imply that dishonesty might creep into these proceedings, and the word "right" has a well-established meaning; but I am willing to meet the wishes of the Premier, and therefore move—

To strike out "right, fair and honest" and insert "equitable."

A board will then have power to make a determination retrospective for any term it thinks is equitable, provided it is not retrospective to a date before the commencement of the hearing.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When discussing this matter during the second reading I suggested that there were two principles upon which the board should consider retrospectivity: firstly, the time occupied in hearing any application, and secondly decisions already made by senior tribunals. The circumstance which led the Leader to introduce this matter was the Federal Arbitration Court's decision in the margins case whereby it granted retrospectivity to last December. Our local boards were not able to grant retrospective payments and the awards operated only after the prescribed period of gazettal. I propose after "equitable" to add the words "having regard to decisions of other industrial tribunals or to the length of the hearing of the case." It frequently happens that where the word "may" appears in legislation, those administering it regard it as an instruction. I think it would be wrong for retrospectivity to become the normal feature of any award, although there are instances when it is justified by circumstances. If an award is delayed because of the illness of a board member or if there has been unnecessary delay in procuring information upon which a decision is made, the board should be empowered to grant retrospectivity. If however, it is a new application receiving prompt attention by the board, there is no necessity for retrospectivity. In the margins case, increased payments were back-dated about six months, but under the Leader's present suggestion the board would not be able to grant such retrospectivity. I think it should have that power. If a senior authority grants retrospectivity a board should have power to follow that lead and grant retrospectivity beyond the date of the commencement of a hearing.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Originally the Premier was opposed to the modest degree of retrospectivity I suggested, but now he proposes to extend the board's powers in respect of retrospectivity for a more lengthy period. He

is incorrect in suggesting that the margins case prompted the introduction of this matter. The impelling motive was that the Industrial Court has the right to make retrospective awards, whereas wages boards—an essential part of our industrial set-up—have not. I think it proper, to secure uniformity, that wages boards should have it. There have been occasions in the past when, for one reason or another, consideration of claims before a wages board have extended over an unduly long period and as a result workers have been denied justice. Even after a board has come to a decision they have had to wait the prescribed fortnight after gazettal before the new wages operated. I mentioned a case where, because of the intervention of Christmas holidays and another circumstance, even after the board reached a decision it was not gazetted for several weeks and workers were denied the benefit of the award for the whole period. The Premier's suggestion that a board should have power to grant retrospectivity where a superior tribunal has already made such a provision is good and I agree wholeheartedly with it. However, I do not think it necessary to limit this power to cases where the hearing has been subject to undue delay. How would the expression "undue delay" be interpreted? It would open a wide field of confusion.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I am at a loss to understand the full implications of the Premier's proposed amendment. I am not sure whether he desires to exclude the Leader's suggestion in respect of retrospectivity being granted to the date of the commencement of the hearing. If these words are not included in the Premier's proposed amendment a different impression will be created in my mind. Most applications for variations in wages and conditions for employees under State jurisdiction are initiated through wages boards, and they then go to the courts for an award as it affects country employees. Not so often is an application made to the court and then to the board. In this matter the interests of the workers should be safeguarded. The Premier referred to the restoration of quarterly cost of living adjustments, but that is something different. If the court determined that the adjustment system should operate from a certain date it would be an injustice to workers under State awards and determinations not to get the benefit of retrospectivity, which cannot be granted under the Code at present. The Premier's amendment protects this position. Under the Leader of the Opposition's suggestion it would be dated back to

the date of the application. I remind the Premier that delays occur, sometimes for weeks, in having a matter dealt with.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move:—

After "equitable" to insert "having regard to the length of time involved in the hearing, provided that where the determination is based on an award made by the Industrial Court or the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration the board may order that the determination shall come into force on the day on which the award came into force or some other subsequent day fixed by the board."

If a hearing were unusually prolonged the proposal by the Leader of the Opposition would come into operation and the board could make the award retrospective to the date of the hearing, but if a decision has been made on an award by the Industrial Court or the Commonwealth Arbitration Court the same degree of retrospectivity could be given as was given by the superior court. I do not favour retrospectivity being adopted in the ordinary course of events, and I have two reasons for saying that. If a hearing is held up because of the absence of a board member or something of the sort an injustice is done if the date does not go back to the date of the hearing. Recently the Commonwealth Court said that margins for skill should be based on two and a half times the 1938 rate, and fixed a retrospectivity of about six months. In that matter our boards could give a similar decision to apply 16 days ahead. They should have the power to go back to the date fixed by the superior tribunal. My proposal takes nothing away from the clause, but adds something to it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Because of the lack of time it is not possible to give a considered opinion on the amendment, but if it means what I believe it to mean from the Premier's remarks it takes nothing from the clause but adds something to it in giving boards power to make retrospective determinations. For that reason I accept it.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 8 negatived.

Title passed. Bill read a third time and passed.

HIRE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 2. Page 1365.)

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I support the second reading, but in the unlikely event of the Bill getting to the Committee stage I will

seek further information from the Leader of the Opposition. Points raised by previous speakers who opposed the Bill were summarized in the speech made by the member for Torrens (Mr. Travers), who said it would be futile to pass such a Bill. He said it deals only with small items, and that it places no restrictions on earth-moving plant, for instance, worth £10,000. That means that restrictions are placed on the items that everyone needs, but not on expensive items. His remarks were sheer hypocrisy, for if he felt strongly about the Bill he could move to widen its scope.

The SPEAKER—He could only move that way in Committee, and the Bill has not yet reached that stage.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—But he could have suggested that.

Mr. Jennings—He could have supported the second reading.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Exactly. The Premier and the Minister of Agriculture often urge primary producers to cut costs of production because we are now in a buyer's market. Do they think primary producers are idiots and do not know that? If the Premier and the Minister are sincere why do they not move to amend the Bill and control exploitation of our primary producers by hire purchase organizations? One only has to consider the fabulous profits made by companies supplying agricultural machinery to producers to realize the truth of what I am saying, yet the Government does not intend remedying the position. I disagree strongly with the remarks made by members from the Government benches, and I also disagree with members who have supported the Bill. The member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Hutchens) said that all members should support the Bill because it is in line with the policy of the Premier, but such an argument has lost the Labor Party every election for the last 20 years. The people say, "If the Labor Party agrees with the Premier's policy let us keep the Premier in office." That is why the Premier has been called the best Labor Premier this State has ever had. The member for Semaphore (Mr. Tapping) said that the Bill supported the financial policy of the Prime Minister, who says that we must stop further bank credit in order to stop inflation. It is true that inflation (if that is the right word) can be stopped by stopping the circulation of money. Young people today want reasonable facilities in their homes and appliances to relieve their wives of drudgery.

No one on or near the basic wage can raise the money to buy a washing machine, for instance, and many go to hire purchase organizations for finance, which means that they are spending their future wages. Some people say that people should wait until they can pay cash for appliances, but if everyone did that manufacturers would have to stop making goods because the demand would drop, and this would lead to much unemployment. Many people say that hire purchase is a serious problem, and I think it is. The National Bank of Australia is a big shareholder in Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. A newspaper report states:—

Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. is to make a new issue of 6,000,000 ordinary shares at par on a one-for-one basis. This will lift issued capital by £1½m. to £3m. Directors state that they confidently expect to maintain the existing 10 per cent dividend rate on the increased capital. The National Bank of Australia Ltd. has informed the company that it intends to maintain its 40 per cent interest in the ordinary capital of the company and will take up its full quota of shares in the present issue.

Many people are going to the bank, as the Premier admitted earlier this afternoon, for advances for legitimate purposes, but the bank says it is not in a position to meet their requests. At the same time this bank admits it has 40 per cent of the shares of Custom Credit Corporation. The company issued further shares on a one-for-one basis, which means that for every one share already held each shareholder would have another. The company considered it could still pay dividends of 10 per cent, so the existing shareholders would get a dividend of 20 per cent in the future. Another hire-purchase company is Australian Guarantee Corporation, in which the Bank of New South Wales has a substantial interest. The annual report of this company stated:—

Further expansion in business lifted consolidated earnings of Australian Guarantee Corporation to well over £1,000,000 in a record year to June. Group earnings rose from £913,009 to £1,197,237—the eighth successive rise in profit. Profit is equal to an earning rate of 41.5 per cent on ordinary capital (increased by £700,342), after charging preference dividends. Ordinary dividend is again 15 per cent and requires £367,626 or a third of the profit. Preference dividends absorb a further £34,000. Hire-purchase debtors rose by £4.66m. or 18 per cent to £29.98m. Overdraft was cut by £2.37m. to £11.13m. Debentures totalling £4.69m. were raised and with the capital increase and surplus profits financed the increased business and reduced dependence on overdraft finance.

This company, which is backed by one of the oldest banks in Australia, had a profit rate of 41.5 per cent on capital. I think all members know that I am a strong advocate for private enterprise, but hire-purchase business is not my idea of private business. It is legalized theft. It is bloodsucking of the crudest and cruellest kind, for much of its profits is extracted from the most helpless section of the community, those on the lower rung of the wage ladder. We hear much about democracy being challenged by Communism. Democracy, if it functions as it should, will never fall as a result of attacks from without; it will fall only as a result of rottenness from within. I issue a warning that the capitalistic system will be brought to its knees if we allow hire-purchase exploitation to continue. Those exploiters are breaking down all the hard-working men who are building up Australia and must depend on the banking system. What is wrong with Australia today is not the worker, either the employer or the employee, but the financial system, which is so rotten that it will not allow the people who produce the goods to buy them without mortgaging their future. What happened in the thirties can happen again unless we alter the present financial system and base it not on a certain number of pound notes or the mining and storing of gold, but on the production of the nation.

The Leader of the Opposition in his Bill has provided that people buying goods on hire-purchase must be told the cash price of the goods and their periodical commitments. Surely no exception can be taken to that, unless it be by those people who enjoy the 40 per cent profit on their capital in finance organizations. I support the second reading and would like to think there were men on the Government benches big enough to deal with this Bill on its merits, but so far we have heard only stupid, futile and irrelevant arguments from Government members. The Bill is a challenge to every member to say whether he is prepared to do the right thing for the people least able to help themselves or to hand them over to their exploiters who are making such huge profits.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I, too, support the Bill because it provides that purchasers using hire-purchase facilities must be told exactly what they are up for. That is a fair and reasonable demand to make, by statute, on the organizations to which the member for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray) has referred. I sound a warning on what can happen in this country,

for there is a danger in the hire-purchase system. In saying that I do not disagree with the idea of time payment for there is no other way in which the products of industry can be distributed, because the people of this country never at any one time have sufficient money to purchase the output of secondary industry. Having accepted that premise, however, we must decide how best to regulate the extraordinary and abnormal profits extracted from the people who today enable industry to keep producing. These great financial organizations have access to the money which today is denied to people, such as home builders, who need it. It has been said recently that the War Service Homes Commission cannot supply finance to an ex-serviceman home builder until December next year, yet there is unlimited money for hire purchase merely because the profit on it is unlimited.

Nobody can reasonably disagree with the principle in the Bill because it merely provides that the purchaser shall be told what he is up for. In matters of this kind most people wish only to purchase commodities that make life easier for them in the home. The profit made by finance companies transcends that made by any other branch of industry. The people who pay the profits to those organizations are people who, by their demand, are keeping the wheels of industry turning. I would like to see those profits regulated. After all, we regulate the profits of the grocer selling small household commodities such as butter, sugar and tea, yet on many of his lines his profit margin is less than 8 per cent, from which he must meet wages and overhead. No business today can operate on a margin as low as that, and were it not for his profits on such items as patent medicines no grocer could continue in business. As the profits on such lines as butter, sugar and tea are regulated, the profits on equally essential items, such as washing machines and refrigerators, should be regulated too. Although the Bill does not regulate profits, it at least tells the dummy who in the long run pays the profits what he is up for, and it is therefore a step in the right direction.

I trust that the Bill is only the thin edge of the wedge. Under landlord and tenant legislation the Government maintains strict control over rents, and in many cases that control works unjustly. As I refuse to support an injustice in that case, so I refuse to recognize hire-purchase legislation unless it does what this Bill does: shows the purchaser what he

is up for. The next thing that must be done is to control the profits of those organizations that suck the very life blood in the form of weekly instalments from the people who keep the wheels of industry turning.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I take a different view on the Bill. Previous speakers have been glad to accept the principle of hire-purchase; indeed, some said it was the salvation of the worker. I have always believed that time-payment, judiciously used, was the correct procedure for the purchase of household amenities, but I do not think we can legislate to cure the fool of his folly. It has been said the smart salesman will always try to sell something to somebody, but such a transaction should not be finalized and hire-purchase facilities granted until the principals have investigated the transaction. If it were not for hire-purchase many industries would be idle and many workers unemployed today. The root of much of the trouble is in the excessive profits made on the manufacture and sale of some household appliances, such as washing machines, refrigerators and wireless sets, and surely those enormous profits could be reduced. A few years ago I was told on good authority that a number of refrigerators were dumped at sea in order to keep up the price. We should endeavour to obviate such activities. In the report of the Select Committee on the Moneylenders Bill in 1930, reference was made to hire-purchase transactions and the following appeared:—

In view of the growing importance to the community of this form of business, the Committee gave much consideration to its many aspects, and a large volume of evidence was tendered under the following headings:—Down Payments (Deposits)—The committee had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that it would not be in the best interests of the trade generally for legislation to be enacted which would compel a minimum proportion of the purchase money to be paid when the hire-purchase agreement was entered into. Each transaction has to be dealt with on its merits, taking into consideration the creditworthiness of the customer and the use to which the article to be purchased is to be put. For example, any legislation attempting to fix a down payment would have to fix different percentages for essential articles used for business purposes and articles which may be termed “luxuries.” Representing the general opinion regarding deposits is the following statement (Question 2038, page 585):—“The amount of deposit payable by a customer does not, as it may on the surface appear, always have a strong bearing on the risk. A person in an assured position and of good habits and known honesty, is a much safer risk to a merchant than another

person who may pay 20 per cent deposit but of whom little else is known and whose employment and habits are doubtful."

I appreciate how hard it is at times for a person to obtain assistance. I have been in the unfortunate position of urgently requiring money and not being able to borrow it. I approached several people and was almost desperate when one man came to my assistance and after lending me the amount I required told me I would have to pay him back at the rate of £1 a month. I would not have cared had the repayments been £5 a month. That was more or less a time payment arrangement and I was thankful for it. One member quoted from a circular issued by David Murray and Company, but he did not read one paragraph, which stated:—

About eighteen months ago this company was approached with regard to the selling of furniture and necessary household equipment by some newly arrived migrants to this country living in hostels, who had been allocated homes, but whose savings had been completely absorbed by the deposit required for their homes. We decided to take a chance on these people and sold them furniture and other goods on no deposit. This has since proved to be good business for the company as the people concerned have honoured their obligations and met their instalments like clockwork. The important point which you should consider, however, is that there was no Government plan of assistance for these people and had not my company or somebody like us have been in a position to finance them they would not have had a stick of furniture in their homes.

That company is to be congratulated on enabling these people to obtain furniture and other household essentials. Its action has created in the minds of New Australians a sense of good faith and trust in our reputable trading concerns. I agree that every hire-purchase agreement should set forth the amount of repayment. Most of them do. When one signs an agreement he knows how many instalments he will be required to pay and consequently can easily calculate the interest rate. I would not like to see heavy restrictions placed on hire-purchase. There are always some people who must buy, no matter what the article is, and they experience difficulty in meeting their commitments, but that surely, is a risk firms must take. I subscribe to the sentiments expressed by the members for Chaffey and Stanley that banks should not enter the hire-purchase field. I support the second reading, though I do not agree with all the Bill's provisions.

The House divided on the second reading—

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

Noes (19).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, the Hon. Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Michael, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, Teusner and White.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Hutchens. No.—Mr. Travers.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived:

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FRANCHISE) BILL.

(Continued from October 12. Page 1072.)

The House divided on the second reading—

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

Noes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Michael, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, and Teusner.

Majority of 2 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived.

NATIONAL PARK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is one of the two Bills which have been introduced as a result of discussions between the Government and representatives of the citizens who are interested in the formation of a National Trust. Those who have in recent years taken an interest in the movement for the formation of a National Trust have been actuated by diverse motives. Some are desirous of preserving sites, buildings and chattels which are of interest from the point of view of the history of South Australia. Others desire that lands should be set aside because of their natural beauty or because they contain relics of aboriginal art and other activities. Others again desire that various

tracts of country should be protected so that their natural vegetation and bird and animal life will be maintained in perpetuity in the interests of science. The Commissioners of the National Park have advocated the formation of a National Trust mainly because of their interest in the plant and animal life of the State from the scientific point of view. They have also been influenced by the idea that in the interests of the health of future generations it is desirable that adequate areas of land should be maintained in a natural condition within a reasonable distance of the main centres of population.

These various points of view have all been considered by the Government and after discussion with representatives of the interested groups the Government agreed that in addition to a Bill for the formation of a National Trust a measure would also be introduced extending the powers of the Commissioners of the National Park so that they could take over the control and management of other areas and maintain them in their natural condition as wild-life reserves. The National Park Commissioners already possess an organization which is well adapted to look after wild-life reserves. Among the Commissioners are representatives of the leading learned societies of South Australia, and of the State Forests, the Botanic Gardens, the Royal Zoological Society and the Government. They have had long experience in this kind of work. The provisions of the Bill, therefore, are all directed to the one object, namely, the extension of the powers of the Commissioners in the direction I have indicated.

Clauses 3 and 4 alter the long title and preamble of the principal Act, so as to make it clear that the Act will apply to wild-life reserves. Clause 5 alters the title of the Commissioners for a similar purpose. It also provides that, in addition to the Minister of Lands, an Officer of the Department of Lands nominated by the Minister will be one of the Commissioners. It is not always possible for the Minister to attend meetings and for this reason and because of the possibility that further Crown lands may be placed under the control of the Commissioners it is desirable that the department should have another representative. Clause 6 provides that the Governor may by proclamation declare that land vested in the Commissioners, or of which the Commissioners are lessees, or which is under the care, control and management of the Commissioners,

shall be a wild-life reserve within the meaning of the Act. It is contemplated that any land which is to be established as a wild-life reserve will be dedicated and placed under the care, control and management of the Commissioners by appropriate action under the Crown Lands Act, and thereafter dealt with under the National Park and Wild-Life Reserves Act.

Clauses 7 to 12 are all consequential amendments. Clause 13 extends the powers of the Commissioners to accept grants and gifts of land and personal property and exempts them from stamp duty and succession duty on such gifts. Clause 14 provides that wild-life reserves or other lands under the control and management of the Commissioners will be exempt from rates and taxes, as the National Park now is. Clause 15 makes it clear that wild-life reserves cannot be mortgaged or made security for debts of the Commissioners and clause 16 enables the Commissioners to expend their revenue on wild-life reserves as well as the National Park.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes some amendments to the Electoral Act which are desirable for the purpose of bringing the law into conformity with modern requirements. The amendments relate to diverse topics which I will explain separately. Clauses 3 to 9 deal with postal voting. The present Act provides for postal voting and is quite effective for this purpose so far as electors in Australia are concerned. It is, however, difficult, though not impossible, for South Australian electors in the United Kingdom to vote by post because there are no electoral officers either in the United Kingdom or in any overseas country who have authority to issue the necessary documents. The Electoral Act does not provide for the appointment of electoral officers to act outside electoral districts. Applications for postal ballot-papers made by electors who are overseas have to be made to the appropriate electoral officers in South Australia, and the postal vote certificates and ballot-papers are then sent to the electors. When the elector has recorded his vote, the ballot-paper is returned

to South Australia. All this procedure must be completed between the issue of the writ and the third day after polling day. If there were no air mail it would be impossible for any South Australian elector in the United Kingdom to vote. With the large number of South Australians constantly visiting the United Kingdom it is desirable that provision should now be made to enable officers in that country to receive applications for postal voting papers, and issue the necessary papers in proper cases, and collect the ballot-papers after the votes have been recorded.

Clauses 3 to 9 deal with this problem. They enable the Minister to appoint assistant returning officers to act at places outside the State. They also enlarge the time for applying for postal vote certificates and postal vote ballot-papers, so that applications may be made at any time after the tenth day before the issue of the writ for the election. At present such applications can only be made after the issue of the writs. The time for sending in postal votes is also extended so that these votes may be counted if they are received within seven days after polling day, instead of three days as at present. These alterations are in line with the Commonwealth procedure, and will not appreciably delay the declaration of the poll. If the clauses are carried, the Government will be in a position to appoint an assistant returning officer in London.

Clause 10 deals with informal ballot-papers where the informality arises because insufficient preferences are indicated. In an election where there is only one seat to be filled and there are two candidates the Electoral Act at present provides that if the elector indicates his first preference and not his second preference the ballot-paper will be valid. If, however, there are more than two candidates and the elector does not indicate his preference for the full number of candidates for whom he is required to vote, the ballot-paper is informal. Clause 10 deals with this position by providing that in a case where the number of candidates does not exceed the number for whom the voter has to indicate preferences, and the voter indicates his preference for all the candidates but one, and leaves blank the square opposite to the name of that one candidate, it is to be assumed that the voter's preference for that candidate is his last preference and that the voter has accordingly indicated his preferences for all number of candidates for whom he is obliged to vote. This amendment will reduce the number of informal votes.

Clause 11 increases the maximum amount of electoral expenditure which a candidate may lawfully incur or authorise. At present the maximum is £50, plus £5 for every 200 electors on the roll above 2,000. In view of the reduced purchasing power of money it is proposed to double these amounts. Clause 12 extends the list of matters in respect of which electoral expenses may be incurred or authorized by a candidate. One of the permissible items of expenditure at present is "printing, advertising, publishing, issuing and distributing addresses by the candidates and notices of meetings." On the true interpretation of these words it appears that the only matters which a candidate can print, advertise, publish, issue and distribute are his addresses and notices of meetings. General advertising of political opinions and requests for the support of electors appears to be forbidden. It is proposed by clause 12 to include in the permissible electoral expenditure, all expenditure, by the candidate on advertising and broadcasting, and all expenditure incurred in publishing, issuing, distributing and displaying addresses, notices, posters, pamphlets, handbills and cards. It is also proposed to include expenditure on telephones as a permissible electoral expenditure. These amendments will bring the State Act into line with the Commonwealth Act on these points.

Clause 13 repeals section 138 which says that all money provided by any person other than the candidate for electoral expenses must be paid direct to the candidate personally. The Government has reason to believe that this provision is by no means generally obeyed in practice. It is known that organizations sometimes pay expenditure on behalf of candidates, directly to the persons who have provided the services. It is proposed to repeal section 138. There is no similar provision in the Commonwealth Act. Clause 14 contains several proposed new sections to be inserted in the principal Act. The proposed section 155a provides that an association or a person acting on behalf of an association is not to publish or announce that any candidate is associated with or supports the policy of the association unless the candidate has consented to such publication or announcement. A provision to the same effect is already in the Commonwealth Act. The justification for the clause lies in the fact that considerable harm may be done to a candidate by a false representation that he belongs to or supports an association which is disliked by his electors, or whose policy is

opposed to that of the candidate. I think there was an instance of this at the last election in the Semaphore district.

Proposed new section 155b restricts the size of electoral posters. A national security regulation for this purpose was introduced by the Commonwealth during the war and afterwards incorporated in the Commonwealth Electoral Act. It limits the size of electoral posters to 60 square inches. Under the Commonwealth Act this limitation applies not only to each individual poster but to any combination of electoral posters. In other words, it is an offence under the Commonwealth Act to post up two or more electoral posters in combination with each other if the total area of all those posters is more than 60 square inches. It is difficult however, to decide whether posters are in combination with each other and the Government is informed that the language of the Commonwealth Act caused some embarrassment to those responsible for enforcing this particular provision.

In order to avoid this difficulty the present Bill declares that every poster which is less than three feet from another poster shall be regarded as forming part of that poster, and the limitation of 60 square inches shall apply to the area of all posters within three feet of another poster. It may appear that 60 square inches is rather small, but the Commonwealth law on this point has been in force since 1946 without amendment and it is advantageous to have uniformity between the State and the Commonwealth on this point. In addition, section 155b follows the Commonwealth Act in providing that electoral matter is not to be written or drawn directly on roadways, footpaths, buildings and other structures. Power is granted to members of the Police Force to remove or obliterate electoral posters or electoral matters exhibited in contravention of the provisions of the Bill.

I think the Bill will commend itself to members opposite. It is an attempt to bring our electoral laws into line with present-day procedure. The Act has been in operation for many years without any amendment. Broadcasting is now one of the chief means of advertising electoral matters, but under the Act that is forbidden. If electors are to be well-informed on electoral issues it is desirable that candidates should have available to them all means of submitting their views.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

METROPOLITAN MILK SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with an amendment.

SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 8. Page 1446.)

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—I thank members for their courtesy yesterday in granting me leave to continue my remarks, for it allowed me to obtain further information. I support the Bill, which was introduced several months ago. Until a few weeks ago I thought it might not be called on again this session, and I am happy that I was wrong. However, I hoped there would be some provision on the Estimates for country sewerage, but I could not find any. I have always strongly advocated the extension of sewerage facilities to country areas, and I still believe that sewerage for country towns would greatly assist the decentralization of industries. We often hear Government members talking about decentralization, but it is preached rather than practised by them. Many industries in country towns are hampered by lack of sewerage facilities and difficulty in disposing of effluent. I have previously referred to the difficulties of the Gawler Manufacturing Company.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Septic tanks would not get over their difficulties.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I have not mentioned septic tanks yet. That company still has great difficulties in getting rid of effluent, and so has the Farmers' Union's butter factory in Gawler. Other country industries are in similar trouble.

Mr. Stephens—That does not apply only in the country.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I realize that, but this Bill applies particularly to rates to be charged in country areas. Many country industries have been unable to expand because they are not sewered; indeed, some have had to curtail employment. In one industry in Gawler the effluent flows back into the offices and change rooms, and the company and the council are anxious for a sewerage scheme for the town. Unless more industries are established in country centres many people will go to the city for employment. Last Saturday night when I was present at a function in Wasleys, some residents deplored the fact that most of the young people in the town could find no occupation there and were forced to go

to the city for employment. The railway service does not allow them conveniently to travel to and from Adelaide every day, so they have to stay in the city during the week. Many Gawler people spend two hours in travelling to and from Adelaide every day, and find this very tiring on top of the fatigue of their work. If possible, they eventually leave the town and obtain accommodation near their place of employment. That sort of thing is going on all over the State and is detrimental to country towns. Further, it swells the population of the city, which is bad industrially and economically. The introduction of sewerage facilities would provide an incentive to industries to establish plants in country towns. Gawler has a labour pool, and many people travelling to the city daily would be pleased to work nearer their homes, but industries have not been established there because of the lack of sewerage facilities. I trust the Bill will mean a change in that regard.

The lack of sewerage in country towns is bad for health reasons, and most country sanitary schemes are out of date. All country district councils are well aware of this, and I have read with interest of the bold experiment carried out by the Murray Bridge Corporation, which I think has been successful. Other country towns favour such a scheme but have found it beyond their financial capacity without the assistance of a Government subsidy, which is not likely to be forthcoming. Other country towns are living on promises and half promises. The Public Works Committee has recommended a number of country sewerage schemes, but the position has been bad for a number of years and I became perturbed when I found no reference to the subject in this Budget. I refuse to lose hope, however, and trust that the schemes will be implemented soon. On occasions I have strongly criticized the Government for its delay in establishing country sewerage facilities and I am afraid I may be doing that again; but in the light of the remarks made by the Minister of Works (the Hon. M. McIntosh) in his reply this afternoon to the member for Victoria (Mr. Corcoran), I suppose that in future criticism by Opposition members will be out of bounds.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—That will be the day.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Unless the Minister spoke in the heat of the moment it looks as if members on this side will not be able to criticize the Government, otherwise their districts will suffer as a result; but I cannot

think the Minister was in earnest because his attitude seemed so petty. Much remains to be done concerning country sewerage facilities and I am reminded of the remark of Cecil Rhodes as he lay dying: "So little done; so much to do." I was glad to have been one of my Party's nominees on the Sewerage Committee that met over the past few months, and I thank the Minister for the kindly remarks he made about the committee in his second reading explanation on June 21. The committee did much work; it was a happy committee and I believe that it got down to tin tacks and that the complimentary remarks of the Minister were well deserved. Committee members thoroughly examined sewerage facilities not only in South Australia, but also in other States.

The last enactment concerning country sewerage was passed in 1946, but under it nothing has been done, and with the passing of time it has become out of step with modern conditions and money values. Further, nothing was likely to be done under the old rating of 1s. 9d. in the pound on assessed annual values, but I hope something will be done under the new maximum rating of 2s. 6d. The old legislation was in effect a dead horse. Naturally, I am not anxious to see increased rating for country sewerage facilities, but I am anxious to see such facilities extended to country towns, so I reluctantly accept this steep increase because I believe it will benefit country towns soon. Under the maximum rate of 2s. 6d. the proposed country schemes will be cheaper than similar schemes in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Much cheaper to the individual, but dearer to the State.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Yes, but the Minister and I both hope that the eventual benefits will compensate for that cost. In Victoria and New South Wales the schemes are run mainly by local councils. That has not been the practice in this State, and I do not like it for I believe that the overall scheme should be controlled on a State-wide basis. The extensions will be costly and the returns from many schemes will still fall well below the amount necessary to meet interest and maintenance charges, but I believe that any loss will be more than offset by the beneficial effects of the amenities and the better health brought to country towns. Further, the effects of the decentralization of industry resulting from the extension of these facilities will also be beneficial.

The member for Stuart (Mr. Riches), when speaking on this Bill, advocated the subsidizing of septic tank systems in country towns whose residents felt that they could not afford a sewerage scheme. He said such a subsidy would require a small initial cost, but eliminate the continuing annual loss that would be involved in a sewerage scheme. Further, a septic tank system would give a healthier service to the town until sewerage facilities could be afforded and provided. Mr. Riches is to move an amendment in Committee so I will not discuss the subject here. I hope most devoutly that this Bill is not a pre-election Bill, but one that will mean something. I do not believe it is the perfect solution to the problem of country sewerage facilities. Indeed, I think the Minister will agree with me when I say that there is no perfect solution of that problem.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—There never has been of any problem.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—We may find the perfect solution of this problem some day, but in the meantime I support the proposed scheme despite the expense involved. The Minister and his officers gave all possible evidence to the Committee, and after being made aware of all the available details, I now realize that nothing could be done at the existing rate of 1s. 9d. I do not like the increased charges, but I believe they are unavoidable. In the fervent hope that sewerage facilities will soon be extended to country towns, I support the Bill.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I, too, support the Bill, to which all country members have looked forward since 1946. I disagree, however, with the member for Gawler (Mr. John Clark) when he says that nothing has been done since that year, because much work has been carried out by departmental draftsmen and surveyors in preparing plans and estimates of costs of country schemes.

Mr. John Clark—I was referring only to the actual inauguration of the scheme.

Mr. FLETCHER—It would be interesting to know what has been spent on plans and estimates of cost since 1946. The Public Works Committee, of which I am a member, has inquired into and approved a number of country sewerage schemes. One has only to see the insanitary conditions in a number of towns to realize how serious is this problem. It is not related only to country areas. At a meeting of the Public Works Committee in

connection with the new treatment plan at Glenelg, Mr. Hodgson, a world authority on sewerage, presented most interesting evidence. As a result of his observations overseas the Glenelg treatment works will cost about £117,000 less than originally estimated. If we can accept that as a criterion, it is reasonable to assume that sewerage costs generally may be considerably reduced.

For many years I have advocated a sewerage system for Mount Gambier. That city has a large population and most of its effluent and waste has always been disposed of through pits and deep bores. After hearing evidence from experts, one wonders how long it will be before a serious epidemic breaks out there. Most of the town's water supply is from the Blue Lake, but we do not know from whence that lake is fed. If some disturbance occurs underground and the effluent and waste is suddenly diverted from its present channels it could result in pollution of the waters with a subsequent epidemic. A cheese and butter factory near Mount Schank disposes of its wastes into a cave. It has followed that practice for some years and gases have built up to such an extent there that one can strike a match and ignite them. Something must be done to provide sewerage for Mount Gambier and other country towns. Whilst I do not like the rise from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d. in rates, the increase is necessary to pay for any sewerage schemes that may be introduced. The responsibility of meeting costs should not rest with district councils and corporations because the Government is in the best position to undertake such schemes. I hope that in the near future the sewerage of country towns will commence.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I support this Bill. It provides that an amount not exceeding 2s. 6d. in the pound, as determined by the Minister, shall be the sewerage rate for all country drainage areas. I do not think anyone in the country would disagree with that, but I suggest that no country areas will be sewered in the lifetime of any member here. In view of our financial resources and the manner in which they are regulated, a general sewerage scheme for country districts would be impracticable in the foreseeable future. I admit, however, that towns like Port Pirie—which owes its importance to the aggregation of secondary industries there—and Mount Gambier—a most influential city—may possibly be sewered, but Clare and other places will not be. If sewerage is important in Mount Gambier and Port Pirie it is also

important in Clare. At present Clare uses what is described by Victorian health authorities as the "undesirable pan system." In respect of every application for the building of a new home, the corporation stipulates that provision must be made for drainage and the installation of a septic tank. Recently we received a joint report from the Engineer for Sewerage, Mr. Murrell, and the Engineer for Water and Sewerage Treatment, Mr. Hodgson, which damns with exceedingly faint praise septic tank installations. The report stated:—

The Department of Health is concerned with the possible pollution of underground water by septic tank effluent. Bacteriological tests have shown that this is occurring.

As a matter of fact, the health authorities have closed certain wells in Clare and ordered the pumping plant to be removed therefrom to ensure that they are no longer used. The bacterial count has risen because of the disposal of effluent from tanks which has seeped into underground water supplies. The corporation has always believed that septic tank installations are the answer to sewerage for country towns. People have complied with the corporation's request to provide such installations. We have also toyed with the idea of making them compulsory, but we are unable to do that because a number of places in the main street have no room for them. Blocks of land facing the main street are completely built upon and they have no means of disposing of effluent. The only way of overcoming the problem there would be to provide a pipe system to take the effluent from all septic tanks and dispose of it at one point. That would be costly and beyond the corporation's resources.

What is the alternative to the pan system? The only real alternative is complete sewerage, but as this is outside the realm of practical politics, the corporation has insisted on septic tanks. According to the joint report, there are dangers and difficulties and obnoxious effluvia arising from septic tanks. It is suggested that any town with a complete system of septic tanks can give off an odour discernible to anyone approaching it. Everyone would know it to be a septic tank town because of the septic smell. Victoria has an entirely different scheme. Instead of flushing the pan with about two gallons of water the tank is filled with water and used with the addition of only a gallon or two each week. Some have gone for as long as twelve months without any addition of water. Apparently this scheme satisfies the Victorian authorities and it seems to be the answer to the problem in Clare and other country towns.

Because of the money involved it is not possible to say that at a given time another system should be installed instead of the septic tank system. As it is not possible for complete sewerage schemes to be installed in country towns in the foreseeable near future, and as reports say that the Victorian septic closet system is effective, will the Government consider its installation in country towns by making money available in connection with houses already built? Some occupiers would not be able to meet the cost. Will the Minister ask his departmental officers to report on the Victorian septic closet system? We do not want to be led up the garden path again. Although the Department of Health has favoured the septic tank system, departmental officers now say it is a bad system because of the saturation of the ground and the fouling of underground water.

The Victorian system has some appeal, but it is expensive to install. It is not put inside the house, but built on to it, and the plans I have show how much space is necessary to keep it away from the living quarters. It would do away with the objectionable smell associated with the septic tank system. It could be installed in country towns like Clare, and the people with the money available would gladly install it, but in order to compel its installation money would have to be granted to councils. I will accept the opinion of these highly qualified gentlemen about the dangers of the septic tank system, but I am not afraid of an epidemic. America has vast rivers. Some of the towns there empty their sewage into the flowing river whilst lower down towns get their water supply from it. This has not resulted in epidemics. It is well-known that moving water purifies even the sewage in the water.

All the sewage from Adelaide is poured out on to the Sewage Farm without any chemical treatment. It is broken down into liquid form. It grows lush pasture which is used by dairymen for their cows. They do not cut where the raw sewage is poured, but on ground where the sewage has been poured previously. The area covered is so great that there is not enough sewage deposited at the one time on the ground to choke the bacteriological action of the soil that causes the purification. It is a type of soil composting and it works well at the Sewage Farm. I have sufficient faith in the asepsis powers of nature to know that if the soil is given the opportunity, and not waterlogged or bogged down by the sewage, it will handle all the sewage put on it.

If only a small piece of land is concerned, however, saturation point will soon be reached but I have not heard of anyone dying from this sort of thing. It is remarkable what the soil can do. The report refers to effluent running down the gutters of country towns, but we have not heard of epidemics there, or people dying like flies. Of course, it is an objectionable feature, but the dangers we hear about do not exist. If an ordinary wheat bag were placed in the ground at the Sewage Farm and left for a fortnight it would disintegrate, so great is the force that causes the fermentation: Nature is essentially clean in action, but sometimes it is given an impossible task by people living in a small area. If given the opportunity Nature will handle these things. There is evidence that no epidemic will be caused. However, this is not the right way to deal with the problem. We want a scheme that is simple and not objectionable to good living, and I believe the Victorian scheme is the answer to our problems about country sewerage, for it does the same job as our septic tank system but does not have a tremendous amount of effluent from the tank. Deep drainage for country towns is not within the realms of practical politics, and I want to know whether the Government is prepared to install septic closet systems of the Victorian type that will not result in underground water or surface pollution and not cause effluent to run down the streets of country towns. Ratepayers could pay by instalments for such a scheme. At present they are charged about £5 a pan annually as sanitation rates, and that amount could pay interest at 5 per cent on £100 for any scheme.

Country towns cannot hope for deep drainage in the foreseeable future, but here is an alternative for them. Will the Minister tell the House what the Government is prepared to do to help country towns in this matter? I am sure country people would welcome such a scheme. I support the Bill because I know they will be glad to pay a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound, but I also know that most country ratepayers will not be called upon to pay anything for sewerage in the next 25 years because the schemes cannot be carried out. I hope the Minister will get a report from his department on the Victorian scheme administered by the Department of Public Health in that State. I have some information here that was issued by that department in November, 1953, and I should like to know whether the scheme there is functioning satisfactorily.

If so, similar schemes could be carried out in this State.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—No, because the success of such a scheme depends on the locality.

Mr. QUIRKE—The locality does not matter under the Victorian scheme. The installations there will work in impervious ground. Only two gallons of water a week has to be got rid of, sometimes even less.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—In that case the Government need not come into the scheme.

Mr. QUIRKE—The Minister cannot get away with it like that. There are too many people in country towns who cannot afford the installation, and the Government should say to what extent it is prepared to assist them. The ratepayers could make payments annually and if a house were sold provision could be made to recoup the expenditure on the installation. It would probably cost about £250,000 to install deep drainage in Clare, but the Victorian scheme might cost only about £5,000.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—How much will it cost in an industrial town?

Mr. QUIRKE—It might cost more there, but not much in agricultural areas. We must get away from the obnoxious pan system which is a nightmare to every councillor in the country.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—The Bill will not affect sewerage in the metropolitan area, but I support it because I do not want country people to have to put up with the shocking conditions that some people in the metropolitan area have to contend with. For some years many people in the Port Adelaide district have been asking for deep drainage, and a few weeks ago a public meeting was held in the Woodville district about this question. There is no deep drainage in Woodville North where many people have septic tanks. The member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke) said there was no danger to health in filth running down the streets and lying about, but that is different from what our health inspectors tell us. Many authorities blamed the old pit system for typhoid fever, but when a deputation waited on the Minister recently—

The SPEAKER—The honourable member realizes that this is a scheme for country sewerage.

Mr. STEPHENS—Yes, and I am comparing country schemes with what many people in the metropolitan area have to put up with. Some members have suggested septic tanks for country towns, but they do not always operate successfully. Many suburban people have soiled

paper from septic tanks lying around their back yards, and women sometimes have to empty the tanks twice a day. Holes have to be dug to bury the waste but they soon become filled with water, which overflows and lies in the backyard. The people concerned have approached the corporation to see whether they can go back to the old pan system because they are worried about the possibility of an outbreak of disease. I am calling a conference of the mayors of Port Adelaide, Woodville, and Enfield.

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

Mr. STEPHENS—I listened attentively to what some previous speakers had to say about the installation of septic tanks instead of sewerage facilities.

Mr. Davis—Have you studied the reports?

Mr. STEPHENS—I would not like to see the type of septic tank that I have seen in some parts of the metropolitan area installed in the country. In one part of Woodville North the ground is waterlogged and residents are asking for better drains so that the septic tanks can work more satisfactorily. Some of the tanks are in a filthy condition and cannot be drained. This is deplorable, particularly as they are on premises adjacent to food processing factories. The residents have organized deputations to the Woodville council and I have even introduced a deputation to the Minister of Works regarding this matter. Some of the residents have asked for a night cart system instead of the present septic tanks.

Mr. Davis—You can have our share of that.

Mr. STEPHENS—Septic tanks may be all right in such places as Port Pirie. Although I have been there, I do not claim to know Port Pirie any better than the member for Port Pirie (Mr. Davis) knows my district. I support the Bill, but if anything is to be done on the installation of septic tanks I trust that the districts where it is intended to install them will be thoroughly examined beforehand. I believe that sewerage facilities should be extended all over the State. Although such a system may cost much money, the cost cannot be compared with the adverse effects on the health of the community resulting from the use of unsatisfactory sanitary methods. Health officers and medical men have complained of the dangers that may be caused by the conditions prevailing at Woodville North. Everything possible is being done there, but those people have been told that sewerage facilities cannot be provided for at least another six years.

If satisfied that septic tanks will be installed only in suitable areas, I will support the amendment.

Mr. CORCORAN (Victoria)—I support the Bill, which provides for an increase in the country sewerage rate. I shall be happy if the Bill results in the early sewerage of the towns in which I am interested, but although I do not wish to take a pessimistic view of the future, I am not satisfied that sewerage facilities will be implemented immediately the Bill is passed. Why have we had to wait so long for the introduction of this Bill? I have often expressed regret that nothing has been done over the past few years. The Sewerage Committee's report indicates that the country sewerage rate must be increased, therefore I support the increase. Can the Minister of Works say when he expects sewerage facilities to be installed at Naracoorte? I think much water will run down the Naracoorte Creek before such a scheme is implemented.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—At the rate of 1s. 9d. in the pound it will run down forever.

Mr. CORCORAN—Will the people who are to benefit from sewerage facilities be able to bear the cost involved? Had this scheme been implemented some years ago when prices were more reasonable the people would not be faced with the steep financial obligations involved in the proposed scheme. No doubt the Minister secretly thinks it will be a long time before sewerage facilities are extended to country towns, but they must be extended sometime because the future of the State is bound up in decentralization, which will be fostered by such projects as this. Should the people who have been encouraged to develop country areas be asked to pay a rate of 1s. 6d. in the pound more than city residents?

Mr. O'Halloran—That is the Government's idea of encouraging people to stay in the city!

Mr. CORCORAN—Could not country people be placed on the same basis and enjoy the same privileges at the same cost as their city brethren? The Government should investigate the relative costs involved in sewerage and septic tank facilities. Some authorities I have read say nothing is to be feared from a septic tank system, whereas others do not agree. One thing is certain: more modern facilities are required to supplant the primitive night cart method operating in certain parts.

Mr. O'Halloran—All we require is a satisfactory system of sanitation in country towns.

Mr. CORCORAN—Yes. City people enjoy up-to-date facilities, and such facilities should

be extended to the country in order to encourage decentralization. For those reasons members on this side are eager to see something done. To illustrate the sharp increase in charges in the last few years, one need only refer to an hotel at Port Augusta which in 1946 would have paid £25 in sewerage rates whereas today it would have to pay £250.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Increased values are responsible for that.

Mr. CORCORAN—I realize that, but the Engineering and Water Supply Department makes its own assessments; it does not adopt council assessments. We must ascertain whether any system is within the financial capacity of the people. If it is not, we must endeavour to find some alternative proposal. We cannot take risks and must be satisfied that any scheme we introduce is the best possible. I regret that the city and country are not rated on the same level. Can the Minister indicate the reason for the difference in the two rates? Why should country people be charged 2s. 6d. as against 1s. in the metropolitan area? I support the Bill, but hope I am wrong in my fears concerning implementation of country sewerage schemes.

Mr. WHITE (Murray)—I support the Bill. From the point of view of health the proper sewerage of country towns is important. Many country towns still use the old pan system and I agree wholeheartedly with the member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke) that that system is one of the bugbears of country councils. Only one man out of thousands would take on the job of emptying the pans and he can demand practically anything for so doing. The system is unhygienic, and if the night soil man becomes ill the system breaks down. Pans leak and overflow and there is general dissatisfaction in the town. The pan system is outmoded in any town of reasonable size. Deep drainage is undoubtedly the most satisfactory method of sewerage any town, but because it is impossible to implement it in various towns septic tanks have been used. Murray Bridge is completely sewerage by means of septic tanks and the system is working satisfactorily. The soil in the area consists of sand on the surface with gravel beneath and is ideal for drainage. There are only isolated areas of clay where some difficulty has been encountered. The average rainfall is only 12½ in. and it is a comparatively dry district. These conditions have contributed to the success of the system. The corporation has not entirely disregarded the advantages of deep

drainage and has made it clear to the Public Works Committee that it still desires deep drainage for the business and factory area.

Mr. Davis—Are the industries in Murray Bridge using septic tanks?

Mr. WHITE—Not for industrial waste.

Mr. Fred Walsh—They use the River Murray.

Mr. WHITE—That could be so. The installation of septic tanks at Murray Bridge was undertaken without Government assistance. One or two people, who were not able to make installations because of financial difficulties, were assisted by the council, but they are repaying the money advanced to them. No person has suffered hardship through the introduction of this system. The average cost of installing a septic tank was £56. Costs varied according to the nature of the soil. The council worked in closely with residents and that has been responsible for the successful operation of the system. Because it has been successful at Murray Bridge it does not necessarily follow that such a system will be effective in other towns. Naracoorte, Mount Gambier and Port Pirie, which have been mentioned in this debate, may have peculiar conditions which would prevent the successful operation of septic tanks.

Mr. Davis—Who said they were not successful at Port Pirie?

Mr. WHITE—I think there are areas in Port Pirie where they would not be satisfactory because of the swampy nature of the soil. The water table would be high near the swamp.

Mr. Corcoran—According to a Victorian report that does not matter.

Mr. WHITE—I was interested to hear what Mr. Quirke said about that. That suggestion should be properly investigated because it may answer some of the sewerage problems in country towns. The Murray Bridge system received the full support of the Central Board of Health, but I was rather disturbed to read in the report of Messrs. Murrell and Hodgson, circulated among members, a condemnation of the system. I feel some further explanation should be made. I do not agree with everything in that report.

Mr. Davis—You should have some knowledge of septic tanks because you have had more experience of the system than any other member.

Mr. WHITE—It is working satisfactorily in Murray Bridge. There are only isolated areas where the clay subsoil prevents the effluent from getting away satisfactorily. There may be areas where septic tanks are

not satisfactory and the only solution of the problem is to have deep drainage, but that is an expensive cure. In running a town the disposal of human waste is an important factor. No system should be allowed to become top heavy in the matter of finance. Therefore, it was wise for the Minister to appoint a committee to inquire into the matter of costs. A rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound is suggested as the maximum, but it will not be necessary for this rate to be charged in all cases. The legislation gives councils the power to say whether or not they want a deep drainage scheme, which provides a safeguard. A town may have installed the septic tank system, regarding deep drainage as unnecessary, or too costly to install. Deep drainage has much to offer country towns. It would mean that living conditions would be much improved. There are four things that people look for—congenial employment, adequate facilities for the education of their children, facilities for spending leisure hours, and good living conditions. The installation of deep drainage in country towns would help. I support the Bill in order to give the scheme a trial, but I hope discretion will be observed in the matter of charges.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—Some members have queried why there is a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound for the country and only 1s. in the pound in for the metropolitan area, but it is a matter of assessment. When Mr. E. J. Craigie was a member of this place he said that the Beehive Corner property paid more in rates than any electorate in South Australia, based entirely on assessments. It is not a question of 2s. 6d. in the pound as against 1s. in the pound, but the assessment on which the rates are levied. For the same frontage, 10 times as much would be paid in the metropolitan area at 1s. in the pound as in the country at 2s. 6d. in the pound. Water is the first essential in a sewerage scheme. Adelaide gets its water by gravitation whereas most country towns get it after it has been pumped four or five times at huge cost. A comparison of the two rates shows that everything is in favour of the country. In the other States each town has had the responsibility of installing sewerage schemes. The State has not come into the picture at all. The committee appointed here decided that a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound for the country was the least that should be levied.

Mr. Macgillivray—Who comprised the committee?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Messrs. John Clark, Riches, Brookman, Teusner, and myself. It was unanimous in its findings. It was asked to consider a fair basis of charges for country schemes. It carefully examined all the evidence produced and the factors affecting sewerage of country towns, and unanimously agreed on the following resolution:—

The committee is satisfied that the economics of country sewerage must be placed on a more realistic basis by deriving increased revenue either by way of an increased rate or increased assessment.

The committee went into the two alternatives and the evidence placed before it showed that after relating up-to-date assessments with present-day values and costs the revenue derivable from the rate of 1s. 9d. in the pound fixed in 1946 was not now a practicable basis of a charge in connection with country schemes. The committee then recommended that the country rate be increased from 1s. 9d. to an amount not exceeding 2s. 6d. in the pound, and that the minimum rate on sewered properties be £4 per annum, and for vacant land £1. Notice has been given of an intention to move in Committee for an alternative, but I am not permitted to deal with it now. Rates of 2s. 6d. for the country and 1s. for the city will mean a huge loss in the country and a profit in the metropolitan area.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you say that the metropolitan scheme is paying?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Prior to the last elections the honourable member announced that the metropolitan scheme showed a huge profit and that some of that profit should be applied to the betterment of conditions in the metropolitan area. Speaking from memory, I would say that there was a slight deficit on the last assessments but this year on the new assessments we will show a profit.

Mr. Davis—What amount would be paid in the metropolitan area and at Port Pirie on a trust home with an assessed rental value of £140?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—That matter has been gone into *ad infinitum* and I will not go into it further.

Mr. Davis—The rate would be £7 in the metropolitan area and £17 10s. at Port Pirie.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—If the honourable member does not want the legislation he can vote against it. Not one country scheme would show a profit at the rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound. It is within the province of councils to have a deep drainage scheme or to adopt,

as has been done at Murray Bridge, the septic tank system. The committee had much information before it.

Mr. Corcoran—Surely you do not want to prevent us from querying the difference between the charges?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The difference is in the valuations. As the honourable member knows, you can have a high assessment and a low rate or a low rate and a high assessment and obtain the same result. One has to be related to the other, and relate our position to that of country towns in the other States. In my second reading speech I said that at Stawell (Victoria) the rate paid was 3s. 6d. in the pound, at Mooropna 4s. 8d. and at Tatura 5s. 1d. In Western Australia, where the system was installed prior to the war in the depression, the schemes were subsidized by the Government, and towns are now asking for the Government to take them over. Their rate is higher.

The evidence given to the committee was that in every country town in Australia starting a new scheme the rate will be at least 2s. 6d. in the pound. A rate of 1s. 9d. is unrealistic. When the proposals were first initiated the Government suggested a rate of 2s. in the pound and Mr. Duncan, who was then member for Gawler, led a strong campaign for a differential rate between 2s. and 1s. and induced the House to believe it could be done for that amount. It could not have been done because the resources of the State would not have permitted it. No scheme could be undertaken without a satisfactory water supply. At Mount Gambier we did not have an efficient water service until more than £100,000 was spent, and at Murray Bridge between £40,000 and £50,000 has been spent.

Mr. John Clark—It does not apply to Gawler. There have never been water restrictions there in my time.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—With sewerage, there would be until the water supply was improved. Two works have been undertaken towards that end—the construction of the South Para dam, and the big main which goes through that district. As Mr. O'Halloran knows, it is impossible to talk about a sewerage system for Peterborough until there is an assured water supply. Apart from a water supply, the next question arises "What can the State afford?" Many country people will never get a sewerage system. The Government is trying to relate

current costs to actual facts. At a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound those who will get the service will be lucky. If we are to have this system, that rate is the very lowest and then we will have to show to the Commonwealth Grants Commission when the time arrives that we have charged enough. Towns such as Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Mount Gambier and Gawler would get no subsidy from other States and they would have to undertake the service out of their own resources. The rate of 2s. 6d. was decided unanimously by the committee and it is unjust to say that the Government has forced that amount upon the House. Therefore, I hope that the second reading will be agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. RICHES moved—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole House that it have power to consider a new clause relating to the installation of sewerage schemes or septic tanks in country drainage areas.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 passed.

New clause 2a—"Schemes for country areas."

Mr. RICHES—I move the insertion of the following new clause:—

2a. The following section is enacted and inserted in the principal Act after section 20 thereof:—

20a. (1) Before commencing to construct sewerage works in a country drainage area, the Minister shall draw up a scheme for such sewerage works, and an alternative scheme relating to the installation of bacteriolytic tanks at premises within the drainage area.

(2) A scheme for sewerage works shall contain—

- (a) plans, specifications, and the estimated cost of construction and maintenance of the proposed works;
- (b) the estimated annual value for rating purposes of the rateable land and premises within the drainage area;
- (c) the amount of the proposed sewerage rate and the estimated annual revenue to be derived from such rate.

(3) A scheme relating to the installation of bacteriolytic tanks shall provide for the following matters:—

- (a) the making of advances by the Minister to owners or occupiers of premises within the drainage area who are at any time required by any Act or regulation to install bacteriolytic tanks on such premises and the amounts and terms and conditions of such advances;
- (b) the granting of subsidies by the Minister to the council of any municipality

or district which is wholly or partly within the drainage area, such subsidies to be applied towards paying the cost of installing any drainage works which are necessary for the purpose of draining effluent from bacteriolytic tanks within the drainage area:

(c) the terms and conditions of any such subsidies:

(d) any other matters relating to the installation of bacteriolytic tanks in the drainage area.

(4) The Minister shall submit the schemes drawn up under this section to each municipal or district council whose municipality or district is wholly or partly within the drainage area. Each council shall inform the Minister whether it desires a scheme to be proceeded with and, if so, what scheme. The Minister may amend any scheme and the council may accept the scheme as amended.

(5) If the council, or all the councils concerned, agree to a scheme the Minister may, when money for the purpose has been voted by Parliament, carry the scheme into operation.

(6) The Governor may make regulations for facilitating the carrying out of schemes under this section and prescribing any matters necessary or convenient to be prescribed in connection with such schemes.

The new clause is designed to provide that when a scheme has been prepared for the installation of sewerage in a country drainage area particulars must be supplied to the councils in that area. There is nothing new or controversial about that part of the clause. It is a practice which has been followed and I understand from the Minister that he is quite happy about continuing it. Any scheme for sewerage works must contain plans, specifications and the estimated cost of construction and maintenance, the estimated annual value for rating purposes of the ratable land within the drainage area and the amount of the proposed sewerage rate. That has already been done in those towns which have considered a sewerage scheme for submission to the Public Works Committee.

It was during the course of the committee's investigations that a new set of assessments was forwarded to Port Augusta and we found that while the increase in the rate represented an increase in the annual charge to the consumer, an increase in the assessment in addition placed the scheme outside the financial resources of the town and made it economically impossible. The increased assessment on one premises would lift the payment from £25 to £250 a year and in certain business premises from £20 to £150, and for the ordinary house from £5 to £17. For any country town which could afford a rate of 2s. 6d., no one would object to a system being installed, but there are places which could not afford that rate. Even those towns which could afford a

scheme would have to wait for many years before sewerage could be made available. We know of the effectiveness of the septic tank system in operation at Murray Bridge and at Port Augusta, where the whole of the new Housing Trust area and Commonwealth Railways area have been changed over to septic tanks. I consider it reasonable that before the Government submits a proposition for complete sewerage it should ask its experts to submit a scheme for the installation of septic tanks. The new clause provides that two schemes shall be drawn up by departmental officers and submitted to the council with reports from the engineers, and then the townspeople themselves can determine which scheme would meet their needs best. No one argues for one moment that septic tanks are equal to deep drainage, but they are a very good substitute and a tremendous advance on the antiquated system now in operation at country centres. It is because of that, and because many country towns could change over to septic tanks in a reasonable period with a little financial assistance from the Government, that this amendment has been introduced. If it is shown that they cannot be installed because of soil conditions or water levels, the engineers could report to that effect, and the information would be made available to the council. All that is necessary to assist many towns to change over is an advance to ratepayers on pensions and low incomes, and the Government could recoup itself annually from the amount now paid for the existing service. In some places pipelines would have to be put in. Such a pipeline would have to be constructed in the main street of Port Augusta at a cost of about £1,200. If the Government did that it would tide us over for many years and we would be rid of the unsatisfactory pan system. The Government would have to find £295,000 immediately for capital expenditure on deep drainage, which would aggregate £196 a house, and the householders, in addition to financing the original cost, would have to pay annual rates. The Minister will suggest that we should follow Murray Bridge's lead, and if a town feels it cannot afford sewerage it should finance the installation of septic tanks from its own resources. I do not know how the mayor and town clerk of Murray Bridge feel after reading the report that the Minister supplied to every member, but it would certainly disturb me if such information were made available after ratepayers had been compelled to install septic tanks, because it demonstrates that there may be pitfalls in some centres.

The amendment provides that septic tank systems should be designed by competent officials as an alternative to deep drainage. The report went to great length to set out objections to septic tank installations, but there is not as much in it as would appear on the surface. The engineers recommended a procedure that very closely follows that suggested in this amendment except that, instead of a pipeline to take away the effluent, they recommend a small treatment works for the business end of a town, and septic tanks for the rest. However, I am afraid that the installation of a small treatment works is years ahead, and this matter is extremely urgent for many country towns. The difficulty experienced in carrying on the present services cannot be appreciated by any but those who have attempted to manage them. The maintenance of pans is a costly business, and it is something we should not ask any human being to do.

The scheme outlined in the amendment gives the Government power to offer country corporations an interim programme while they are waiting for deep drainage, which would give many country towns the opportunity of doing what Murray Bridge has done. In support of the contention that septic tanks are preferable, I shall quote from a booklet issued by the public health authorities of South Australia, designed for the express purpose of encouraging country centres to install septic tanks, which sets out the following:—

This system of sewage disposal has had long and successful use in South Australia. The first septic or bacteriolytic tanks were used in this State in 1901. The Central Board of Health receives plans of all installations made, and its officers study them and advise on any adjustments necessary. Official control of septic tanks in the State began in 1908. Since then approximately 30,000 tanks have been installed in the State. The difficulties have been few and slight, a good result largely due to the effective supervision over the installations.

At a public health conference held last Friday week, convened by the Public Health Department and attended by secretaries of local boards of health throughout the State, a paper from the town clerk of Murray Bridge, urging other towns to follow that town's experience was read. The town clerk said that he wanted to convey his experience in the hope that something of benefit would develop for those contemplating compulsory installation in their areas. He emphasized that throughout Murray Bridge has had the assistance and advice of the Central Board of Health. As a matter of

fact, he said that no council could proceed with compulsory installation unless the Central Board first of all gave its approval. He said:—

We are all familiar with the usual type privy, the pit system or the pan, both crude, and generally as far away from the dwelling as possible, treated anyhow and a den for flies. Is it too much to ask our people to improve their way of living? Experience has shown me it is the opposite. People were persuaded in many instances to bring their toilet into or attached to their homes. This was not favourably received at first, but gradually took on with general satisfaction. Country folk too long have educated themselves on a line of thinking that the lavatory had to be treated almost as an enemy instead of the clean toilet that can be offered even by the septic tank. Now then what have we? Above all a much cleaner town, the problems of the local board's inspector reduced by half, our citizens with toilet facilities comparable with those where sewerage schemes are operating, the standard of living much better, and the privy now a clean and tidy arrangement. So then I say to you, where facilities are favourable; go to it!

That experience is in marked contrast to the impression one would get from the report that was circulated amongst members.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—At your request.

Mr. RICHES—Yes, because I thought the report should be provided for the information of every member of the House; I want to get at the truth of this matter. I am only asking that full consideration be given to the amendment because I believe that if the Government will act on it, it will afford immediate relief to many country centres, and it need not interfere with a drainage scheme if that should be found possible or necessary in the future. In order to establish my case, I feel that I have to answer the objections that have been raised by the two engineers who made the report. I asked for the report for two reasons. Firstly, I knew that country towns, at the behest of the Health Department, were moving for the installation of septic tanks, and I thought they should have the benefit of the report. Secondly, I thought that it had to be answered, that the onus to answer it was on me, and I hope I had brought forward some of the answers. Nobody has suggested that septic tanks are better than deep drainage, which every town would have if it could afford it. However, there are places that cannot afford it, and will have to wait 10 or 15 years for it. The Bill is incomplete unless some provision is made under which these centres can raise their standard of living, and I think my amendment will do that.

I believe we have the answer to the objections raised by the engineers.

We know there are some towns where, as the engineers pointed out, the water level is so high that difficulty will be encountered in getting rid of the effluent, and that is also known to the Public Health Department, which has forwarded to all councils the report that the member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke) read. He did not read something new, but something that has the imprimatur of the Public Health Departments in both South Australia and Victoria. The report shows that the septic tank and septic closet systems can work successfully in any area which is not actually flooded. Many towns in Victoria are asking for amendments to the Local Government Act in order that this system can be used. No-one has suggested that the septic closet is as good as the septic tank, or that the septic tank is as good as deep drainage, but septic closets meet a need and are infinitely better than the pan or pit systems. It is recommended that septic closets be installed even where deep drainage may be installed in the near future. The report is sent out to local boards of health with drawings and all the details for installation.

It has been said by our engineers that in Sydney practically the whole of the foreshore still relies on the pan system, but that is not because they prefer it to septic tanks. When I visited Sydney about two years ago I was informed by the chairman of the Sydney Metropolitan Water Board that much of that city still has the pan system and would have it for many years because it was physically impossible to install deep drainage in those areas. In Melbourne there are still many places on the pan system, but I was told that was because of war-time difficulties and that in a few years that system will be outmoded. I did not get any evidence that the pan system was considered satisfactory. I understand that the order of preference of our Public Health Department is deep drainage first, septic tanks second, septic closets third, and all other systems a bad last. The report circulated by the Public Health Department urges councils to get away from the existing system and states:—

The department recently conducted a stand at the "Homes Exhibition" under the title of "Banish the Pan Closet" to indicate to the public that septic sewerage in one form or another is possible in every household and that there is no need to tolerate the pan closet any longer. Trial installations have been visited by officers and councillors of

several municipalities and the results speak for themselves. For instance, Oakleigh Council are proposing to proceed with the replacement of many of their 1,600 pan installations in that municipality, and are seeking financial support from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works or an amendment to the Local Government Act to permit a council in a metropolitan area to finance a municipal scheme.

That is what we seek in this new clause. Not even in other States are the councils able to install septic closets with their own resources. They have to go to the Government for financial assistance, but we are not asking for much support in this State. In regard to the operation of the closets the report states:—

Effluent disposal is possible in the worst soils. In Ringwood, for example, where there is only three to four inches of top soil covering hard packed clay with a high water table in winter, and where standard soil tests indicated no absorption, effluent has been successfully disposed of in only 15ft. of agricultural line for closets serving up to six persons each. As a general rule 25ft. of agricultural lines laid in accordance with normal septic tank effluent disposal standards as shown in the drawing will handle any likely overflow from a septic closet in the worst soils. If the water table is so high that back flowing to the tank is likely, the tank should be raised and a length of sealed drain run down to the level at which agricultural pipes are set. The effluent can be disposed of in any locality except in actually flooded land. In excessively wet conditions it is possible to stop deliberate water additions for 10 or 12 weeks if necessary.

The report concludes:—

It is hoped that your council will do everything possible to assist the "Banish the Pan Closet" campaign. It is not desirable, however, to encourage septic closet installation where a septic tank is possible. Many municipalities are already seeking approval for mass installations throughout certain towns and townships under the provisions of the Local Government Act or are financing individual efforts under the same Act. As the cost of the septic closet is so low it represents a substantial saving over the years compared with the constant outlay necessary to cover a pan service. It is worthy of consideration even in areas where sewerage may be forthcoming in the foreseeable future.

I hope what I have read has shown that there is much merit in these alternative schemes, which can meet the needs of country towns without imposing an undue burden on the people. Something must be done for Port Augusta before deep drainage is installed, which may be many years. Deep drainage there will be very costly and many people would not be able to afford to pay the rates.

The new clause provides that the Minister shall submit a scheme for sewerage to local government bodies and also a report of his officers on the possibility of installing septic tanks. The House will realize the desirability of that procedure rather than that towns should consider the installation of septic tanks without advice from competent officers. I think that when deep drainage was first installed in the metropolitan area the Government assisted householders for the necessary installations, and we are now asking that that be done for country people. The Government would not be called upon for much assistance; in fact, only from those who could not afford to meet the original cost. If it is necessary to install a pipeline to move effluent from a business section of a town the council could be subsidized. It would cost about £1,000,000 for deep drainage for Port Pirie, so when will that town's turn come? We must do something for country towns that may have to wait many years for sewerage.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I ask the Committee not to agree to the new clause. Firstly, this scheme was never intended as an alternative to septic tanks, and the new clause will not affect the right of councils to install septic tanks. They still have the power to do so. The member for Stuart (Mr. Riches) said that only a few people would call on the Government for assistance under the scheme he outlined, but if that is so there would be no hardship on councils.

Mr. Davis—How are the councils going to get the money?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Murray Bridge has done it without calling on the Government for finance, and Mr. Riches destroyed his own case when he said that only a few people would draw upon the Government. If that is so why should the Government be a party to a proposal it does not think to be the answer to the question? The new clause states:—

Before commencing to construct sewerage works in a country drainage area, the Minister shall draw up a scheme for such sewerage works, and an alternative scheme relating to the installation of bacteriolytic tanks at premises within the drainage area.

Of course, proposals for drainage have been submitted. The only thing remaining to be done is to submit the new charge based on a rate of 2s. 6d. having regard to the new assessment and also the increased number of premises. What is the alternative? Members have before them a report by Mr. Murrell

(an Australia-wide authority) and Mr. Hodgson (a world-wide authority whose text book is recognized by several universities). The conclusion drawn in that report is that septic tanks are not a satisfactory alternative to a deep drainage system.

Mr. Corcoran—Members have other reports from the Department of Public Health, and they are confused.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There is no better authority than those I have quoted. The report was prepared by Messrs. Murrell and Hodgson before Mr. Riches moved his amendment, therefore it deals with general issues rather than any specific question.

Mr. Stephens—When do you expect sewerage facilities to be installed at country towns such as Port Augusta and Port Pirie?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Why not ask Mr. Riches and Mr. Davis, the members for those districts? They are asking for something that has been installed in other parts of the State without Government assistance. The people at Murray Bridge, for instance, have installed their own system. Government expenditure depends on the amount of money Parliament is able to allocate for a scheme, and that depends on the priority of the work involved. Every advance made for a septic tank system in a country town takes away the necessity for sewerage facilities, and tends to postpone their installation. The Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Dridan) submitted a report on Mr. Riches' amendment and it was discussed by the committee this morning. That report states:—

The drawing up of a scheme for bacteriolytic tanks would involve a great amount of inspection and soil testing and the department has no staff to undertake work of this nature. In any case, an aggregation of individual bacteriolytic tanks does not comprise a unified drainage scheme as each installation is entirely separate and becomes part and parcel of the individual property. The proposal would involve making advances to owners or occupiers of premises for bacteriolytic tanks and (as would certainly be the case in many areas) if trouble developed in disposing of the effluents the Minister would be called upon to grant subsidies to local governing bodies towards the cost of works to drain the effluents away.

After all this had been done at great expense, the town concerned would not have satisfactory drainage and eventually pressure would be exerted on the Government to do what should have been done in the first place, viz., install a sewerage system. With a sewerage scheme all issues are clear cut. Designs and estimates are prepared and the proposal submitted to prospective ratepayers

through the local governing body. Each property owner knows beforehand what rates he will be called upon to pay and what is more important, he knows that in return for these rates he will obtain a service which is entirely satisfactory in every way. In addition to sewage, the scheme will handle all his bath-room and kitchen wastes and take all waste waters clear of his property without any health hazard, without building up a moisture content in the soil which may endanger his house and without forming a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The Government knows approximately what the capital and annual costs of the scheme will be and merely has to decide whether in the interests of the community as a whole the annual loss, if any, should be made good in the form of a State subsidy. Moreover, construction of a sewerage scheme provides a permanent asset which can be enlarged at will to cope with development of the town concerned.

On the other hand, there is always an element of doubt with a bacteriolytic tank if installed on a township allotment of limited size. For a while the installation may perform well, but then drainage troubles develop unless the soil provides exceptionally good drainage. The property owner is then called upon to use all kinds of devices in attempts which are probably abortive to dispose of the tank effluent. I think it is certain that any householder with experience of both types of installation (sewerage or bacteriolytic tank) would willingly pay several hundreds of pounds more for a house served by a sewerage scheme if he were purchasing a new property. Bacteriolytic tanks are entirely a matter for individual property owners and local governing bodies and I feel that no Government department should become involved technically or financially in any scheme involving such installations. I cannot conceive of any proposal likely to cause more friction and administrative difficulties than that put forward. As I see it the whole purpose of Government capital expenditure is to create a valuable asset which will serve the community well for all time by raising living standards and providing for rural, industrial and residential development. The making of advances to individuals for septic tanks and later granting subsidies for a net-work of drains to convey the effluents away would not achieve this purpose.

Mr. Corcoran—On what does he base his information?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—On his own knowledge.

Mr. Corcoran—What is his background?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—He has had world-wide experience.

Mr. Quirke—In other words, he is a good public servant.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—He is a mighty good one.

Mr. Quirke—And as such he lets the Government out completely. No country town will be sewered in your lifetime or mine.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There is nothing I would prefer to see more than country sewerage. In the early days of the broadening of the railway gauge I was asked to make improvements to the South-East line. I said that everything we did towards that end would defer the broadening of the gauge and I lived to see that come true.

Mr. Quirke—We do not get money for country sewerage.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—We get a subsidy for disabilities, but we will not get it in respect of individuals putting in septic tanks. In the early days of my experience, when people installed sewerage in Adelaide we had deferred payments and anyone who wanted to install sewerage leaned upon the Government for deferred payments.

Mr. Tapping—In many cases they could not avoid it.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Instead of creating a country sewerage system we will be making advances to people to put in septic tanks only to discover that ultimately a sewerage system will have to be provided. Before they pay for their septic tanks they will be charged rating for sewerage. The member for Port Adelaide led a deputation to me the other day in respect of septic tanks in Woodville North. They said that toilet paper, instead of escaping when the chain was pulled, floated on the surface and had to be removed and buried in the backyards.

Mr. Stephens—You told the deputation it would be six years before they could get sewerage.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—At North Glenelg a septic tank system operated quite well, but the area developed to such an extent that deep drainage was justified. Because the land was so saturated as a result of seepage almost every channel to provide for deep drainage had to be timbered up and the cost was double what was originally estimated.

Mr. Quirke—Will that happen at Murray Bridge?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think so, ultimately. The local people have paid for that system. It was entirely a matter for the council and owners and it may pay them in the meantime. We do not prevent anyone from proceeding with septic tank installations. If this Bill is passed I will send each council, in respect of which we have had a favourable report, a statement of what it will cost with the rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound and they can decide whether they are prepared to go ahead

or to adopt an alternative system. There is nothing to stop them from proceeding with septic tank installations.

Mr. Corcoran—What is your opinion regarding the capacity of people to pay for sewerage schemes in country areas under existing conditions? When do you think sewerage schemes could be installed in country towns—in particular Naracoorte?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—About three questions are involved: firstly, the capacity of a person to pay. At Port Augusta I understand it will be compulsory for people erecting new homes to pay for the cost of septic tank installations.

Mr. Corcoran—My question related to country sewerage.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There is nothing to stop people from installing septic tanks. Councils can reject a sewerage system if they want to.

Mr. Corcoran—Do you consider it within the capacity of people to pay for country sewerage under existing conditions?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—They can follow their own desires because I will send them the assessment.

Mr. Corcoran—Have you an opinion on it?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—They will make their own assessment of the situation because it will not be forced on them.

Mr. Corcoran—I asked for your opinion.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The committee said that 2s. 6d. was not unreasonable. I have given members the advantage of all the information I have. If local councils want septic tanks they can have them. They can have a pan system if they so desire. Despite what has been said to the contrary, in Sydney and Melbourne, instead of enforcing a universal system of septic tanks, they have used the pan system with a bi-weekly collection. It is not within the power, nor is it the function, of the Government to submit an alternative scheme. It is not the function of the engineering staff to do so. If we make advances for septic tank installations we defer the day of a universal system of sewerage. It is not the right of a central government to make advances to people to enable them to establish septic tank systems.

Mr. Quirke—The Government did that in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—We have not done so. We made individual advances for sewerage connections but they became so great

we could not proceed with some sewerage projects because of the loading it placed on our Loan funds. If we grant it to one we must grant it to all, and then the day of sewerage in country towns would be years away. I oppose the new clause.

Mr. DAVIS—I support the new clause. I protest against the rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound for the country and challenge the Minister to justify that rate.

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member is out of order in discussing that matter. He must relate his remarks to the new clause.

Mr. DAVIS—Will the Government indicate when it is expected to commence installing sewerage systems in country areas? Two years ago the Minister said at Port Pirie that a sewerage system for that town had a high priority but he must have been only tickling the ears of the residents. The priority seems to have gone altogether and the position at Port Pirie is getting worse. We all know that for a long time there is no chance of sewerage systems being installed in country towns. I told the Minister that for a house assessed at a rental value of £140 the charge at Port Pirie would be £17 10s. and only £7 in the metropolitan area. He did not answer my interjection on this matter and referred to the rates paid for a valuable property in the city. He said that the charge is based on assessments, and that country councils can say whether they want sewerage or septic tanks. He should know that they cannot afford sewerage systems and the longer the delay in installing them the greater will be the cost. Country people should not be expected to pay 2s. 6d. in the pound, but, of course, the policy of the Government is to look after city people and forget country people.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—In other States country towns started their own sewerage schemes. Why didn't Port Pirie do it?

Mr. DAVIS—The Minister knows that would not be possible. Port Pirie could not find £1,000,000 for such a system. The Minister referred to the report by two engineers. It is a black report in regard to septic tanks.

Mr. Quirke—It is a handy report.

Mr. DAVIS—Yes, so that the Government can shirk its responsibilities in country areas. The Minister quoted the report to try to influence the Committee to defeat the new clause, but he did not quote the report of the Health Department or the health officers in Victoria, who gave a glowing report on septic tanks. Are we to believe the engineers

or the health officers? A recent conference of health officers in Adelaide favoured the proposition which is now before the Committee. I am pleased that the member for Murray (Mr. White) supported their opinion and said that the septic tank system at Murray Bridge was quite satisfactory. All that country people want is the same right as those living in the metropolitan area. If the Government is unable to provide a deep drainage scheme, then some other system will have to be installed and we suggest that the septic tank is the next best thing. It is unfair that country people should be penalized and have to pay more than those in the metropolitan area for a similar service. I hope the Committee will realize the justice of the new clause. If it is accepted, then we can place the matter before our people and let them decide what system they will accept. The scheme we have suggested will not cost the Government a penny because the people will pay it all back. The Minister suggests that country councils should install their own system, but that would be impossible. It is an injustice to expect them to go to that expense, seeing that the metropolitan scheme is financed by the Government.

MR. QUIRKE—I support the new clause. I do not think I have ever listened to such a tissue of excuses as that submitted by the Minister tonight. Certain reports have been produced as a reason for the Government not spending money on bacteriolytic tanks or any alternative form of sewerage disposal in country towns. Everyone knows that the septic tank system is not a satisfactory alternative to deep drainage, and that following the Minister's speech tonight there is no possibility of any country town obtaining a sewerage scheme. However, the new town north of Adelaide, yet unnamed, is to be provided with a sewerage system. Every house will be connected. The mere fact that it is in the metropolitan area is sufficient reason for its being supplied with a service before much older towns like Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, and Port Augusta.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—They will pay 1s. 9d. as against 1s.

MR. QUIRKE—But you are asking the country people to pay 2s. 6d. for nothing. It is the same old story—provided a town is within the metropolitan area it can get anything, yet country towns 100 years old can get nothing. We are not so thick in the skull as to believe that there is any possibility of getting the deep drainage system in the country. Therefore, we ask for an alternative

scheme. By the time we get deep drainage in country towns the concrete in the septic systems will have disintegrated. It is useless putting up that sort of argument. Long before we get sewerage, we will have to install another septic tank. We ask that country towns be given a measure of assistance to help themselves. If it is not possible to provide sewerage, there will in all probability be some alternative. Another dozen satellite towns could be built and every home would be sewered before any persons resided in them, but at Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Clare and Port Augusta nothing has been done in this direction.

The Minister's reply to the honourable member for Stuart simply damns forever the chance of the people of Port Augusta to get sewerage. He bases his attitude on the report issued by the two engineers. We know very well that what is asked for is not an effective substitute, but it is at least a substitute. Country towns can have the obsolete, antediluvian pan system and nothing else, because they will not install septic tanks on the face of this report if it is made public. On what the Minister said, by tomorrow morning Murray Bridge people will regret having installed them. There is a problem at Clare, but there are 200 septic tank systems working effectively and the capacity to put in another 200, but in the main street it is impossible to install them because the buildings occupy the whole of the blocks. It is no use Government members making excuses and I am particularly surprised that a country member should have done so. In the city people can get everything, but in the country all they get is a damning report on what they are attempting to do. On what the Minister has said, no country towns dare put in septic tank systems, and what is the alternative? There is the Victorian alternative that has not received any consideration at all. This amendment would enable any proposal to be investigated and reported upon. According to the report, it is impossible to report on individual systems for country towns, but what about the individual report that has to be made by the Central Board of Health? Will the next issue of *Good Health* issued by that board damn everything it has said before? For years, the board has shown in this booklet the designs of bacteriolytic tanks, how they work, how they dispose of the effluent and everything else—not a word of condemnation.

The report made by the two engineers damns bacteriolytic tanks even where there is a soil that will take them, and where they have been operating for years. Despite what the Central

Board of Health has been pouring into the country for years, these men have condemned the country to the pan collection system, and they have done so in the interests of the Government. I do not believe their report because, if it is correct, we should have had an epidemic that would have swept thousands of people into oblivion. The septic system of sewage disposal is quite effective, and no less effective today than it was 30 years ago. The reason why it is installed today is to offset the pressure that has been brought to bear by representatives of country towns in this House to have something other than an obsolete system.

I support the amendment. All its mover asks is that country towns shall have an alternative report to tell the people the best they can have when they cannot have a drainage system.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Having been a member of this committee, I feel that I should say a few words about the amendment. I am against it, and I do not think any part of it should be accepted. I would rather not see the Government make any advances for septic tank installations. Septic tanks in the country have been installed at the owners' expense. I do not know whether the Opposition proposes that the Government should advance subsidies for everyone who installs them.

Mr. Riches—We did not say it should advance subsidies.

Mr. Davis—We are not asking the Government to pay anything.

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is a funny way of looking at it. Public money will have to be used.

Mr. Quirke—And repaid.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes, but the money advanced will not be available for other purposes, and there are plenty of uses for public money at the moment. We need all the money we have available for permanent systems, so we should not install any system that will have to be replaced later. Not a shred of evidence was given to the inquiry committee to justify the new clause. Septic tanks are certainly useful in many instances, but in many towns soil conditions are not suitable. They will handle only a small percentage of household waste. The engineers' reports stated that these tanks will handle not more than 20 per cent of the liquid wastes of many towns in dry weather and only about 7 per cent at Gumeracha. Even at Murray Bridge, which is suitable for septic tanks, only 21 per cent of the waste material is handled. Their report stated that

the following towns would not be suitable for septic tanks:—Crystal Brook, Bordertown, Naracoorte, Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Pirie, Woodside, Lobethal, Renmark, Barmera, Victor Harbour, Nuriootpa, Port Lincoln, and Clare.

Mr. Davis—That is not true about Port Pirie.

Mr. BROOKMAN—The report on that town is that "at the Port Pirie hospital the ground water level is so near the surface that disposal into the ground is impossible and the liquor is to be piped elsewhere for disposal." The report also states that Gawler, Gumeracha and Mannum are not suitable for septic tanks. In Western Australia many towns with septic tanks such as Bunbury, Collie and Katanning, are trying to replace them with deep drainage because they are not satisfactory. Unfortunately, the ground water level often rises after septic tanks are installed and the soil rapidly becomes water-logged. Taperoo now has trouble with septic tanks. The new clause provides that alternative schemes must be prepared, but they would involve much investigation and, in my opinion, unnecessary work. The Engineer-in-Chief's report states:—

I cannot conceive of any proposal likely to cause more friction and administrative difficulties than that put forward. As I see it, the whole purpose of Government capital expenditure is to create a valuable asset which will serve the community well for all time by raising living standards and providing for rural, industrial and residential development. The making of advances to individuals for septic tanks and later granting subsidies for a network of drains to convey the effluents away would not achieve this purpose.

I strongly urge the Committee to reject the new clause. Many towns could install septic tanks without advances or subsidies from the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER—I support the new clause. Mr. Riches and Mr. Davis put up a good case for an alternative to deep drainage. They submitted a scheme that will be useful in many country towns. Like Mr. Quirke, I wonder whether we are ever going to have deep drainage in the country. Unless the main street of Mount Gambier, where there are big business houses, hotels and guest homes, is sewered soon there will be many difficulties.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Therefore the alternative suggested is no answer.

Mr. FLETCHER—Of course not, and I hope that it is never needed in Mount Gambier, but the report on the septic tank and septic closet systems shows that they should not be used

where the water supply is drawn from wells or bores. I agree that that would be the position in Mount Gambier with the septic tank system. Sewerage facilities have been provided for the new Reidy Park school and the Mount Gambier hospital because septic tank systems could not satisfactorily serve those buildings.

Mr. DAVIS—The honourable member for Alexandra (Mr. Brookman) said that he opposed the amendment only because the mover was asking the Government to do something for country people and that money would be wasted on septic tank systems, but country people are as much entitled as city people to share in the revenue collected by the Government. Government members are prepared to protect only the interests of the metropolitan area and forget the country people who are the backbone of the State. It would not be wasting money to provide much needed facilities for country people who are doing so much for the State.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I have not spoken before in this debate because I have no faith in this Bill or in what the Government intends to do in the country. Immediately after World War II the Commonwealth Government wrote to the State Government, which in turn circularized local councils, asking what works they desired to carry out in order to absorb the thousands of men being discharged from the services. The councils replied with all sorts of schemes, one of which was that which is now included in the Bill. Many of the schemes were not practicable. Today we are suffering from the over-enthusiasm of district councils, which was engendered by the request of the Commonwealth and State Governments. I cannot see how small townships can have deep drainage systems.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable member must deal with new clause 2a. He cannot speak to the Bill.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Now an alternative scheme is suggested. Members have in their possession copies of a report dealing with the questionable use of individual septic tanks in lieu of a sewerage system for country towns. Mr. Chairman, may I refer to this report?

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member may continue.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The concluding paragraph states:—

No matter how the proposal is considered, septic tank installation on a broad scale cannot be recommended as an alternative to a sewerage scheme.

The concluding paragraph is fallacious because a septic tank system has never been suggested as an alternative to deep drainage. It is an alternative to the dry pan system. Is the position that we can finance tramway and railway services and other facilities in the metropolitan area, but at the same time cannot provide services for the country? If deep drainage cannot be provided, surely septic tanks are better than pans. The Government formed a committee to consider this matter and has handed its responsibility over to that committee. As a result the argument is not in respect of what the Government has said, but what the committee has said. The committee has agreed that 2s. 6d. should be the basis on which deep drainage can be provided.

Mr. Riches—The committee suggested that as the upper limit.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—But it did not suggest what should be the effective rate. Country people cannot afford the 2s. 6d. In country towns septic tank systems, subsidized by the Government, would be an alternative to deep drainage. Under the present so-called Liberal and Country Government nothing is impossible in the metropolitan area, but in respect of country districts difficulties arise, including the question of finance. No country Government member has suggested that we cannot afford to subsidize, by millions of pounds, the Tramways Trust, although the country gets no return from that organization. Now that we are considering a matter concerned with health and public hygiene in country areas we are confronted with the problem of who is to pay for it. I remember when Renmark was eager to install a deep drainage system. An approach was made to the Government, but the Premier, who is the leading socialist in the Commonwealth, refused to allow Renmark to exercise initiative and borrow money to undertake its own deep drainage. He said that Renmark must be considered with all other towns in South Australia.

Mr. John Clark—Hasn't Renmark instituted a septic tank system?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Yes. It desired to have a deep drainage system and if money had been made available then it would have cost only a fraction of what it would cost today. If country towns cannot have deep drainage the Government should suggest an alternative system. Under the present financial system there is no hope of any country town being provided with an effective deep drainage system. Hygiene, public health and

convenience of house owners do not matter because the Government cannot find the money. We are back where we were in 1946 when councils, at the instigation of the State Government, submitted schemes whereby they could absorb labour. That fizzled out and at present we are simply beating the air. No council outside the metropolitan area would be prepared to accept the responsibility imposed under this Bill.

Mr. CORCORAN—I support the new clause and congratulate Mr. Riches on the convincing way in which he explained his reason for moving it. It is an attempt to improve the primitive methods now in existence. The Minister gets hostile when he is questioned by members, but we are only seeking information. We want to help him as much as possible. We are not trying to convince any one that the septic tank system is on the same level as deep drainage. We are seeking financial assistance in order that systems may be installed in country towns. The new clause contains an alternative to the pan system. We have a right to know why there is such a difference between the rates for the metropolitan area and the country. We want the information so that we can pass it on to our constituents. Opposition members are confused about this matter of installing sewerage systems. The Department of Public Health has issued a pamphlet saying that the septic system is satisfactory, and we have a report to the contrary from two experts on the matter. We want to know who is leading us up the garden path. We have had some information about the Victorian system and Mr. Riches referred to the paper read at the conference of health authorities at Murray Bridge. I do not think the Department of Public Health would deceive us. We do not want to be misled in any way. I hope the sewerage of country towns will come sooner than we expect. The new clause should be accepted.

Mr. WHITE—I do not think the new clause is necessary because most of the powers sought are already in existence. A Government would not install a deep drainage system in a country town without submitting the costs and specifications to the local council, and then the ratepayers would be able to say whether or not they wanted the system. There is nothing to prevent a council from having the cost of a septic tank system investigated before it accepts a deep drainage system. A number of towns have already financed the installation of septic tanks and have not found it a great hardship. I was chairman of the committee in charge of the

installation of these tanks at Murray Bridge and we had no difficulty. If it were possible for the Government to subsidize the installation of septic tanks there would possibly be a big demand everywhere and it would not be long before huge sums were tied up. I agree with Mr. Shannon that we would be holding up the work on big drainage schemes. The money tied up in septic tanks could be utilized for the better system of deep drainage. I fail to see that the new clause has anything to commend it, as everything asked for in it can be done without it.

Mr. STEPHENS—I do not care very much for the septic tank system, preferring the deep drainage system. Mr. White says that if money were spent on septic tanks the people would have to wait years for deep drainage. I want to see something done in my time for the people in the country and that can be achieved by agreeing to the new clause.

Mr. Pearson—We are already doing it without the new clause.

Mr. STEPHENS—There are many places in Port Adelaide and Semaphore which are not yet connected with deep drainage.

Mr. RICHES—Mr. Pearson says the new clause is not necessary as its objective is being achieved without it. That is not so. The Government is making money available to Port Lincoln on this year's Estimates to assist the corporation, which apparently is unable to finance a sewerage scheme out of its own funds.

Mr. Pearson—It is for the hospital and school and not householders.

Mr. RICHES—The report of the town clerk of Murray Bridge to the Public Health Conference indicated that the cost to the corporation of installing septic tanks was as low as £35 to £50 whereas today it is £80. Fifteen or so residents had to be assisted from corporation funds. Having in mind Port Pirie, Port Augusta and other towns, one must realize that it would be beyond the resources of the local councils to do the work, and all we are asking is for the Government to come to their assistance. Mr. Brookman said he is opposed to the new clause because if money were advanced for this purpose it would not be available for other works. Although the Government agrees to grandiose schemes costing £2,000,000, it will not agree to the small amount involved to make advances to householders. He said there was no evidence before the Committee to justify the new clause. It was not empowered to make any investigation into septic tank installations.

The only evidence before it one way or the other was the report circulated to members. The committee was not empowered to conduct the investigation suggested by the Leader of the Opposition last year, but was confined under the terms of reference to whether 1s. 9d. in the pound was a reasonable basis or whether the Minister should have discretion. It did not bring down any report for or against the septic tank proposals I have outlined. I ask the Committee to remember that the Public Health Department has pleaded with councils throughout the State to get away from the pan system and install septic tanks.

The Committee divided on the new clause.

Ayes (13).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Dunstan, Fletcher, Hutchens, Jennings, Macgillivray, O'Halloran, Quirke,

Riches (teller), Stephens, and Frank Walsh.

Noes (15).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jenkins, McIntosh (teller), Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford, Travers, and White.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Fred Walsh, Lawn, Tapping, and McAlees. Noes—Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Hincks, Michael, and Shannon.

Majority of 2 for the Noes.

New clause thus negatived.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.49 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, November 10, at 2 p.m.