

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, May 17, 1956.

The SPEAKER (Hon. B. H. Teusner) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

### APPROPRIATION ACT (No. 1).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Act.

### PETITION: NORTHERN SUBURBS PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Mr. COUMBE presented a petition from 1,151 residents of Nailsworth, Collinswood, Broadview and Medindie, asking that the Municipal Tramways Trust be requested to provide some form of transport along the former bus route *via* Howard Street, Der-Langer Avenue and Northcote Terrace.

Read and received.

### QUESTIONS.

#### POTATO PRICES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In view of the unsatisfactory position in which the Prices Commissioner was placed recently in having to threaten retailers regarding the price charged for potatoes, can the Premier say whether it is the Government's intention to restore potatoes to the control list so that whenever necessary the Prices Commissioner may promptly fix the retail price?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The position referred to arose from the fact that the supply of potatoes from the Adelaide Hills was discontinued for a number of days because of the weather. I believe undue publicity was given to what was really only a temporary hold-up of supplies. Consequently many people purchased potatoes in excess of their immediate requirements and some traders took advantage of the position. The Prices Commissioner issued a warning that if an undue margin were charged he would recommend recontrol. Subsequently the Commissioner advised that the warning had had effect and further checks revealed that the large majority of retailers were selling within the prescribed limits so far as South Australian potatoes are concerned. It is not the Government's intention to recontrol potatoes, but it would give earnest consideration to any such recommendation from the Prices Commissioner.

#### POOCHERA SCHOOL HOUSE.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—I understand that some time ago approval was given for the erection of a school house at Poochera on Eyre Peninsula.

Can the Minister of Education say whether that building will be erected within the next financial year?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am receiving a large number of inquiries from members as to what will be on the next loan programme, but at the moment I cannot say what will be on it.

### METROPOLITAN FIRE STATIONS.

Mr. TAPPING—I have received the following letter from the Town Clerk of Port Adelaide:—

I am directed by the City Council to ask that you direct a question to the Premier asking whether any progress had been made by the Premier following information tabled by the Fire Brigades Board of re-siting of Metropolitan fire stations and the request of the Municipal Association for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the basis for contributions from metropolitan councils.

Has the Premier any information on this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Following on the recommendation received from the Municipal Association the matter was considered by Cabinet and the Chief Secretary was authorized to write to the metropolitan councils asking them to express their views. I understand that not all reports are yet to hand, but those received have been analysed. The Government will further consider the matter when all the replies are to hand.

### BUDD RAIL CARS FOR PORT PIRIE.

Mr. DAVIS—Has the Minister of Works obtained a reply following on the question I asked on May 9 about Budd rail cars for Port Pirie?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have received the following report from the Railways Commissioner:—

The railways have in traffic at present six '250' class country railcars and three trailers, which are fully employed in running services to Moonta, Burra, Morgan, and Mount Gambier. It is planned that a further three railcars and one trailer will be constructed during 1956-57. As soon as we have an additional railcar and trailer ready for traffic, it is hoped to put this equipment in the Port Pirie passenger service.

### OIL INVESTIGATIONS.

Mr. BYWATERS—The following is an extract from the *News* under the heading of "Oil Traces at Taillem Bend":—

Traces of oil are reported to have been found in a drill about three miles from Taillem Bend. The traces are reported on a site where oil was claimed to have been found 30 years ago.

Chairman of directors of Murray Basin Oil Syndicate, Mr. W. P. Burns, said today the plant that had been used at Taillem Bend had been transferred to the syndicate's new site near Pinnaroo. He said: "The Taillem Bend test was most interesting. At 100ft. gas was evident. The driller reported traces of oil at 221ft. and 260ft. This has yet to be proved and we hope to do this when we can resume at Taillem Bend." Mr. Burns said the Taillem Bend operations had been suspended because of a shortage of drillers.

Can the Premier say whether the Government is assisting the industry in any way?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Perhaps 10 years ago the Government passed legislation giving companies the right to take up exploration leases. Incidentally, it has been followed by every other State. It is a convenient way to give a company protection whilst investigating a large area. At stated periods the company has to relinquish certain portions, ultimately getting down to a production area. The Government has provided means whereby an investigational licence can be taken up for a fairly large area to enable the company to search for oil and progressively develop its plans. Also, from time to time we give geological advice and assistance. As these are private companies operating for profit we do not make money grants. It is true that the number of bores put down and proved profitable is small, but, on the other hand, if a company strikes oil it becomes fabulously wealthy. There is no great difficulty in getting companies to apply for the areas available.

#### HOUSING TRUST RENTS.

Mr. RICHES—Can the Premier give any information concerning the suggested increases in rents charged by the Housing Trust? I have had some inquiries, following on an article which I understand appeared in the *News* yesterday, from people who are very much concerned about the proposal. They wonder whether it is likely to affect existing rents or whether it will apply only to rents of houses constructed in the future.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Anything I can say on the new housing agreement is purely conjecture. On the Supplementary Estimates I said that unfortunately no new agreement between the Commonwealth and States had been finalized. I said the suggested rate of interest under the agreement proposed by the Commonwealth was three-quarters per cent below the bond rate, and I pointed out that for other reasons Commonwealth proposals had been rejected by some States and that consequently

nothing had been finalized. If present building costs are maintained and there is a new agreement embodying the interest rate mentioned it will mean that on the present standard house the increase will probably be 7s. to 8s. a week.

Mr. RICHES—Twelve shillings was mentioned.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—We can mention any figure we like, because it is purely conjecture at present. Much depends on the size of the house. If it were a large house the increase would be more than 12s., but the new interest rate will probably involve a rental increase of 7s. to 8s. a week. Under its Act the trust has power to equalize rents, but it is not the policy of the Government or the trust to increase charges if they can be maintained at a reasonable level. The man who has lived in a trust house since 1948 has paid much less rent per week than the man who had to wait until 1954, so there is some justification for considering equalization of rents; but the power has been used sparingly in the past and undoubtedly that will be the policy of the trust in the future.

#### ROAD GRANTS TO COUNCILS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Within the area of the Barossa District Council there are 11,443 acres of Government forests, besides reservoir area, from which 15,000 tons of timber and between 2,000 and 3,000 tons of reject wood are taken annually and transported over council roads. If these forest lands were rated on the same basis as adjoining lands £913 would be received at the present council rate. It is suggested that there is nothing to indicate, from a comparison of grants made available to other councils with a similar road system to maintain but with no Government lands, that there is anything specifically granted to compensate for lack of revenue lost through the non-ratable forest area. Can the Minister of Works representing the Minister of Local Government, say whether the council is eligible for a special grant to compensate it for this loss of rates, and if so, will he clearly state the amount when listing the grants to the council?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Without trying to intimate specifically what grant can be expected I may say that those factors are always considered in the final allocation and that there is nothing peculiar about a district council having Government properties such as hospitals and schools within its area. I will take the matter up with my colleague.

### HOLBROOK ROAD BRIDGE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Last session the member for Hindmarsh asked a question about the Holbrook Road bridge over the Torrens near the Flinders Park school, and was advised that the department recognized the necessity for widening the bridge but that more urgent bridge works precluded work on this bridge. My constituents have told me that children living in the locality must cross this bridge and, as one who frequently uses it, I know it is extremely dangerous and becoming more dangerous, as Holbrook Road is the only through road from Marion Road to the Port Road and the industrial areas of Woodville and Kilkenny. The bridge, which was constructed some years ago, is not sufficiently safe for the pedestrian and vehicular traffic it is called on to carry, and although I do not suggest widening, because I appreciate the cost and other factors, I consider a foot bridge should be provided on the western side. This foot bridge could be simply and cheaply constructed with angle iron and woodwork to protect children and other pedestrians from the risk of falling into the river. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads take up this matter with his colleague?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will do that and bring down a reply, probably the week after next.

### MURRAY RIVER LEVELS.

Mr. KING—Can the Minister of Works say how much water is coming down the River Murray and its tributaries and what effect this will have on South Australian river levels?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have not those details but I receive them from time to time. The figures are accurately calculated and almost uncanny in their incidence. I will write to the honourable member or, if he will ask his question again next week I shall have a specific reply next Tuesday.

### SPEED LIMIT SIGNS.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Will the Minister of Works ask his colleague, the Minister of Roads, to consider the advisability of making the 35-mile an hour speed limit signs more conspicuous on arterial roads leading into Adelaide as some motorists are not aware of their existence?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Generally speaking, the National Safety Council and the Roads Standards Association control this matter and it has not been

directly within the province of the Highways Department, but I will take it up with my colleague and bring down a reply, probably on Tuesday.

### SALK POLIO VACCINE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On Tuesday I asked the Premier a question about the use of Salk vaccine in the prevention of poliomyelitis, but apparently he did not hear the second part of the question; therefore I now ask him whether Government medical officers are studying the causes and a possible cure of poliomyelitis?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—An advisory committee, which has been working on these problems for many years, has had and will continue to have the Government's support. The vaccine will probably make a big impact on the occurrence of the disease, but any useful information available on the outbreak of poliomyelitis will be valuable and the Government will continue to collect as much information on its treatment and prevention as it can and continue to support any investigation into its eradication.

### SOUTH-EASTERN FREEZING WORKS.

Mr. CORCORAN—Can the Premier say whether his Government has considered the establishment of a freezing works in the South-East, and if so, where it is likely to be located?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government considered this matter some time ago and evolved a plan which, I believe, would have been to the advantage of the South-East and the State, and which envisaged the establishment of shipping facilities and superphosphate and freezing works. Negotiations on the freezing works had reached a fairly advanced stage of agreement with a large and powerful company, but when the Public Works Committee reported adversely on a deep sea port for the South-East the matter became complicated and there has since been delay. I believe, however, it will again become active as soon as the Privy Council has determined the Government's rights on the establishment of freezing works. The decision in the case at present being heard by the Privy Council will have a big bearing on the establishment of such works in the South-East. The matter has not been lost sight of and we believe it is urgently necessary for the development of the South-East. The Government would support any enterprise that desired to establish a works in the South-East, by providing that it could supply a quota of the metropolitan area requirements.

## TENANCY OF RAILWAY HOUSES.

Mr. JENNINGS—Recently I had a discussion with a group of railway workers at the Islington Workshops who were concerned about the tenancy of railway houses, particularly those that accommodate employees recruited overseas. I understand they were given unlimited tenancy so long as they remained in the railway service, but now they are getting only limited tenancies, in most cases three years. Some are faced with eviction at the end of this period without any hope of getting alternative accommodation, and they feel that so long as they remain in the railway service they should have the tenancy of the houses. No doubt the Railways Commissioner believes that he may recruit more labour overseas by offering vacant possession of railway houses, but it has been pointed out by some employees that this policy may not result in any net gain because, if those already here are evicted, they will probably leave the railway service. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways take up this matter with his colleague with a view to removing the fear of eviction?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will do so, but I say definitely that it is not the policy of the Government, or I am sure of the Commissioner, to evict people in order to recruit labour from overseas. I will get the other information the honourable member requires.

## CHILD MIGRANT'S MEDICAL TREATMENT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The *News* yesterday published an article under the heading "Ruta's Mother Speaks," and it seems from this article and another in today's *Advertiser* that the specialist, who I believe is well-known in the neuro-surgical field in this State, had made an incorrect diagnosis and that, having made another examination, he altered his opinion, which was supported by a professor at Bonn, Germany. Will the Premier ascertain, either through the Director-General of Medical Services in this State, or from the specialist concerned, the true facts relating to his diagnosis in order that no injustice may be done him?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member asked a question about this matter a few days ago and I said that I would see if a report could be obtained as there are limitations on the Government's coming into it. The Government does not normally come between a doctor and a patient, but if any injustice has

been done to any authority in this State I desire it rectified. I will get a report and see where it takes us. I hope to be able to answer the question next week.

## SUPPLY BILL (No. 1).

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishment, and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1957, a sum of £7,000,000 be granted; provided that no payment for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ending June 30, 1956, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service, or any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee of Ways and Means, and adopted by the House.

Bill introduced by the Hon. T. Playford and read a first time.

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

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

This follows the normal form of Supply Bills. Authority from Parliament is sought to spend £7,000,000 to meet the expenses of the public services of the State during the financial year ending June 30, 1957. This will be sufficient to carry on State services for approximately two months. Clause 2 provides for the issue of an amount not exceeding £7,000,000. Clause 3(1) provides that, of the monies issued under the authority of clause 2, no payments shall be made in excess of the amounts voted for similar services on the Estimates for the year ending June 30, 1956, except that increases in salaries and wages may be paid where such increases are fixed or prescribed by any award, order or determination of an authorized wage fixing authority. Where increases in wages or salaries are made, clause 13(2) gives the Treasurer authority to pay such increases out of moneys voted by Parliament in this Bill.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Acting Leader of the Opposition)—I do not object to the Bill, but in view of the forthcoming adjournment it may be necessary for a further Supply Bill to be introduced. The Treasurer is authorized to pay any increases in salaries.

I am particularly interested in a recent decision of an industrial tribunal in respect of increases concerning which an appeal has been made. Unless the Government provides for the restoration of cost of living adjustments I do not think there is much likelihood of there being any salary increases. I will reserve any further comments for future financial measures.

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

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from May 15. Page 108.)

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla)—Firstly, I add my congratulations to those of other members to you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment, and to the Chairman of Committees. As a new member I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to the staff of Parliament House for the courtesy and help they have given me. That assistance is greatly appreciated by all new members. I will deal first with a short statement, filling exactly three lines, in the Governor's Speech regarding exploratory investigations and drilling for iron ore deposits in the Middleback Ranges. Last year in opening Parliament the Lieutenant-Governor said on the same subject:—

The deposits of iron ore in the Middleback Ranges are the State's most valuable mineral asset and it is one of the Government's paramount interests to secure the establishment of a steel industry on Spencer Gulf in the vicinity of these deposits. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company, however, does not see its way clear to undertake such a project. Its reply to the resolution passed in Parliament and to the Government's repeated requests to complete the Whyalla development programme as outlined by the company in 1937 is not acceptable to my Ministers. They have no intention of asking Parliament to repudiate the company's indenture; but on the other hand, they are not prepared to acquiesce in the present unsatisfactory position. An investigation is in progress to ascertain whether sufficient high-grade ore exists outside the company's leases to enable a steel industry to be established in South Australia. If the results of this investigation should prove unfavourable my Government will appoint an expert committee to advise what measures can be taken to ensure that South Australia shall derive adequate benefit from its iron ore deposits.

This year we had only the three lines, despite that last year the Government said it was a matter of paramount importance. Nothing in the Governor's Speech this year suggests that it is a matter of urgency. Recently in the *Advertiser* there was a report that Victoria

might beat South Australia in having a second steel industry established in Australia. The *Sun* of April 21 said that vast deposits of iron ore in East Gippsland had been examined and showed great promise of development. It said also that the Victorian Mines Department had for the last two months been conducting surveys and test drilling, that high quality limestone in ample quantity was within 10 miles of the deposits and that Morwell coal was about 119 miles away by rail. One of the most important features associated with the find was last year's discovery about the transfer of Morwell soft coal into hard coke, which is necessary for metallurgical work. The ore deposits apparently are mostly from 50 per cent to 65 per cent grade, but there is also plenty of 40 per cent grade ore.

The Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria has already ordered a pilot plant to handle 25 tons of briquettes a day and turn them into 11 tons of hard metallurgical coke. It is planned to start production with the first plant in 1957. Data and experience from it could lead to major production. Another source of information stated that the speed up of investigations into the East Gippsland deposits had been brought about by the interest shown by the Kaiser Company in the United States of America, which is prepared to invest £100,000,000 in the Victorian venture provided the deposits are sufficiently well proved. Intensified air survey has been conducted with special equipment on iron ore at a depth of several hundred feet below the surface. It is further stated that the Victorian Premier plans to visit the United States of America and Great Britain in June with propositions to place before investors. These reports have caused considerable concern in Whyalla which feels that the establishment of steelworks there is long overdue, and that they are of vital interest to the progress of the town. In answer to a question in this House in August last year the Premier said it was estimated there were between 10 million and 20 million tons of high grade ore in the Middleback Ranges outside the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's leases. Replying to a question a few days ago he mentioned 15 million tons as the likely estimate for the same investigations. Nearly a year has gone by and the same position apparently exists in relation to the present drilling operations. From 70 to 100 million tons of ore is required to interest overseas investors in the establishment of steelworks. If we are to beat Victoria in the erection of steelworks it is obvious that we must intensify

the search, that is if steelworks are to be dependent on new finds outside the leases of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co.

One would imagine from the bald statement in the Governor's Speech that the Government has gone somewhat cold on the project, and it would appear that the company is still to be allowed to monopolize the State's most valuable iron ore resources, irrespective of the consequences to the State. It is obvious that the economic benefits to the State from steelworks established here would be tremendous. Both from the angles of employment and value of products, and from the point of view of decentralization of industry, there would be great benefit. Once steelworks were erected at Whyalla other allied industries would be erected in the vicinity. Whyalla is the logical place for steelworks. Strategically, from the defence point of view, it is much better than Newcastle, Port Kembla or Nowa Nowa. It would be more secure from naval and aerial attack and could be defended much more easily. In the event of war, the fact that much of the iron ore could be converted on the spot into steel products would be of the greatest importance, because that quantity of ore at any rate would not have to be conveyed by sea or rail to the eastern seaboard. During the last war what is known in Whyalla as a forge plant was erected in that town by the Commonwealth Government, because of the fear that naval action would destroy similar facilities if they existed on the eastern seaboard. That is taken by competent authorities to mean that plants on the eastern seaboard are vulnerable.

We are being continually told that the influx of migrants into Australia should be continued at the highest possible level, consistent with our ability to absorb them. Obviously, however, we cannot hope to match in manpower those nations that may cast envious eyes on Australia, and since the whole foundation of defence equipment is based on steel supplies, our strength in defence should be based primarily on steel production in order to offset that numerical inferiority. Although I do not desire to overstress the defence aspect I remind members that it is of national importance. Further, whereas most defence projects have no economic value, the establishment of a steelworks to cover the peak demand for steel would fulfil the requirements for material progress in a modern community. In June last year the Premier said that B.H.P. policy was to plan its operations for Australia's base requirements,

not peak requirements. From the economic point of view that is serious enough and the reverse of the policy being implemented in the U.S.A. and Great Britain, but from a defence point of view it should not be tolerated: the same emphasis should be placed on maximum steel production as is being placed on bringing the maximum number of migrants possible to this country.

In 1954 the B.H.P. Company stated that it would not consider establishing steelworks in South Australia before 1960 and that its action would then depend entirely on the iron ore resources available. Apparently the decision will be ultimately based on the profit-making possibilities at the time and in the meantime our high-grade ore is being used at an ever-increasing rate. It is not practicable to leave the erection of a steelworks until an emergency arises; that was clearly shown in 1941 when the B.H.P. company made two proposals to the Commonwealth Government, which would have entailed the production of 6,000 tons of ingot steel a week with the associated mill equipment to turn out the final steel products. At that time the manpower authorities said the project was impossible, that it would require 2,500 men and that it could not be finished in time to be of use during the war. In his survey of the iron ore resources, published in 1954, Dr. Miles said:—

It is obvious that for adequate national progress, in fact for national survival in the troublesome years ahead, Australia must look forward to a very marked expansion in her steel industry. During the next decade it is probable that a threefold expansion in Australian steel production will be desirable, if not essential.

In last year's debate on the motion to establish a steelworks at or near Whyalla several things were revealed. We learned that when the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Indenture Act was passed in 1937 it was understood, and indeed intended by both parties, that a steelworks would be established at Whyalla. Further, with the building of the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline it was also understood that a steelworks would be erected to use the water supplied by the pipeline. Finally, members were reminded that Mr. Essington Lewis in his 1948 Joseph Fisher lecture went into some detail about the erection of a steelworks. I do not wish to refer to that debate any further, but I will quote from the appendix of the 1954 report of the Director of Mines, which has just been issued and has probably not yet been read by all members. I would particularly like new members opposite to

take heed of these points before, as one of their number said the other day, their blood thickens. In speaking of the ownership of mineral wealth, Mr. Dickinson said:—

Fundamentally, mineral resources are natural assets, vital to our well-being and social security. When exploited they may benefit the community in two ways, as a source of revenue and as the raw material for industry. Being expendable and irreplaceable, it becomes a national duty to see that they are fully utilized in the public interest.

From ancient times, under Roman law, and in part under early English law, the ownership of mineral deposits was subject to certain rights of the Sovereign.

In South Australia leases are issued under the Mining Act for a period of 21 years, but they carry the right of renewal under the conditions in force at the time of renewal. By this means the Government is able to exercise some measure of control as a means of conserving and regulating the exploitation of its mineral resources in the public interest.

The Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Indenture Act, 1937, of South Australia and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Agreement Act of West Australia have set a radical departure from this principle of public ownership and control of mineral resources. The effect of these Acts is to virtually transfer certain mineral resources, namely, all the known high grade iron ore in Australia, from public to private ownership. Although nominally still owned by the Crown for purposes of royalty payments, all the other leasehold conditions normally applying to ensure the exploitation of these resources in the public interest are no longer relevant. In other words, these Acts have given the Broken Hill Proprietary Company absolute control in perpetuity of these vital resources. There is little doubt that the possibilities of both present and future uses of these high grade iron ore resources, and their relevant importance in serving private and social needs, were taken into account by the respective State Governments when these agreements were under consideration. As a result the transfer of these resources from the public to private control were made for specific purposes, the establishment of a "blast furnace" in South Australia, and the establishment of a "re-rolling steel mill" in Western Australia. There is no question that the legal obligations, in connection with these Acts have been carried out in South Australia and will be carried out in Western Australia, but it becomes anomalous after a period of years, when the plants in question have been paid for and returned substantial profits to the shareholders, that these property ownership privileges should be allowed to continue indefinitely without fulfilment of the further obligations or intentions, which clearly could not be written into the Acts.

It must be recognized that when public policy favours the transfer of resource properties from public ownership to private ownership for all times, a reasonable use of such properties conforming to the community's

needs, is always to be expected. These transfers of property rights in natural resources upon which the community is largely dependent for its industrial well-being, can also be regarded as placing upon the private proprietors, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, another responsibility not usually associated with private ownership, a responsibility to the nation as well as to their shareholders. It is well known that private undertakings may well serve the public interest in the development and conservation of natural resources, but the limits and conditions of this successful co-ordination are very real. One test of the compatibility of private and public motives is the correlation of ultimate private benefits and general economic well-being, the former being measured in monetary terms of profits and values, the latter being measured in terms of material goods and prices. Whilst the circumstances in 1937 were conducive to the acceptance of this legislation, it is clearly obvious today that the legislation was unsound in principle and had led to the development of a resource monopoly which is not meeting the requirements of the nation.

Unfortunately these Acts provide no basis whereby the use and control of these resources can be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted, with changing conditions, to suit public or private needs. The terms and conditions are inflexible. In fact they are essentially expressions of the old "laissez-faire" doctrine that private initiative and unrestrained self-interest always may be depended upon properly to reward individual enterprise and, at the same time, to serve well and adequately the public need. This doctrine is well known to be condemned both by logic and experience. It is clearly evident now that when public policy favours the transfer of mineral resources to private ownership, a reasonable and beneficial use of such resources should be required as a condition of private title. Furthermore, the perpetual power of the State to bring about readjustments in their control through the flexibility of legislative and judicial construction and interpretation of the phrase "beneficial use" should be recognized. Whilst it must be recognized that the terms and conditions of the agreements relating specifically to the establishment of industries are sacrosanct and inviolate, it is not inconsistent with this agreement to incorporate into Commonwealth or State legislation, or both, provisions declaring mineral resources the property of the public, dedicated to the use of the people. It is within the scope of public policy to recognize water resources, irrigation, coal, oil, uranium, etc., as natural resources of paramount social importance; and legislatures and courts may declare all such properties subject to some form of public control.

Despite the terms of this report the Government refused last year to take action on a matter of such great national importance. Certain statements on this matter were made in His Excellency's Speech last session, but it was not mentioned this year, despite the fact that estimates of iron ore in areas outside the

B.H.P. Company leases do not seem to have increased during the year. These circumstances cannot inspire confidence in the Playford Government's determination to do anything in this matter. In view of the Victorian activity the search for high-grade ore outside the company's leases must be intensified to enable definite conclusions to be reached as soon as possible; if the prospects are hopeless we should be told. We have now reached the position, firstly, where our State's resources of high-grade iron ore are being quarried at an ever-increasing rate and no attempt made to use our great deposits of low-grade ore. Secondly, the decision to erect a steelworks is apparently to be made purely on profit-making considerations; and thirdly, the rate of development in our national economy and all things dependent on steel is to be determined by a company committed to a policy of production to meet base requirements only. No sovereign State should acquiesce in this situation.

I now turn to the subject of education, and in this regard paragraph 21 of His Excellency's Speech referred to the recruitment of trainee teachers stating:—

The campaign of recruitment of trainee teachers conducted at the end of last year was successful.

I think that may be fairly described as a complacent and self-satisfied statement, whereas there is very little in the South Australian education system to be complacent about. We have been told that there has been a successful recruitment campaign, but the truth is that because of resignations and retirements of teachers and a greater intake of scholars any benefit resulting from such a campaign has been completely eliminated. As recently as the last State elections the Minister of Education said the pupil teacher ratio was as low as 30, but anyone knowing anything about education must realize that that ratio does not reflect the real situation. The teacher shortage in this State is chronic and a matter of the gravest concern to teachers, parents, and, I believe, the Minister himself. Why then, should we have these absurd statements, apparently for political purposes, to cover up a serious situation affecting the welfare of our children?

The Governor's Speech failed to deal with the dissatisfaction in the teaching profession on a multiplicity of matters. By no stretch of imagination could the South Australian Institute of Teachers be called a militant organization. Obviously, it has a professional concern for children as well as for teachers. Anyone visiting our schools or reading the

authentic reports in the *Teachers Journal* will see that staff shortages, bad housing, inadequate compensation for outback service, and a generally niggardly approach by the Government to the teaching profession are causing considerable dissatisfaction among teachers. We have been told that a special course has been inaugurated to train 120 temporary teachers, and although that is necessary as a short-term measure it will nevertheless accentuate the problem regarding trained teachers because of the immobility of temporary teachers. It is time the Government dropped all this pretence over the teacher question, for factual statements are required to get the public behind the Government in recruiting more teachers. If the public were behind the Government and it approached the problem determinedly I am sure more could be done. There is little, if any, excuse for the present position. The number of children likely to attend our schools in any given year can be forecast reasonably accurately for some years ahead, and the responsibility lies fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Government, which has been in office for many years.

The teacher shortage not only affects the size of classes and creates dissatisfaction among trained teachers, but affects many other things of great importance. Since 1939 this State has been talking about raising the school leaving age, but in 1956 it appears as far off as ever. Lately there has been considerable criticism about the very restricted syllabus which many children are compelled to follow. Any suggestion to depart from the narrow syllabus is met with the argument, "There are not enough teachers." The syllabus should be broadened, and should contain more social studies, history and geography, with less emphasis and compulsion on foreign languages where they are not required.

The stock answers to this problem are, firstly, that the position is no better in other States, and secondly, that we have not enough money, and the Grants Commission cites the State that has the lowest education costs per head as the measuring stick when considering grants for education. However, these difficulties could be overcome provided the States were prepared to tell the public the facts and insist, as sovereign States, on obtaining a Commonwealth grant for the specific purpose of education. The Minister's report of 1954, which is the last one available, says that expenditure on education in 1954 was 2½ times that of 1949. One might imagine from that



that we were doing a great stroke by education, but during that period money values were halved, so there was no increase in services. Furthermore, the population of the State increased in the same period by over 16 per cent. We have been told almost *ad nauseum* that between 1949 and 1954 we have been living in a period of unprecedented prosperity. If the Government has been doing all it can during these times the outlook for education is particularly poor. I support the motion.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—I rise with pleasure to support the motion, and I first thank all those who have made it possible for me to be here. I thank the electors of the district of Murray for the confidence they have shown in me and trust that when in three years I give an account of my stewardship I shall not be found wanting. I congratulate you, Sir, on attaining your high office, and although I have known you for only a short time I am sure that you will be impartial at all times. I also congratulate the member for Unley (Mr. Dunnage) on being elected Chairman of Committees, and I congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion on their speeches. I was particularly impressed by the speech of the mover, Mr. King, and I believe that he and I have much in common. He supported the decentralization of industries, which is so important for the future of this State, but I remind him that although his Government has been in power for a long time it has not supported decentralization.

Mr. Coumbe said there were seven new members on his side of the House, but I point out that we have two new members on this side. He said that new blood had been infused into the Government, but I assure him that Mr. Loveday and I will enter vigorously into the debates to come. I was particularly interested to hear the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) mention the need for uniformity of electricity charges. I have always maintained that the surcharge should be abolished, and I shall speak on that matter later.

I congratulate my colleague, Mr. Loveday, on the fine oration he has just delivered. He must have carried out considerable research to be able to place so much information before the House. I thank the member for Semaphore (Mr. Tapping) for the kind remarks he made about me recently, and I trust that I shall be able to emulate his example in this House. I have

always admired the way he has considered and debated legislation before the House. Last week the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) said that constructive criticism would always be welcomed in this House, and I trust that any criticism I may make will always be of a constructive nature. If at times it does not seem to be so I assure members that it will be meant constructively.

My first criticism is in regard to Ministers' replies to letters from members. I must say that I have had several courtesies extended to me by Ministers, but unfortunately there have been long delays in replying to some of my letters. I realize that perhaps a week or so may elapse between a Minister getting a letter and getting the information for a reply, but there can be little excuse if a reply is not given for many weeks.

I wrote a letter to the Premier about rocks abutting the road at Dawesley. Only two days after I was elected I was approached by the proprietor of a bus service at Murray Bridge, who said that these rocks created a danger to traffic. This bus service uses this very important highway, and he showed me marks on one of his buses that had been caused through striking these rocks. The running rail of the bus was badly smashed and he thought his complaint was justified, and I agreed. I inspected the rocks and thought it would not take much to have them removed. I have been told that a semi-trailer travelling to another State had the rear assembly torn from it as a result of striking one of these rocks because the driver had to keep well to the left of the road as an approaching vehicle had dazzling headlights. I have heard that motorists have had tyres blown out through striking these rocks, so I wrote to the Premier because Dawesley is in his district. He took the matter up with the Minister of Roads, and I received an acknowledgment from him. That was two months ago, but I have had no further reply, although I rang the Premier's office twice and was told that the matter was in the hands of the Minister of Roads and that I would get a reply in due course. I believe I should have had a reply long ago.

I wrote another letter to the Minister of Railways about the slow railways service between Murray Bridge and Adelaide, for it takes about three hours to travel that distance of a little over 50 miles. If the service were faster more people would patronize the railway system and help to make it pay. I congratulate the Government on introducing the new diesel rail cars, which are comfortable and economical,

and can travel more quickly than the older type of train. On the route from Adelaide to Mount Gambier 50 miles is travelled in about 2 hours, which is quite reasonable. I ask the Minister, in view of a report in the *Mail* that more diesel cars would be run in this State, that the Murray Bridge line be considered to make it served entirely by diesel cars. That letter was written on March 19, but I have had no reply. My constituents are entitled to get replies more quickly, and I urge Ministers to consider members more and reply promptly to letters received.

I said before that I supported Mr. King's remarks about the decentralization of industry and population, and I am alarmed at the continued drift to the metropolitan area. Today 62 per cent of South Australians live there, and only 38 per cent in the country. This is most unsatisfactory. I believe decentralization is essential both from an economic and defence point of view. I do not wish to be an alarmist, but we must face facts. As a result of atomic warfare, nuclear weapons, and guided missiles this country is no longer isolated and we should take steps to decentralize industry and population. America and England are both attempting to spread their industries and population. During the last war they decentralized population as much as possible because concentrated centres represented a hazard. As a young country, Australia has better opportunities for decentralizing industry.

Murray Bridge and surrounding districts are ideal for decentralization. Murray Bridge is on the Melbourne-Adelaide highway and railway. There is ample water, which is essential for industries, and land is much cheaper than in the metropolitan area. I would like to see a cannery established in my district because, with the fruit growing industry at Myponga and many vegetable growers transferring from the city to the Murray districts, it would be ideal. It would be desirable if vegetables when freshly cut could be immediately deep frozen. People in outlying districts—Whyalla, Broken Hill and the Northern Territory—would then be able to receive deep frozen fresh vegetables in good condition.

I believe the Government made a great mistake in selecting the site for Elizabeth as it is only an extension of the already congested metropolitan area. Had it been sited adjacent to the Murray River it would have been convenient to water and there would not have been the necessity to pump water in large

quantities. There is no doubt that potentialities exist in my district for the establishment of a town of the size of Elizabeth.

Last Friday I attended a conference of the Murray Valley Development League at Murray Bridge, where I heard much about the possibility of a port at the Murray mouth. Recently I communicated with a high Government official and I asked why firms like Chryslers and Holdens were not established in areas such as the Murray district. He said that these firms were loth to leave areas near ports. If there were a port at the Murray mouth this objection would be overcome and industries could be sited there. Mr. Ellis has devoted time and energy in preparing a report on why a port should be established there. I shall not read that report now, but I commend it to the Government for attention. The firm of David Shearers, in my district, has proved that decentralization of industry is possible. However, that firm is faced with a housing problem. If more houses were erected at Mannum, David Shearers could employ many more men and this would aid decentralization.

Although I represent a district close to the River Murray I am continually approached by people who have water and irrigation problems. People within 14 miles of the river cannot get water. They have put down expensive bores but the water has proved too saline for stock or household use. Recently the Public Works Committee was at Murray Bridge and evidence was presented to the effect that the water in the area was far from suitable. In fact, there is a salt content of from 1,200 to 1,400 grains per gallon. It would be desirable to establish means whereby water could be made available for stock and general purposes in this area. It would be a good scheme to have a tank at Bowhill so that water could reticulate from there to Keith and further. This would be expensive, but it would open up much good country. On the other side of the river there is a tank at Palmer and with piping water could be sent down the Bremer Valley to provide water as far as the sea. This would be costly, but so have other projects been. People in that area see the pipelines from Mannum to Adelaide or from Morgan to Whyalla and naturally feel that they have been overlooked. I trust the Government will examine this matter with a view to providing water to the people in that area.

The member for Light, Mr. Hambour, referred to electricity surcharges and I agree

with him. At present country people are being penalized by having to pay as much as 100 per cent surcharge over and above their zoning charges. I appreciate that the Electricity Trust has made it possible for these people to receive electric power, but I am opposed in principle to the surcharge. It is an anomaly. We are all one people in this State, whether we live at Murray Bridge, Mannum or elsewhere, and as such we should all pay the same price regardless of where we live. There is no surcharge on the water from the Murray to Adelaide, so why should there be a surcharge on electricity to the country? I live on one side of the river at Murray Bridge and a friend of mine lives on the other side. He pays half as much again for electricity as I do, which is wrong. He is entitled to receive electricity for the same price as I pay or, for that matter, what people pay in Adelaide. The same price applies in Port Augusta as in Adelaide: why should it not apply throughout the State?

I recently raised a question concerning the establishment of an experimental farm on the reclaimed swamps of the Murray. I believe it is most desirable. Dairy farmers in that area contribute considerably to the State's progress and at present are supplying one-third of the milk consumed in the metropolitan area. That is no mean feat and an experimental farm in the area would be a great asset to those dairymen. The reclaimed swamps are an asset to this State. Recently at a field day conference in my district a resolution was passed concerning the establishment of an experimental farm in that area. I asked the Minister recently whether the Government would favourably consider it, but he apparently knew nothing of it. However, on page 374 of the *Journal of Agriculture*, I notice that a resolution has been placed before the Advisory Board of Agriculture. The resolution was that the department establish a demonstration and experimental block on private property on the swamps, similar to that at Milang. The Director intimated that whilst the proposal was desirable it could not be given precedence over other projects which were being undertaken by the department. The dairymen in that area are undertaking much research in improving their pastures and herds. A Government experimental farm would greatly assist them and it could be made a payable proposition.

At Murray Bridge anyone can cross the river free of charge, but at Mannum and other places where punts are operated people have to pay. This is wrong. If we wish to cross

the river why should we have to pay a charge? Mr. McKenzie, my predecessor in the Murray district, was successful in having the charge eliminated in respect of primary producers crossing the river, but everyone should be permitted to cross without being charged. People who work at Shearers in Mannum and who live on the other side of the river must pay to cross to work. If they are working at night they have to pay an opening fee of 2s. 6d.: if they work five nights a week that considerably reduces their wages. The principle of paying to cross the river is wrong and there should be free ferry crossing for all.

The Public Works Standing Committee visited Murray Bridge some time ago and took evidence with regard to the need for a new courthouse. It is rather remarkable that a courthouse has not been provided for such a large and important district. At present the court has to sit in the home of the police sergeant, under very adverse conditions and some of the information gathered by the Committee was astounding. It was found that the court is held in one of the front rooms of the sergeant's residence and that during proceedings people are allowed to smoke and the odour penetrates throughout the house, which is not conducive to the good health of the occupants. Although I feel that the Committee has given this question favourable consideration I hope that it will expedite the presentation of its report so that we may have a courthouse at Murray Bridge at the earliest possible date.

I have mentioned a number of matters relating to my district and I look forward to a successful session. I promise you, Sir, that I will at all times endeavour to conduct myself in a dignified manner, and I look forward to very happy associations here.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—As I rise to support the motion I am deeply conscious of the great heritage of the Parliamentary institution, and of the great personal freedom, rights and privileges inherent in that system. On the lightest reflection one cannot but entertain feelings of admiration and gratitude for those who, through the proud ages of British history, have had a part in the evolution of the system. With these thoughts predominant in my mind and with a deep abiding respect for the traditions of the past and a keen desire to live and work for the present and the future, I cannot be insensible of the great honour which attaches to a place in this Assembly. I therefore wish to express my thanks to the good folk of the

Barossa electoral district for the confidence they have shown in entrusting me with the representation of this very important rural area, and for the opportunity thus given me of humbly endeavouring to render myself more extensively serviceable to my State within the great heritage to which I have referred.

Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your preferment to the high office you now hold. I have no doubt that you will walk worthily in the footsteps of your very illustrious predecessor and that you will maintain the high traditions of your important office with credit to yourself and satisfaction to all members. Allow me, also, to congratulate the member for Unley, Mr. Colin Dunnage, on his election to the important post of Chairman of Committees.

I wish within these walls to pay my humble tribute to the memory of my late esteemed friend and representative in this place, Mr. Don Michael, and to the memory of the late Hon. A. W. Christian—two good and just men who, through many years of community life, strove for the common good of the State and who have left a very honourable impression in our history.

I wish to express my thanks to the permanent staff of this place and to members generally for their very kindly reception of me and for the spontaneous assistance rendered, which to me, as a raw recruit, has meant very much indeed. I have always been aware, Sir, that the wider one searches for knowledge the more one realizes how much there is to learn, and one's limitations, and as I approach my work in this place I do so fully conscious that I do not know everything about all subjects; that there are many and diverse views and that I am here to expand my knowledge and endeavour quickly to form mature judgments.

With those remarks prefacing what I have to say in relation to His Excellency's Speech, may I respectfully observe that it was a fine resumé of past achievement, recording phenomenal progress in all sections of primary and secondary industry and in the exploitation of our mineral and power resources with imagination and initiative, reflecting great credit on the Government. I would not, however, overlook the benign Providence who, through a run of good years, has provided seasonal conditions most conducive to our national welfare. As a young, virile and ambitious people, however, we must not live in the past, and I was, therefore, most interested in the plans for the future. These revealed

sound and satisfactory suggestions for the maintenance of an aggressive approach to State problems, the initiative to continue the expansion of production in both old-established and new lands, the continued expansion of secondary industries praiseworthy application to social problems and a most commendable exploratory programme for further mineral wealth.

I have a full and clear appreciation of the utter need for vigorous development of a controlled and balanced economy, and that the maximum development of our secondary industries consistent with practical economics is most necessary to ensure this, but I firmly believe that we are, at base, essentially a primary producing State and that our future progress in secondary industries will depend materially on the continued prosperity of our primary industries.

Paragraph 5 of His Excellency's Speech clearly indicates the value of our primary industries and I was therefore very pleased to note in the following paragraph the measures to be taken to improve conditions, through research, in a wide range of primary interests by the Department of Agriculture. Here I wish to refer to the inestimably valuable work performed over the years by the department in the promotion of the welfare of our primary interests, and I would take this opportunity to congratulate very heartily the member for Flinders (The Hon. G. G. Pearson) on his appointment to the important portfolio of Agriculture. As a man of wide and practical experience in primary production, and with innate ability, I am sure that he will be a worthy successor to the late Hon. A. W. Christian and his predecessor, that grand old gentleman of the land, Sir George Jenkins. As an instance of the department's work I have in mind the wheat industry, which last season returned the State 30,000,000 bushels, constituting our second largest exportable commodity.

With the very heavy wheat surpluses throughout the world, with the degree of self-sufficiency becoming more evident in what are normally wheat-importing countries, and with bi-lateral trading agreements between major exporters and their customers, we are finding it increasingly difficult to dispose of our wheat; buyers are becoming increasingly quality conscious and selective. Here I wish to pay an unqualified tribute to Waite Research Institute and Roseworthy College on the evolution of varieties of wheat that are having a profound effect on the general f.a.q. standard

of South Australian production. Roseworthy College was responsible for the well-known weapon-named varieties of Dirk, Scimitar, Javelin, Sabre and now Claymore, which are varieties superior to the early Roseworthy releases, Rapier x and Sword, combining both high-yielding ability with inherent high-baking quality. This greatly assists, firstly, the local requirements of modern bakery practice, secondly, the requirements of those overseas markets which are buyers of Australian wheat in the form of flour, and, thirdly, those overseas markets which seek our essentially Australian character white wheats for blending purposes. I have always felt that under our f.a.q. system it was unfair and unethical to ask growers to produce better quality wheats only to be paid the same price per bushel as they would receive for weak flour varieties yielding many more bushels per acre. The great service of Roseworthy College in embracing both quality and high-yielding capabilities in their weapon varieties has enabled our farmers fairly and economically to concentrate more definitely on the production of them, as is reflected in an analysis of varieties sown in 1954, when 41.9 per cent of this State's seeding was in the approved strong or medium-strong flour wheats, including Gabo, as against less than five per cent of similar quality varieties in another State.

The Hon. T. Playford—Was that Queensland?

Mr. LAUCKE—No, Victoria. The Australian Wheat Board is already marketing graded wheat to a limited degree overseas, as shown during last harvest, when New Zealand specified a particular South Australian loading port for three cargoes of wheat grown in the districts neighbouring that port. Those districts, from my own observation, produce Roseworthy varieties in the main. This, Sir, is surely a clear indication of overseas demand for assured quality, and underlines the high importance of production of quality goods to build up exports. When it is considered that there has been a reduction of about 95,000,000 bushels—from 395,000,000 to 300,000,000—in the total quantity of wheat covered by the six exporting countries and the 44 importing countries party to the International Wheat Agreement, and that Australia's quota has been reduced from 88,000,000 bushels in 1949 to 45,000,000 bushels under the 1952 agreement and to 30,000,000 bushels under the present agreement, it is most evident that we must concentrate on the production of that type and quality of wheat which will hold and increase our traditional

markets and earn new ones. I feel that if the principle of restricting the number of varieties of wheat sown in Australia were adopted to the exclusion of the notoriously weak flour varieties, the quality standards of f.a.q. could well be maintained. There would then be no reason for an inferiority complex to arise, for it must be remembered that our wheat, if maintained at a minimum of 10 to 12 per cent dry protein of high quality, has character and attributes peculiar to itself in bushel weight, flour yield, ease of milling, low moisture content, and excellent colour. All these rank it as one of the best wheats in the world, but we must overcome the disability arising through the insidious introduction of low quality varieties.

I am pleased to note that in the field of egg-producing poultry, further research is to be undertaken, and I presume it will be done through our Parafield experimental station. Mr. C. F. Anderson, Chief Poultry Adviser, and Mr. Allan McArdle, Senior Poultry Adviser, have done magnificent work in an industry that has an annual value to this State of £3,000,000, nearly half of which is made up of exports. It would not be the important primary industry it is today were it not for the able assistance and advice given to producers by the Department of Agriculture. As we have progressed in the past, so I believe we can continue to progress if we allow adequate facilities for research to be made available to the responsible officers. The poultry industry is perhaps one of the quickest to respond to modern findings, and there have been amazing advances in the United States, where it is really big business. I believe we have much to learn from American methods in housing, nutrition, and breeding stock, and I am glad to note that Mr. McArdle is to go there to study production methods for application here later. I am sure the State has very much to gain from his visit.

The fruit growing and canning industry is rising in importance in this State, and it is very pleasing to note the activity of the Department of Agriculture in regard to the scourge of gummosis in apricots. The recent important finding by Mr. M. V. Carter, Plant Pathologist of the Waite Research Institute, that the disease is spread from old infected wood by wind-blown spores is leading to a concentrated effort by fruitgrowers and home gardeners to destroy the spores by burning every stick of dead apricot wood on their properties. Eradication of the disease through Mr. Carter's finding would indeed be a boon to the industry. While

speaking on fruitgrowing and canning, I will refer to the great dependence of growers on the canneries for the prompt disposal of perishable fruit. The history of canneries in recent years has not been a happy one, and I feel that this vital industry is worthy of consideration for more favourable home market margins. The influence of the Department of Agriculture is evident throughout the entire range of primary industries, and as my electorate embraces practically all phases of primary production found in this State—wheat, barley, wool, fat lambs, grapes, stone fruit, apples, pears, market gardening, dairying, poultry, pig raising, etc.—I trust that members will appreciate my dwelling on its importance. I heartily wish it well in its approach to the many problems confronting the man on the land, because I have full knowledge of the farmers' appreciation of and spontaneous co-operation with the department to the advantage of the State.

I wish now to refer to the important grape and wine industry of this State, and to express gratification at the Commonwealth Government's action in 1954 in reducing excise on brandy by 30s. a gallon, and then retaining the differential in favour of brandy as against other spirits in the recent adjustment. Here we have an instance that vicious taxation does not necessarily mean proportionately greater revenue to a Government. The overall benefits of lower excise receipts have been the preservation of an industry and the provision of a fair return for their labours to many thousands of good Australian families. South Australia produces 75 per cent of the wine of the Commonwealth, and the industry is conducted by men of keen knowledge and ability to judge the requirements, both local and overseas. They are most enterprising in using the best techniques that the world has to offer. Those who distribute the wines in the local market do not assist the winemaker in his effort to produce wines at a fair price to the consumer. I have in mind that wines sold in bottle departments for 6s. a bottle are listed at 15s. when offered at table in certain establishments. This terrific impost on the consumer must act as a real depressant on sales, and I feel that the industry is being most unfairly treated, because the proper time to drink wine is at meal time.

Allow me to stress the importance of water, power and roads in country areas and to state quite clearly that we in the country do not seek soft and charitable amenities, but we do need these utilities to enable us to maintain and increase primary production and firmly

encourage the establishment of further secondary industries in country areas. I shall respectfully but firmly ask that the old-established pioneering areas of our State be not deprived of these utilities indefinitely. There appears to be a most erroneous impression even in high places that our oldest settled districts are properly catered for in basic utilities. The provision of these facilities should not be made with the idea of immediate gain because through them wealth is created and taxation is levied; and the wealth that is created will ultimately prove the wisdom of supplying utilities at costs that enable them to be used by those seeking to produce.

It has been said that decentralization has not been as wide as we would like. Although Leigh Creek, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, and water supplies on the West Coast are encouraging decentralization, they will not be fully effective so long as there are differential rates for the basic utilities as between city and country consumers. On the assumption that higher rates have been charged for power installation and supply in country areas because of the cost of sending power to the country from Osborne, has not the time arrived for an equalization of tariffs as between city and country consumers in view of the fact that 80 per cent of the output of Port Augusta is now being transmitted to Adelaide consumers?

I heartily commend the Government for its great and noble work in hospitalization, school dental services, Deaf Guidance Clinic, Children's Hospital, Queen Victoria Maternity Home, Home for Incurables, Northcote Home and Kalyra Sanatorium, and for the assistance given by way of a pound for pound subsidy to homes for those in their declining years. May I refer to the truly Christian work of church organizations in the various Missions for our aborigines, who are entitled to the kindest consideration. I feel that as a Government we must not be tardy in co-operating with them wherever possible in their great work.

In conclusion, I wish to refer to two time-honoured virtues which, in the last few decades, have not had the importance attached to them that they justly merit, but which I trust will henceforth receive due encouragement. Having in mind that we all have a common destiny, we must have in the first place a full realization of the dignity of work, whether we be employer or employee. The second virtue is thrift. In these times, when we are looking

at our overseas credit balances with concern and finding that we have insufficient funds for public works programmes, as capital can come only from savings, thrift should be encouraged and the results of savings applied through the various lending organizations for all national developmental requirements. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I congratulate the member for Barossa on his very thoughtful speech. It is pleasing to hear an expert in his own field giving us the benefit of his knowledge. We have had a number of wheatgrowers in this House, but I do not know that we have had many experts on the milling industry, and therefore it is pleasing to have some new knowledge available to us on this subject. I cannot remember such a large influx of new members, and I extend my best wishes to them all. I think it is safe to say that each one who has spoken in the debate has earned the approval of the older members for his demeanour and approach to his duties. I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment. In common with other members I think your remarks on the opening day on your election were most appropriate and notable. We have suffered the loss of two members of the last Parliament, namely, the Hon. A. W. Christian and Mr. H. D. Michael. We passed a resolution on the opening day deploring their loss, and I can do little more than endorse that resolution. The Hon. A. W. Christian had a short but notable career as Minister of Agriculture. I think the successful outcome of the attack on the grasshopper plague was a great personal credit to him. He had been talking about this plague for many months, and had been spreading the warning to farmers that we were going to suffer. When the grasshoppers did arrive he was most energetic in his efforts to eradicate them, and the comparatively small damage the State suffered from this infestation was due in no small measure to his efforts. Mr. Michael was a great friend to all of us. He was a very wise and modest person, and his achievements on the Land Settlement Committee will stand for a long while. His characteristic of modesty was one of his most endearing traits, and we all miss him very much. I regret the absence of some members of the old Parliament. The honourable member for Burra will realize that I am not criticizing him in any way when I say that I miss not having Mr. Hawker here. He had a valuable contact with the pastoral industry and a very wide knowledge of it, and I think that is something we need in this House. We have

not many members with such a knowledge, and I feel that we will miss Mr. Hawker in that regard.

I congratulate Mr. Pearson on his appointment as Minister of Agriculture. I personally feel that he has well earned that office. He is following in the footsteps of Mr. Christian and Sir George Jenkins, who had helped that department along with great distinction, and I am sure Mr. Pearson will equally distinguish himself in this office. He has that temperament so ideally suited both for farming and for his new office, and I am confident that his wisdom and judgment will stand him in good stead.

We have a tremendous potential production in agriculture in South Australia yet to be tapped. I would not describe it as a ripe plum waiting to be plucked, because it has to be earned and we do not yet know everything about how to get that extra production. We are learning about these things rapidly. The last 10 years has seen tremendous advances in agricultural science and its application, and tremendous advances in the development of new land, partly by machinery and partly by extra knowledge, and to quite an appreciable extent by the fact that there has been more money to invest in capital works on the land. It can be said that our farmers generally are seized with the importance of the new developments, as much as farmers anywhere else in the world. I will not say that we are the best farmers in the world, because we have a lot to learn, but at least South Australians realize they have a long way to go and are doing their utmost to get there.

Any increase in production will be largely bound up with irrigation, and I do not mean merely irrigation along the River Murray or other big waterways where large quantities of water are now being used, but irrigation on what I will term ordinary dry land. The two things necessary are water and sunlight, and the difficulty is to get both together. Our seasons, with the Mediterranean climate, start with autumn when we see the plants showing a certain amount of growth. Then comes the winter, when the growth slows up. It is not a particularly severe winter, but the growth is not very great because the sunlight is not there. In the spring both sunlight and water are available, and we get the spring flush and heavy production from the land. All too soon the spring rains cease and we are left with plenty of sunlight but not very much water. One can go in any direction by road from Adelaide in the summer time and see dry

paddocks. Even at Crafers where they get over 40in. of rain a year, there are still dry paddocks. If we can get water on to such land we can produce a tremendous amount. It is obvious that we will not be able to put very large areas down to irrigation in any one particular locality, but here and there there will be a large number of small irrigation schemes. The whole of the Lower South-East has water readily available at fairly shallow depth. Throughout the rainfall areas of the State, other than the South-East, such as the Adelaide Hills and the central districts, there is great scope for the collection of rainfall, its storage on farms in earth reservoirs, and the reticulation of it to pastures. In a 22in. rainfall, 500,000 gallons of rain fall on every acre in a year. It is a tremendous quantity of water, and if we can get only one-hundredth of that quantity it would be of great value. It would mean that 5,000,000 gallons would water 10 acres of land.

Many dairy farmers in the Adelaide hills will adopt irrigation because they have realized it will pay handsomely. It is not necessarily a paying proposition for everybody else at this stage, because we do not know enough about it. However, in the dairying industry it is generally agreed that it can be made a profitable addition to their farming, and that there will be a great increase in production during the summer and autumn, which is the time it is particularly needed. Although there is great scope for irrigation, there is no scope for any large scale scheme to be undertaken willy nilly. Much experimental work has to be done, and thought given to it by individual farmers. The costs are all-important, and I am not suggesting the Government enter into any elaborate scheme, but that the Department of Agriculture should recognize the great and coming importance of water, and should design its research programmes to meet that need. I do not criticize the work of the department in any way. It has already done much research on irrigation, but there is a great deal more to be done. The department can advise you on the use of irrigation for many purposes, but the knowledge of running sheep on irrigation is very limited, and what information is available varies tremendously from being optimistic to pessimistic. I believe there is great scope for running sheep on irrigation, either wholly or partly, and I know there is much room for further research into this matter. The methods of reticulating water are also worthy of further research. On so-called dry land, the usual method adopted in small schemes is spray

irrigation. It is more economical in the use of water, but unfortunately capital and labour costs are high. The old principle of irrigation, where use is made of the fact that water will always run down hill, is something worthy of investigation for small farm land schemes. I was much impressed by the water catchment scheme used in New South Wales, a subject I have mentioned here earlier, and it is certain that it will be used extensively in South Australia in coming years. Paragraph 6 of the Governor's Speech stated:—

The Government has continued with its active measures for improving conditions in the primary industries. Among the matters now receiving special attention are the control and eradication of foot rot and pleuropneumonia . . .

Foot rot in sheep is one reason why the wool cost of production is higher in the closely settled areas than in the outback country. It is an organism, *fusiformis nodosus*, which is peculiarly persistent in the feet of sheep, and there are many sticky problems to be faced in attempting to eradicate it. Great attention is being given to its eradication but there is not much confidence to be placed in its early elimination. It is easy to clear land of foot rot infection by spelling it for about a fortnight. The land is then clear and safe for sheep.

Mr. Davis—What happens when the sheep are taken on to other land? Is that land infected?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Wherever infected sheep go they infect the land. The difficulty in eradicating foot rot is to get it from the sheep, not to get it from the land.

Mr. Davis—Is the land to which the sheep go infected?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Whilst the sheep are on land it becomes infected.

Mr. Davis—Is there not some other way of getting rid of foot rot?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes.

Mr. Hutchens—Does the period of a fortnight vary according to weather conditions?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes. Some people say that in dry weather a few days is sufficient, but I think a fortnight would cover any condition. Unfortunately antibiotics are not effective in connection with foot rot. It does not matter how many units of penicillin are used. There does not seem to be much effect from its use. That means there is no other course than to cut the disease from the foot, but the cutting out demands a tremendous amount of



care. If one small piece of infection is left it will flare up later. A sheep may be apparently healthy for many months but in reality it may be a carrier and be liable to spread the disease. The usual treatment is to cut out the rot by paring the foot, putting the sheep in a foot bath of some substance like blue-stone or formalin to kill the infection, and then putting the sheep in a clean paddock. This paring of the feet is a laborious process. There have been many discussions in organizations of graziers and farmers on the question of whether foot rot should be a notifiable disease. I think recent information shows that the opinion is swinging round to the belief that the disease should be notifiable. The department is to be commended for not rushing into this matter. It said it could do nothing towards improving the position until its officers had been trained in the work. Lately some of its officers have been undergoing training. I have seen how in the early stages of their training they learn to do things rather slowly but attain greater proficiency later as their knowledge and experience increase. When the officers are fully trained they will be able to assist the department in this important work of controlling foot rot. Whether it should be a notifiable disease is something that need not be decided at the moment, but I think it will come. It will then be compulsory to notify the department when the disease is found and it will control the disposal of the sheep.

Mr. Corcoran—It is a big problem in the South-East.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes. The South-East is the worst place because the Victorian border is nearby and over the border trade and commerce is free. Unless the Victorian authorities work with vigor equal to that of our own people it will be difficult to do anything in the matter. I commend the Government for what it has done in this respect but in the next few years there will be a need to further study the matter. At present a farmer with foot rot in his sheep is in trouble because many man hours are needed in eradicating it. Some people think it is better to allow the foot rot to remain because they feel they can never hope to get rid of it. Our departmental officers will be able to help when outbreaks occur in new country. The new farmer, who has not seen foot rot, may not realize how important it is to deal with the matter promptly.

The Governor's Speech also referred to the control of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle. This

disease is a serious drawback to the production of beef cattle in our closely settled areas. The department over the last few years has conducted a campaign towards growing more beef on farms, and there has been success, but exaggerated claims have been made as to the virtue in growing beef cattle. I believe that we cannot superimpose 50 cattle on a 1,000 sheep property and leave the cattle to clean up the thrushes and thistles.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—They will eat the best first.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes, and the rest afterwards. Cattle are useful, but the claims have been exaggerated. The margins for fattened cattle are small and frequently farmers who have bought beef stores at the abattoirs for fattening have sold them at the same price as they paid for them, due of course to the fluctuations in the prices of beef. The answer is to get cheaper beef from the outside country, where it is cheaper to breed cattle. If cheap stores cattle could be obtained in this way it would be a reasonably certain line of profitable production.

Mr. Corcoran—Do you know anything of the scheme to bring down store cattle from Alice Springs?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes. The department recently attempted to deal with pleuro-pneumonia which is preventing our getting good stores cattle from that area. Pleuro-pneumonia is a highly contagious disease. In the Centre it is considered to be endemic because it is always with them. If it got into our dairy cattle there would be disastrous effects and for that reason severe restrictions are imposed on bringing down cattle from these districts. If those restrictions do not actually prevent the cattle from being brought down they are so severe as to be a discouragement. If some areas in the northern parts of our State could be declared safe for the purpose of bringing down cattle, which were guaranteed to be free from pleuro-pneumonia, it would solve some of the difficulty. It is hard to diagnose the disease. It is difficult to say which animal is a carrier and which is not. Vaccination against the disease is not so certain as to make its use reliable. The department has been in close collaboration with authorities in the other States and they are now undertaking a programme towards cleaning up certain areas in the North and making them safe areas from which cattle can be sold freely on the Adelaide market. If that is achieved it will be of tremendous benefit to the closely settled areas.

The research work done by the department in the last few years has increased tremendously, but more needs to be done. Any money available should be spent in research work. I can think of many answers that we should know and there are so many solutions in front of us that any money spent on research is money well spent. Research can usefully absorb almost unlimited sums of money. I will not express an opinion on how much of total expenditure should be spent on research, but I am sure research has assisted the man on the land very greatly.

Mr. Hutchens—Scientific advice is accepted freely by the producer today.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes; as scientists have produced the answers they have quickly gained the farmers' confidence. I now turn to the subject of roadmaking. The Highways Department should make more use of private contractors because they are quicker and more efficient. That statement is not meant as a criticism of the department, but I believe that private contractors generally can perform work better than Government departments. It is sometimes argued that it is impossible to contract for road work because of the financial risk involved, but although there may be difficulties in preparing specifications and carrying out surveys, a contract system under which equipment and drivers are hired is a system admirably suited to roadmaking. The whole crux of roadmaking by contract is proper supervision and if the Highways Department has enough efficient supervisors they will see that proper work is done. It is too much to expect anybody to do a good job without supervision, and no better method of roadmaking exists than by contract under supervision. Contractors should be ensured of a continuity of work, for no-one wants to lay out thousands of pounds on equipment if he thinks that he may be suspended in mid-air at some future time because of financial restrictions. By giving contractors continuous work more will be willing to contract with the Government than is the case today.

The Highways Department allocates to district councils about £2,500,000 and the councils collect about £3,500,000 each year by way of rates, giving them a total of £6,000,000, most of which is spent on roads. This roadmaking is supervised by district engineers in the Highways Department. One district includes the metropolitan area and the electoral districts of Stirling, Murray and Gawler.

Mr. Jenkins—There are 39 council districts in that departmental district.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes, and surely qualified supervision is required apart from that exercised by the district engineer and his departmental officers. To ensure that more adequate supervision is exercised the Government might consider providing courses in roadmaking for certain personnel. I have in mind the post-war rural training scheme under which applicants for war service land settlement blocks were trained for about six weeks at Wingfield. The course was not meant to give complete training but was designed as a refresher course for applicants who had previously been on farms. Such a system could be used to instruct certain personnel in roadmaking. Often one hears arguments about the clay content of the soil and its suitability for roadmaking, and a roadmaking course would enable students to quickly resolve such questions. The amount of technical knowledge used in roadmaking is considerable but is mostly in possession of the Highways Department engineers. That is not good enough and we should train others seeing that such a large sum is involved.

Last year Parliament considered the question of speed limits and I still feel that commercial vehicles are unwisely handicapped. The present speed limits outside built-up areas are 40 miles an hour for commercial vehicles of three to seven tons, 30 miles an hour for vehicles of seven to 15 tons, and 20 miles an hour for vehicles of over 15 tons. The last two limits in particular impose a great hardship on commerce and are unrealistic. Some vehicles over 15 tons must travel over 20 miles an hour before going into top gear. Further, these limits are difficult to police. What damage will be caused by an extra 10 miles an hour? If the roads are damaged by vehicles travelling at reasonable speeds we should make roads better able to carry those vehicles.

Mr. Davis—Some vehicles pay nothing towards the cost of construction.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Commercial transport operators pay heavy fees towards the upkeep of roads. If they do not pay enough higher rates should be fixed; but I maintain that 20 miles an hour is unrealistic as an upper speed limit for a heavy vehicle.

Mr. Hutchens—Wouldn't that be honoured more in the breach than in the observance?

Mr. BROOKMAN—Possibly, but regulations that are hard to police are not good ones and I trust that these limits will be altered. I

have been impressed by senior public servants who have returned after being sent abroad to study various features. The knowledge they bring back is of inestimable value in their fields whether agriculture, engineering, or any other branch of the Public Service. Money spent on sending these men abroad is spent wisely because we can always learn something from other countries. It is hard to expect a senior officer to spend his entire working life trying to learn methods from books and other documents without having had actual experience of those methods. We could well increase the number of public servants being sent abroad.

Some members have accused Ministers of not answering their letters, but such cases are

unusual because the Ministers are in close contact with all private members. Indeed, I do not think private members in any other Australian Parliament have closer contact with their Ministers than those here. Replies may sometimes be a little slow, but I am sure such complaints are not numerous. Our Ministers give all private members a fair go and I appreciate the way they listen to anything I have to say. I support the motion.

Mr. DAVIS secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.59 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 22, at 2 p.m.