

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Thursday, May 24, 1956.

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

**ADDRESS IN REPLY.**

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to receive members for the presentation of the Address in Reply at 2.30 p.m. today.

At 2.22 p.m. the Speaker and members proceeded to Government House. They returned at 2.35 p.m.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech, and other members of the House, I proceeded to Government House and there presented to His Excellency the Address adopted by the House on May 23, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

I thank you for your Address in Reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.

I feel confident that you will give full and careful attention to all matters placed before you, and I pray that God's blessing may crown your labours.

**QUESTIONS.****COUNTRY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Section 6 of the Electricity Supplies (Country Areas) Act states:—

A municipal or district council or any two or more of such councils jointly may submit to the Minister of Local Government a scheme proposing that the council or councils shall establish, purchase, enlarge, extend or improve any electricity undertaking carried on or intended to be carried on by it or them.

Then the Act goes on with the necessary machinery provisions and a paragraph that the Treasurer may make a grant to assist councils under these schemes. Can he say whether grants have been made to country councils under that provision?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The provision has been availed of in a number of places where the Electricity Trust could not contemplate extensions in the near future. There were extensions at Renmark (which later was brought within the trust's ambit), between Ceduna and Thevenard, between Bordertown and Keith, and I believe at one time at Mount Gambier, though that town has since been brought within the trust's ambit. I will get a statement for the honourable member showing

what extensions there have been and the amounts provided under the Act. The provision has been most useful and greatly appreciated, and I think it will be availed of more in the future.

**ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL  
CASUALTY BLOCK.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether the proposal for a casualty block for the Royal Adelaide Hospital is still being investigated by the Public Works Committee, or why there has been any delay in proceeding with the scheme?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As far as I know there has been no need for a delay regarding the terms of reference to the committee. If the work has been delayed it has probably been because other work has been regarded as more urgent, but I will get a report for the honourable member on when the work may proceed.

**SUBSIDIES FOR SWIMMING POOLS.**

Mr. COUMBE—In view of the serious lack of modern hygienic swimming facilities throughout South Australia, particularly in the metropolitan area, will the Treasurer consider increasing the present subsidy of £1,500 paid to local authorities with a view to encouraging the provision of additional swimming pools in this State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The question of swimming pools has not been an easy one, for the procedure in the various States has differed and we have to conform to the general pattern laid down by the Grants Commission. There have been numerous applications for subsidies, but the amount of money available has been limited. Money was voted by Parliament for this purpose under the Tourist Bureau activities, but Cabinet has considered the matter and decided to assist, quite apart from Tourist Bureau activities, to the extent of £1,500 for any one project in any one year on a 50-50 basis. A large number of applications have been received and a considerable number of swimming pools have been installed under the scheme. Applications are at present coming in rather more quickly than the money, and far from increasing the amount, I would say we would have difficulty in retaining the present amount. However, the Government hopes to continue to pay it under subsidy. If the amount were increased to some activities some applications could not be satisfied at all. The present provision is useful, greatly appreciated, and greatly availed of.

Mr. HEASLIP—Before any reduction in subsidy is considered will the Treasurer ensure that preferential treatment is given to applicant towns and districts where no natural means of learning to swim are available?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I regret that my observations may have been capable of misinterpretation. I did not mean that the Government was actually considering reducing the £1,500 subsidy. Indeed, the Government desires to maintain it, and I was careful to say that £1,500 was the amount that would be available in any one year. In one or two instances I have informed organizations sponsoring swimming pools which have more difficulty than others in establishing them that if they apply again in another year their application will be considered. I assure the honourable member that the matters he has mentioned will be fully taken into account.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Will the Treasurer consider assisting Mr. Tom Herraman (Secretary of the South Australian Amateur Swimming Association) in experimental work on a method of chlorination he has developed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I believe that the Engineer-in-Chief has officers capable of undertaking that work, and as this is a matter that may have some significance to the State, I believe the Minister would be willing to make officers available to a reasonable extent. If Mr. Herraman will get in touch with the Engineer-in-Chief that officer will take the necessary steps.

#### REGISTRARS' FEES.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Can the Premier intimate whether it is intended to increase the fees payable to district and suburban registrars of births, deaths and marriages? The fees now payable to these people—who are, in the main, police officers—have not been altered for many years. They are involved in much administrative work for a return that may have been appropriate 50 years ago but is inappropriate now. Does the Government intend increasing those fees to accord with the decrease in the real value of money?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government desires to keep all fees and charges to the public as low as possible. Indeed, some charges to the public have not been altered for many years, notwithstanding that during that period the value of money has completely altered. All these matters must be examined because of their effect on the Budget next year. I will examine these particular fees and let the honourable member have a reply later.

#### KOONIBBA WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—Can the Minister of Works supply any information concerning the provision of water supplies for the mission stations? I have in mind Koonibba in my district. Two alternatives are suggested: firstly, to provide galvanized iron to enable rain-water to be collected, and secondly, to have water pumped by pipe from the nearest main. Can the Minister indicate whether and when a water supply will be provided?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Many suggestions have been made concerning a water supply to that station. One was that the Government would make a substantial subsidy towards a scheme for catchment from the rocks that are there. The mission thought its quota of the cost would be beyond its means, and for a long time the subject was dropped. Another suggestion was to continue a line from the Tod River; but that would have been so costly that it was impracticable. From time to time we have had discussions on the matter but nothing definite has been decided upon that would give a fair return for the money expended and agree with the mission's views of what it could afford. The position has altered to the extent that Yalata Station has been purchased and taken over by the mission, and it was mutually agreed that any profit from the station would be utilized to assist natives, not necessarily on the West Coast. The question will be examined from that point of view. The matter has by no means been overlooked and the discussions have always been most cordial and helpful. We are trying to arrive at something mutually satisfactory.

#### CHILD MIGRANT'S OVERSEAS VISIT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked recently concerning a child migrant who had been treated at the Royal Adelaide Hospital but went overseas for further medical attention?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. I apologize for the delay in presenting this report which I have obtained from the neuro-surgeon of the Hospitals Department, addressed to the Superintendent of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. In view of the widespread interest in this matter I will read the entire report, which is as follows:—

In reply to your inquiry about the Ruta Tomanis case the facts regarding this girl's diagnosis are as follows. I first saw her in November, 1955, at the request of Dr. M. E. Chinner as a suspected brain tumour.

Exploratory craniotomy was carried out on November 4, 1955, and this revealed no evidence of brain tumour. I personally interviewed the girl's father before and after this operation and explained to him that there was no brain tumour. It has been stated in the press that the patient's medical adviser told her parents that her condition was incurable and that she had only two months to live. At no time did I make any such statement to the girl's parents and, in fact, when the girl's father mentioned this to me I pointed out to him that I had never expressed this opinion to him.

A subsequent operation was carried out on April 3 last to relieve rising intracranial pressure. I again interviewed the father personally both before and after this operation and informed him of the reason for the operation which was to reduce the intracranial pressure to allow the child to be flown to Germany. I again took this opportunity of informing the father that there was no evidence of a brain tumour.

Prior to the girl's departure to Germany the press were in frequent communication with me regarding the child's progress and diagnosis and I repeatedly informed the press that in my opinion the child was not suffering from a brain tumour. In spite of this repeated opinion of mine the press persisted in publishing reports stating that the child did in fact have a brain tumour. A recent statement in the press therefore that the diagnosis had been changed and that a brain tumour had been diagnosed in Adelaide is not in accord with the facts.

I enclose herewith a letter from Professor Rottgen, Director of the Department of Neurosurgery of the University Clinic of Bonn which I think is self-explanatory. I might add that at no time was any objection raised to the transfer of this patient to Europe and in fact many additional hours work both by myself and other members of the Neurosurgical Clinic were involved in facilitating her air passage from Australia.

The enclosure from Professor Rottgen of Bonn addressed to Mr. T. A. R. Dinning, Neurosurgeon, Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide, reads:—

Dear Colleague,

Many thanks for letting me have the clinical history of Ruta Tomanis. I am, as you are, convinced that no significant treatment for her illness is at present available. At any rate I would suggest X-ray therapy. You can imagine what a fuss the journalists made out of this case. I hope your opinion of the German neurosurgeons is such that you realize they do not participate in such nonsense.

#### BROCKS CREEK URANIUM N.L.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question concerns a company registered in South Australia under the name Brocks Creek Uranium No Liability. It was prospecting for uranium, but it has now changed to gold prospecting or pretending to do so. I believe that in March, 1954, two other companies were incorporated

with this company, and that despite a Stock Exchange rule that an ordinary meeting must be held in each calendar year, or not later than 15 months after the incorporation, and that a balance-sheet must be presented to the shareholders each year, it was not until May 18 that the first annual meeting was held—more than two years after incorporation—and at that meeting the first balance-sheet was submitted to the shareholders. I believe that because of the non-compliance with the Stock Exchange rule the Exchange may feel obliged to take action that will react to the disadvantage of the shareholders, although they were not at fault. I believe also that as a result of this and other things there is general dissatisfaction amongst the shareholders. Will the Premier have the affairs of the company referred to the Registrar of Companies to see whether a thorough investigation is warranted?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

#### EIGHT MILE CREEK SETTLEMENT.

Mr. CORCORAN—During the Address in Reply debate I referred to the Eight Mile Creek soldier settlement area and expressed an opinion I formed as the result of interviews with the settlers and inspections of the blocks. As the House will rise today for some time I ask the Minister of Repatriation whether he has a report to make on this area?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Following on the representations made by the Returned Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia on behalf of settlers at Eight Mile Creek I attended a meeting in December to hear the complaints of settlers who had said in a letter, which they all signed, that on the average they had lost more than £890 each year since being there. When I met the settlers I told them I could not accept that statement because I knew differently, as some had left the area and been paid by the department almost £1,000, representing the equity they had created while there. One settler whom I know very well and consider a good type claimed that he had a good case and took up the case on behalf of settlers generally. He said he had signed the statement, but on being questioned at the meeting he stated that when he went to Eight Mile Creek he had less than £100; he had met his annual commitments to the department; he owed nobody a penny; and he now had about 100 head of stock which, on a very low estimate, he valued at between £2,500 and £3,000. I said, "Then you have created an equity of

that value in your property," and he agreed. I know other settlers in the same position. Incidentally, that settler within a month or two had purchased a hay baler costing about £960.

Mr. Fletcher—You couldn't blame him for that.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—No, but I blame the settlers for making statements that were proved in my presence to be entirely wrong. At that meeting in December five points were raised for my consideration and I agreed to consider them and help the settlers as much as I could. The problem of drainage was raised. All members, including the members for Mount Gambier and Millicent, know the problems associated with drainage in the South-East: unless the land is drained carefully it will be overdrained and a serious problem created. That problem is present in this area, and I have been asked both for more drainage and not to proceed with so much drainage.

Mr. Corcoran—I said the drainage would have to be controlled.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—We have tried to control it so that the neighbour's property is not overdrained, but it is a difficult problem. Within three weeks after the meeting the South-Eastern Drainage Board met the settlers and decided to carry out the proposal submitted. They are still working on minor matters in the area. At the meeting I was asked whether money could be made available to construct a road through the Creek so that settlers on the beach side could take their stock to higher ground for agistment. I took up the matter with my colleague, the Minister of Roads, and money was made available. That road is now completed and is referred to by the settlers as the speed track because it is so excellent. I consider that the settlers were entitled to ask for assistance and advice and I am anxious to help them.

There is little shelter from trees on the area and since the meeting I have had the Director of the Botanical Gardens (Mr. Lothian) down on two occasions to advise on a type of tree that would best remedy this defect. Although I have not received his report no doubt he will forward a helpful one. Occasionally I have been concerned by reports from settlers concerning the land and pastures, and I arranged with the late Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Arthur Christian) to make his officers available to inspect the area. That inspection was delayed a little

because at that time there was a grasshopper plague and the men were not readily available, but since then the officers have visited the area and recommended to me that on five or six blocks five acres be made available so that experiments can be conducted to ascertain whether some soil deficiency is affecting the pasture. That work is now being carried out.

At the meeting I attended the Federal Deputy Director was present and minutes were taken by the settlers themselves. The Deputy Director and I agreed to send accountants to the district to inspect the settlers' books to ascertain whether anything could be found to help them. That has been done in other areas and found to be beneficial to the settlers. According to the minutes the settlers agreed to give all the assistance they could to the accountants and produce evidence concerning their purchases, sales, returns and anything else concerning their operations; but unfortunately, when departmental officers visited the area subsequently, 10 of the 28 settlers gave no evidence and signed a statement that they did not wish to give it, and four were absent. That is very regrettable, but those who gave evidence showed that they had created equities of varying amounts since they had been at Eight Mile Creek. Indeed, during the time they have been on the area at least 80 per cent have met their commitments in full annually.

Mr. Corcoran—That would not be conclusive evidence that they were making fortunes.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I do not suggest that, but I suggest very strongly that reports from the area were not according to fact. Nobody has greater sympathy with the returned soldiers than I: I will do everything possible to help them and visit them at any time. The five things they asked for have been done, yet I still get reports that we are not doing what we promised, whereas the only promise broken is that by the settlers themselves to give evidence to the two accountants made available by the department.

Mr. HARDING—Can the Minister give any information regarding the pasture position and stock-carrying capacity in the Eight Mile Creek area?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I would not be certain of the actual position of the pasture today but a report presented in December showed that the pasture was in excellent condition. I think, without exception, every settler was carrying the amount of stock he

was supposed to carry under the Commonwealth-State scheme. As a matter of fact, some settlers were carrying at least 50 per cent over the amount they should have been carrying. Consequently I feel that the pasture was very good and I cannot see any reason why it should have deteriorated since then.

Mr. QUIRKE—My interest in the Eight Mile Creek area is consequent upon my membership of the Land Settlement Committee when the area was just a swamp covered with teatree scrub. It is well known with these peat soils that when water that has completely covered them has been drained off the soils are subject to subsidence and oxidization, and become extremely acid. The pH of the soils can have a high acid incidence and the higher it is the less nutritive are the grasses grown on them. I offer a suggestion to overcome the difficulty in the area, particularly as the pasture position in relation to volume appears to be sound but as related to milk production completely unsound. Will the Minister of Lands, if it has not already been done, ascertain the pH of the soils with a view to learning whether the acid reaction from them is so high as to prevent the full nutritive value being in the grasses grown on the soils and to cause the low milk production, which after all is the basis of the return to the settlers?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The question raised by the honourable member has been considered on a number of occasions. It was one of the items that worried me considerably but a survey of the cattle showed that they were in excellent condition. In some cases the yield and quality of the milk was excellent, but in others it was not so good. The matter of acid incidence has been considered and that is the main reason why I have approved the Department of Agriculture planting up to five acres on six blocks in an attempt to ascertain the trouble.

Mr. Quirke—Can you give me the pH of the soils?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—No, but I will endeavour to get it for the honourable member.

Mr. CORCORAN—I thank the Minister for his reply, but I am still not happy about the problems that have to be solved. Speaking on the Address in Reply I suggested that an experimental block be established by the Government in this area. I pointed out that one block had not been allotted and that it could be used by the Government to seek a solution of the problems referred to. I also referred to the drainage problem and queried whether

the holdings were large enough. If an experimental block proved a success it would not be any liability to the taxpayer and would solve many problems. Will the Minister consider establishing one?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member suggested this to me before and I considered it, but after conferring with my officers I thought it better to experiment on five or six blocks there because the problems vary in the different blocks. For instance, a very popular man occupied one block but could not make a go of it. It was considered by the settlers there, and others, that there was something radically wrong with the block, but since his departure another settler has taken it up and made a great success of it. This man applied about three months ago for permission to agist a further 60 head of cattle and 300 sheep on a 34-acre paddock because he could not utilize all the pasture with his own dairy cattle.

Mr. Corcoran—He may be able to agist stock for three months, but could he do it all the year round?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have given that illustration to show that there are variations in the blocks and what efficient management can do.

Mr. Corcoran—I only want to know that the Government is doing all it can to solve the problems of the settlers there.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I assure the honourable member that I will do everything possible to help them.

#### SIGNS AT PORT ROAD INTERSECTIONS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—The Port Road is a two-way thoroughfare, having up and down tracks, and there are many tracks connecting the up and down tracks where vehicles must wait until the Port Road is clear before entering it. However, where the up and down tracks are connected by an intersection running right through them the rule giving right of way to the vehicle on the right applies. I find there is much confusion because of the different rules and in many instances accidents have just been averted. Will the Premier see whether signs can be placed at the intersections showing that the give way to the right rule applies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is impossible to put up notices covering all the provisions of the Road Traffic Act, and the public is obliged to know the general provisions of the Act; indeed, new applicants for licences must pass a test on the Act before getting a licence.

There are some places where obviously the public might have difficulty; for instance, the metropolitan area now extends beyond built up areas, and we have erected signs indicating when the speed limit of 35 miles an hour applies; but I will have the honourable member's question examined.

#### SALE OF HOUSING TRUST HOMES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I believe that some time ago the Premier said he would discuss with the Housing Trust the possibility of tenants purchasing the houses they live in. Can he say how far those discussions have gone?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The trust has always been prepared to sell a large number of houses, but some, owing to the locality or their type of construction, are not suitable for selling. If a dwelling is a single unit and not in a rental area the trust, as a general rule, is willing to sell it, and I believe that the houses erected under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement during the last two years could be purchased. If the honourable member will let me know any area he has in mind I will advise him whether the houses there are for sale.

#### PORT AUGUSTA-WOOMERA ROAD.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Can the Minister representing the Minister of Roads reply to the question I asked recently about the sealing of the Port-Augusta-Woomera Road?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM MCINTOSH—I cannot take the matter any further now, but I will write to the honourable member in the next day or so and give him an up-to-date report.

#### COUNTRY ELECTRICITY CHARGES.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Recently I asked the Premier questions relating to electricity charges in rural areas. Has he a reply regarding surcharges, the method of charging interest on capital costs, and the acceptance of full payment for installation to the consumer?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have had prepared a full report, and as it is lengthy I ask leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Several members have asked questions about country electricity charges and I have had a full statement prepared that will help them to understand the system in force and what alternatives the consumer has available to him. Members may

take this factual statement as having perhaps more validity than the usual answer to a question. It reads:—

The cost of supplying electricity increases with the distance from the power station. Not only is the cost of the transmission line involved (and this may amount to several thousands of pounds per mile) but losses of power are incurred in transmitting the electricity to where it is required. As long as thermal power stations are used to generate the power the site of a station is determined by the availability of large quantities of suitable water for cooling purposes and the availability of coal, or unloading facilities for coal or oil. It has always been the trust's policy to supply electricity in country areas at the lowest possible price. It cannot be supplied at less than cost if the trust is to remain financially sound.

The introduction of a uniform electricity tariff throughout the State would involve large financial losses which could only be met firstly by increases in metropolitan tariffs or, alternatively, if the Government saw fit, by a subsidy from the general taxpayer. The first method might defeat its own object by causing decreased consumption since electricity supply in the metropolitan area is faced with competition much more than is commonly realised and much more than, say, water supply. In the domestic field gas is a strong competitor, and for industrial and commercial uses the cost of operating diesel plant would not be greatly in excess of present electricity tariffs. Some firms do, in fact, operate their own plant, and for heating purposes the use of oil and other fuels is common. An increase in tariffs could therefore result in reduced consumption and increased cost per unit and would thus fail to obtain more revenue. Such an increase would differ from those which have been made necessary from time to time by rising costs where the cost of competitive sources of power have also been affected. Increasing metropolitan tariffs, therefore, cannot be an answer.

The possibility of subsidizing country tariffs from the general taxation revenue of the State would involve the Government in financing the cost from taxation sources in South Australia. The Commonwealth Grants Commission would not condone any policy of subsidy for such a purpose and would disallow the expenditure when assessing the special grant for the State. There would be no other source from which the funds could be obtained except by an increase in taxation. The Grants Commission has already made it clear in a West Australian case that it would disallow any such expenditure in assessing the grant. An Act has already been passed by this Parliament—The Electricity Supplies (Country Areas) Act, 1950—to assist the supply of electricity in sparsely settled areas, but it was not intended that the assistance would be carried to the extent that tariffs would be reduced to metropolitan levels. Assistance under this Act has already been approved for several country councils in connection with local supplies, for example, the District Councils of Tatiara, Murat Bay, Streaky Bay, Elliston, Hallett, Hawker, Port Broughton, Millicent, Karoonda, Lucindale, Orroroo and the Renmark Irrigation Trust.

Special assistance in such cases does not fall into the same category as an overall Government subsidy to country consumers supplied from the main electricity system.

If the present country tariffs were excessive or were such that consumers were forced to alternative and less convenient sources of power, then it might be desirable to endeavour to obtain some other method of subsidy. However, this is not the case. Because of the trust's firm policy of supplying electricity in the country as cheaply as possible, the normal tariffs are not greatly in excess of those applying in the metropolitan area. For example, a domestic consumer possessing an electric range and refrigerator but no hot-water service would use about 2,400 kilowatt-hours per annum. His charge in the metropolitan area would be £22 18s. and in towns such as Waikerie, Clare, Jamestown and Wallaroo would be £28 3s. 10d. This is an addition of less than 25 per cent although these towns are all about 100 miles from a power station. If tariffs applicable in other capital cities of Australia are taken into account the position is even more favourable. The domestic consumer who uses 2,400 kilowatt-hours per annum would pay in various capital cities the following annual amounts:—

	£	s.	d.
Adelaide . . . . .	22	18	0
Melbourne . . . . .	24	0	0
Sydney . . . . .	21	12	0
Brisbane . . . . .	24	8	0
Perth . . . . .	28	4	0

Average, five capitals . . . . . 24 4 0

The cost of £28 3s. 10d., which would apply in the South Australian country towns mentioned above is 16 per cent higher than the average of the five capitals and is actually less than is the charge in Perth. The favourable rates applicable to the trust's supply in the country can also be appreciated by reference to the tariffs charged by local governing bodies who provide their own power. In the town of Naracoorte, for example, the domestic consumer using 2,400 kilowatt-hours per annum would pay £49 for his electricity, compared with the figure of £28 3s. 10d., applying in the above country towns.

If the domestic consumer had an off-peak hot water system and made full use of domestic power, he would use about 2,400 kilowatt-hours per annum on the single meter tariff and 4,800 kilowatt-hours on the off-peak tariff. His annual account in the various capital cities would then be as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Adelaide . . . . .	42	18	0
Melbourne . . . . .	43	0	0
Sydney . . . . .	43	12	0
Brisbane . . . . .	49	15	0
Perth (approximately) . . . . .	57	0	0

Average, five capitals . . . . . 47 4 0

The charge to a similar consumer in the country towns such as Waikerie, Clare, Jamestown, Wallaroo, etc., would be £50 11s. 10d., which is only 7 per cent above the average of the five capitals. It is appreciably less than would be charged in Perth and very little above what would be charged in Brisbane. These

comparisons are for domestic consumers and similar figures could be obtained for other types of consumption. For example, a small dairy with, say, 20 cows would use about 900 kilowatt-hours per annum in addition to domestic power. The cost in the metropolitan area would be £13 8s. and in the country towns mentioned £15 2s., an increase of 13 per cent on metropolitan rates.

Another comparison in such a case is with the cost of operating an independent generating plant on the farm. If the farmer wanted a full domestic supply he would use about 2,400 kilowatt-hours for general use, 4,800 kilowatt-hours for water heating (off-peak) and 900 kilowatt-hours for the dairy. The charge for this amount of electricity supplied from the trust in the country areas already mentioned would be £65 13s. 10s. But the cost of providing the same facilities from an independent generating plant would be about £300. This is so expensive that it is usually not feasible to use electric cooking or water heating unless a public electricity supply is available. The more usual case is where only the essential electrical appliances such as lighting, ironing, etc., are supplied and the milking machine is driven directly from the diesel engine. Even under these conditions the cost of operation would be about £150 per annum plus the cost of some alternative means of cooking and water heating. These figures exclude any allowance for the farmer's own time in tending the plant.

Despite the continuous rise in costs, country tariffs in South Australia have been reduced twice in the last two years. With the commissioning of the Port Augusta Power Station, a general review was made and reductions were applied particularly to the northern towns. In Port Augusta itself, although the electricity is retailed by the local Corporation, the tariffs are similar to those applying in Adelaide due to the favourable rates at which the electricity is provided in bulk by the trust. In November, 1954, a general tariff reduction was made which benefited all types of consumers. All of the above comments apply to normal supplies in country areas. In cases where costs above the average are involved in connecting individual consumers or small groups of consumers, the trust requires an extra payment above the normal tariffs to cover the extra costs associated with supplying individuals or small groups.

The trust has recently reviewed its methods of charging for extensions in country areas where capital costs above the average are involved and has introduced a method which is appreciably more favourable to the consumer than the one previously in use. Consumers already connected under the original schemes are being given the option of transferring to the new scheme which will also apply in all new cases. At the same time, the trust examined all existing extensions which were paying above normal tariffs, and in the case of all those connected prior to 1951 decided to cancel the surcharges and place the consumers on normal tariffs.

The method now employed by the trust in assessing this payment is one of the most

favourable to the consumer of any of the schemes used in Australia. It is as follows:—

1. Consider the case of a consumer where the extension of power lines from the nearest point of supply is estimated to cost £500. The trust's annual expense in connection with this capital outlay is at present 8% or £40. This covers interest, depreciation and maintenance of the lines and is a particularly low figure. With the recent increase in interest rates it may be necessary to review the 8% in the near future.

The SPEAKER—Order! Under Standing Order 134 a Ministerial statement may only be made by leave of the House and may not exceed 15 minutes without further leave. Will the Premier ask for further leave?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I ask leave to continue the statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The statement continues:—

2. Suppose the consumer's payment for power used at normal tariff rates is £50 per annum, then a proportion of this amount—4s. in each £1—making £10, is applied towards the excessive cost of the extension, which in this case would reduce the £40 referred to above to £30. This then becomes the maximum annual amount the consumer is asked to pay in addition to normal tariffs. It should be particularly noted that the £30 will not increase even if electricity consumption is below expectations, but it will be reduced if electricity consumption increases above the quantity estimated for the payment of £50.

3. In any case, the agreement with the consumer is for a period of 10 years only at the end of which time normal tariffs only are charged.

It will be noted that the maximum possible additional amount which the consumer is called upon to pay is £30 per year for 10 years or £300. This is in connection with an extension costing £500. Thus, even if interest is completely ignored, the consumer would not ever pay for the full capital cost of the extension. If interest is five per centum per annum, this amounts to £250 in the 10 years so that there would be only a £50 contribution by the consumer towards the cost of the extension. Where several settlers are concerned in supplying to a group the same principles are applied, and the additional payment is fixed by the trust as one sum for the whole group. The division of this amount among the individual members of the group is fixed by themselves. The trust does assist by making suggestions to the group as to a fair and reasonable allocation among the consumers. An extension is not proceeded with before the members of the group have had all financial implications explained to them, and have agreed to accept the conditions.

In making electricity available under these conditions the trust is obviously making substantial concessions to country consumers. This

is in accordance with the trust's policy for supply in country areas. Even where these charges beyond the normal tariffs are involved, consumers will usually be paying no more than the cost of electricity supplied by any other means. The Naracoorte tariff mentioned earlier, for example, is equivalent to a surcharge of 75% on the tariff applicable in towns like Jamestown, Clare, Wallaroo, etc., where there is no surcharge on the normal tariff. Naracoorte is a sizeable town and the cost of supplying electricity there would be considerably less than in the case of small groups of consumers.

The comparison with an independent generating unit is even more favourable and this is obvious from the number of people who convert to the trust's supply when it becomes available. It must be borne in mind that all extensions of supply are made by agreement with the consumer and under conditions which are fully explained before the mains are connected.

The trust's policy is not only to provide electricity in country areas at the lowest possible rates, but also to endeavour to see that the available resources of material and labour are used to provide supply to as many country consumers as possible. The present methods are designed to implement this policy. That they are successful is shown by the fact that last year 3,993 new consumers were added in country areas. This was easily a record, and exceeded the total number of new consumers, both metropolitan and country, who were added each year to the electricity undertaking prior to the formation of the Electricity Trust in 1946.

#### VICTOR HARBOUR PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. JENKINS—Following on a visit to the Victor Harbour primary school by the Minister of Education, and representations being made, approval was given for the provision of a staff room to accommodate nine male and female teachers. Can the Minister say what progress has been made towards providing the room?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Approval was given for a new staff room for the school. The matter was referred to the Architect-in-Chief for planning, but it is a long way down on the list of priority and I cannot hold out any hope that it will be completed or even commenced in the near future. Considerable sums of money have been spent during the last year or so on this school in its renovation and for the purchase of additional areas of land. Following on a personal inspection I was not very proud of the room which the staff is now using and I would like to see a new room there as soon as possible, but the Victor Harbour school is typical of numerous schools of the older type, both in the metropolitan and country areas. I am pleased to



receive representations from members of Parliament, local government bodies, school committees, the Teachers Institute and other interested parties concerning new school buildings, and repairs and additions to schools, but I cannot guarantee to alter the priority list except where changing circumstances require it. I cannot assure the parties that their requests will be complied with promptly.

From time to time I have received reports from the Director, the Deputy Director and Property Officer of the Department of Education that it is conservatively estimated there are 1,000 minor works that have been approved but are still awaiting completion. That is due, or course, to varied reasons—the almost complete cessation of school building during the war years and in early post-war years, as well as the present widespread demand upon the State's limited resources of manpower, materials, and money. It is interesting to note that the total expenditure on education by the department during the last 10 years has increased tremendously. In 1945 it was £1,500,000, of which £175,000 was spent on buildings, sites, repairs, etc. Five years later in 1950 it was £3,500,000, of which £650,000 was spent on buildings, etc. In 1955 it had increased to £8,500,000, of which £1,650,000 was spent on buildings. I realize that the honourable member's legitimate request is one of a thousand that cannot be complied with at present. We are doing everything humanly possible to bring our older schools up to date and to build new ones as soon as possible. I have been generously treated by the Treasurer since I have been Minister of Education, considering the numerous commitments he has for all departments. Although I am willing and anxious to comply with all the requests of members I cannot do so any more quickly than prevailing circumstances permit.

#### DISPOSAL OF INTESTATE ESTATES.

Mr. TAPPING—During the Address in Reply debate I referred to the position when a person dies intestate. I said that under our law if a husband dies without leaving a will the widow gets one-third and the children two-thirds of the estate. The Act has not been overhauled for at least 40 to 50 years, and I think it is acting unfairly against widows, as they get only one-third of the estate. Will the Premier consider the matter during the Parliamentary recess and give me a reply as soon as possible?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter has been under consideration but I have already

intimated I will go into it again during the recess. Whether the Government will bring down a Bill I cannot say, because Cabinet has not reached a final decision. In due course I will advise the honourable member of the position.

#### PETERBOROUGH WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works any information following on the question I asked on May 22 regarding the expected commencement of work on augmenting the supply of water to the town of Peterborough?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The first 12 miles of cement pipes are expected to arrive in about a fortnight's time and concurrently with their arrival trenching excavations will be made so that the pipes can go in. A start will be made following on the arrival of the pipes in about a fortnight.

#### FULHAM GARDENS TRANSPORT.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Yesterday I asked the Minister of Works a question requesting the Tramways Trust to extend its bus service down Grange Road to Beach Street. As I have now received a petition on this matter, signed by 200 residents in the Fulham Gardens area, will the Minister forward it to the General Manager of the trust?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes. I have had a copy of the honourable member's question sent to the trust and I will now forward the petition.

#### MILANG IRRIGATION SCHEME.

Mr. JENKINS—At one time an irrigation scheme was proposed to enable closer settlement in the area near Milang. Now that the barrage ensures great quantities of fresh water being available, can the Minister of Irrigation say whether the Government intends to implement this proposal?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Some years ago the Land Settlement Committee reported unfavourably on an irrigation scheme to enable vines to be grown in the area, and shortly afterwards when a further investigation was made concerning other types of agriculture it was again found that it would be unwise to proceed with the undertaking because of the high salinity.

#### SOUTHEND FISHING FACILITIES.

Mr. CORCORAN—Has the Premier received a report from Harbors Board officers who took soundings at Southend, on the construction of a deep-sea port there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The investigations at Southend have emphasized, firstly, that an undoubted immediate need exists for landing facilities for fishermen, as this is an important fishing centre and for a long time fishermen have had to land fish on the open beach, which is difficult and arduous. A survey has been undertaken, and the work will be put in hand as soon as possible. The second project mentioned by the honourable member in his Address in Reply speech is much more costly and Cabinet has not yet reached a decision on it.

#### HOSPITAL CHARGES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether, on the completion of the Queen Elizabeth hospital, the Government intends to apply generally the scale of public, intermediate and private charges now obtaining in the maternity section?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I cannot give the honourable member a full reply at present. In reply to an earlier question by the member for Norwood I said that the Government had always desired to keep all charges and fees as low as possible. Today the Royal Adelaide Hospital is one of the only two Australian hospitals where inmates are not charged fees. However, all these matters must be examined when the Budget is being compiled; therefore I cannot indicate yet what the fees will be at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital nor whether the Royal Adelaide fees will be changed. These matters will be brought before Parliament for consideration in due course.

#### THEVENARD BULK HANDLING FACILITIES.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—Can the Minister of Marine say when facilities for the bulk handling of grain will be completed at Thevenard?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The Harbors Board installations will be completed in order of priority, and I think Thevenard has a high priority. After I have conferred with the General Manager of the Harbors Board and he with the wheat handling authority, I will reply to the honourable member.

#### VALE PARK AND HAMILTON SEWERAGE.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question on sewerage facilities for Vale Park and Hamilton?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The pattern of building development in these suburbs has been along the Main North-East

Road and the eastern end of the subdivision. The built-up streets cannot be served without laying sewers through undeveloped land abutting Harris Road and Angas Avenue. The fall of the land in the district is from the Main North-East Road towards the river and consequently sewers must be extended from the river end of Angas Avenue along Harris Road with branches along the various streets towards the Main North-East Road. A scheme to serve these suburbs would involve the laying of nearly four miles of sewer at an estimated cost of £27,000. At a recent deputation from the corporation of the City of Enfield, the Council stated that if it was impossible at this juncture to sewer the whole, they would be willing to accept a compromise for the top portion of the area to be sewered. An examination will accordingly be made to ascertain the extent of development that has taken place since the previous inspection and assessment was made. This will be followed by an up-to-date review of the financial aspects of the proposal. When I receive the Engineer-in-Chief's report hereon, I will submit the matter to Cabinet for consideration. I will let the honourable member have a further reply in due course.

#### COUNTRY SEWERAGE

Mr. FLETCHER—Can the Minister of Works say when consideration will be given to sewerage facilities in country towns?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Last session Parliament amended the legislation by raising the maximum rate to 2s. 6d., a more realistic figure than the previous 1s. 9d., and a sum will be placed on this year's Loan Estimates. When that amount is known the order of priority of towns to be sewered will be determined, but at present I can make no further announcement.

#### STEELWORKS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Can the Premier say whether the investigations into iron ore deposits outside leases held by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company are being carried out to the maximum capacity of the Mines Department? Further, is the Government negotiating with overseas interests for the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla or anywhere else in South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At present the Mines Department is undertaking an extensive programme of investigation in the Middle-back Ranges, but it also has other important projects in hand. The term that the honourable member used—"maximum capacity"—

could mean that the department would do nothing except carry out investigations in his district, but we are investigating many other fields. For instance, the Mines Department is investigating several possible oil fields for private interests and two bores are being put down on behalf of the Government. Further, many bores are being put down in the Leader of the Opposition's district. The investigation at Iron Knob is a large one and much drilling is being done there. After some initial successes we had a good many failures, but we now appear to understand the geological formation of the area better and I think the investigations will disclose sufficient iron ore to warrant continuing our work there.

Recently the Government made inquiries abroad to see whether any overseas concern would be interested in establishing steelworks, and it believes there would be keen interest overseas if the deposits of iron ore were disclosed to be large enough. The works would require the expenditure of between £50,000,000 and £100,000,000, and the first essential is to have available the necessary raw materials. The establishment of such a big undertaking would depend largely on whether Australia was in a position to grant export licences for the materials produced. This country might not be able to consume the total production and the company would obviously want to be able to export surplus pig iron or steel.

#### COST OF LIVING INCREASES.

Mr. LAUCKE—What has the increase in the cost of living been in this State since the Arbitration Court suspended the C series index adjustments, and what items were responsible for the increases?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This question was raised several times during the Address in Reply debate and I have had some figures taken out. They show what commodities or groups of commodities have increased in price, and the various items have been grouped in States with price control and those without price control. Food and grocery prices increased in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania by an average of 12s. 11d.; in South Australia by 10s. 8d.; and in Queensland by 9s. 6d. Rents increased in the four first-named States by an average of 8s. 2d.; in South Australia by 3s. 10d.; and in Queensland by 1s. 7d. Clothing prices increased in the four first-named States by 6d.; decreased in South Australia by 4d.; and increased in Queensland by 6d.

Miscellaneous items increased in the four first-named States by 1s. 6d.; in South Australia by 1s. 3d.; and in Queensland by 3s. 4d. In the four States without price control the average total increase was £1 3s. 1d.; in South Australia 15s. 5d.; and in Queensland 14s. 11d.

#### ADULT EDUCATION.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Can the Minister of Education say whether in recent discussions on adult education, there has been any proposal to interfere with or control local organizations which have initiated adult education classes?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—There has been no decision to control them, nor is it intended to do so. On the contrary, I would encourage them because it is in the best interests of the State that individual communities should control their own classes.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have read and heard reports recently that substantial unemployment is developing in various parts of the Commonwealth. Can the Premier say whether there is any substantial unemployment in South Australia or any possibility of its developing?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The member for Adelaide raised this question during the debate on the Address in Reply, but did not follow it up. It is difficult to get accurate figures on unemployment because a person must be unemployed for a certain period before becoming eligible for unemployment relief benefits. At this time last year we had 6,700 jobs unfilled, and the present figure is 2,700, though they are mostly specialized jobs. The transfer of labour from factory to factory has now almost entirely ceased. At present 113 South Australians are receiving unemployment relief, 63 being males and 50 females. That figure is .04 per cent of the population of Australia.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Are those 113 unemployed people skilled or unskilled workers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand that most of the females are migrants who have difficulty in speaking English and could not take, for instance, positions in shops or restaurants. In addition to those receiving relief it is estimated that there are about 500 unemployed unskilled labourers in South Australia. One group of 450 men came from Western Australia and others have been coming here from interstate seeking employment.

During the last two weeks the net increase in unemployment has been six in the first week and 13 in the second.

#### HACKNEY BUS SERVICING DEPOT.

Mr. JENNINGS—Does the Minister of Works know whether the Municipal Tramways Trust, when letting a contract for the erection of a new bus servicing depot at Hackney, had a penalty clause included relating to its time of completion and, if so, whether the trust availed itself of that clause when the contract was not completed on time?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The trust has advised that there was a penalty clause, but that the contract was completed within the specified time after allowing for an authorized extension of the contract because of inclement weather and other matters outside the contractor's control.

#### SCHOOL VISITS TO WINERIES.

Mr. QUIRKE—On May 9 I asked the Minister of Education a question concerning school visits to wineries upon which a ban has been placed by his department. Has he any further information?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have ascertained that it has been the established policy of the Education Department to refuse to allow tours of wineries. I have not had the opportunity of discussing this matter with Cabinet. I examined a document relating to this matter and found that it went beyond the department's jurisdiction. During the recess I will further consider the matter and confer with Cabinet and let the honourable member have a written reply.

#### SUBSIDIES FOR SCHOOL REFRIGERATORS.

Mr. JENNINGS—On May 8 I asked the Minister of Education a question relating to the payment of subsidies for school refrigerators. He promised to investigate the matter. Has he any further information and, if not, will he advise me by letter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have examined the matter but have not had an opportunity of discussing it with Cabinet. There is only a limited fund available and it is a question of whether we should enlarge the avenues of expenditure on commodities which are highly desirable—for example, refrigerators which may be useful in keeping children's lunches cool—or devote the fund to necessities. If we embark upon a large expenditure on refrigerators and other articles which may be considered

luxuries, the fund will be depleted by that amount and I may be obliged to refuse subsidies on necessities. Up to the present I have been in the fortunate position of being able to agree to every subsidy coming within the accepted categories. I desire to discuss the whole question of subsidies with Cabinet during the recess and then honourable members and school committees will know where they stand.

#### MAGILL BOYS' REFORMATORY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—A short time ago in a press statement the Chief Secretary intimated that the Government intended to spend about £90,000 in erecting buildings at the Magill Reformatory. Does that represent the Government's final decision and was full consideration given to the question of segregation?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chief Secretary has devoted much attention to this matter. Undoubtedly it is highly desirable to segregate the smaller children from those who are more experienced and hardened. Some time ago the Government purchased a valuable property—Struan—near Naracoorte with the object of placing suitable boys there and educating them in farm activities. It is a magnificent property and is being used more as an agricultural college than as a reformatory. The Government desires to extend that scheme as much as possible, but the number of suitable boys available is limited and the cost for a boy at that institution is extremely high. It is essential that only the right type of boy be sent to Struan otherwise the whole scheme will fail. The Government has approved of the expenditure of over £90,000 on improvements at Magill to provide for more effective segregation of age groups and for better accommodation for the staff. It would be extremely costly to maintain and staff an entirely new institution and there would only be a limited number of boys suitable for placing there. I doubt whether it would be necessary, particularly as we already have Struan.

Mr. Corcoran—Struan should become self-supporting.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Struan was purchased at a high price and is a magnificent property situated well away from all forms of temptation. The Government would prefer to improve Struan and increase its accommodation rather than open a third institution.

#### MILLICENT WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Can the Minister of Works indicate what further evidence has been taken

in connection with the proposed Millicent water supply and inform the House of the present position?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The last information I have is that proposals for a water supply for Millicent were referred to the Public Works Standing Committee in January, 1953, for inquiry and report. The then estimated cost was £133,250. As there was a difference of opinion among the townspeople as to whether or not a reticulated supply was required, the committee suggested that the council should take a poll of ratepayers. Following this suggestion, a petition was received signed by the council and 137 ratepayers within the area of the proposed scheme stating that they "are satisfied that a water scheme for the said area is necessary and approve the said water scheme." The petition, together with the request of the petitioners that the Public Works Standing Committee proceed with its investigations regarding the proposed water scheme, has been forwarded to the chairman of the committee, which conducts its own deliberations. I will follow the question up and ascertain whether any more information is available.

#### HAMPSTEAD ROAD, NORTHFIELD.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question relates to the Hampstead Road, more particularly the northern section at Northfield. This road has become more important because of the rapid development of that portion of the metropolitan area, but I regret that it has not improved in accordance with the greater population. It is not wide enough, there are no proper footpaths, and although tramways buses operate on it most of the day and night there are no good lighting facilities. I have ascertained from the Highways Department that this road is included in the main road schedule and is therefore the responsibility of that department. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads take up this matter with his colleague with a view to having the road improved?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes.

#### HONEY MARKETING POLL.

Mr. QUIRKE—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information in reply to the question I asked on May 15 regarding a poll of producers being taken by the Honey Marketing Board?

The Hon. G. PEARSON—I have nothing further to add. The matter will be referred to the Crown Solicitor for opinion, and action taken accordingly.

#### JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That the House of Assembly request the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment for the present session of a joint committee to which all Consolidation Bills shall stand referred, in accordance with Joint Stand-Order No. 18, and to which any further question, relative thereto, may at any time be sent by either House for report.

That, in the event of the Joint Committee being appointed, the House of Assembly be represented thereon by three members, two of whom shall form the quorum of the Assembly Members necessary to be present at all sittings of the Committee.

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolutions. That Messrs. Heath, Millhouse, and O'Halloran be representatives of the Assembly on the said Committee.

Motion carried.

#### PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That Standing Order No. 85 be so far suspended for the remainder of the session as to enable the Parliamentary Draftsman and his assistant to be accommodated with seats in the Chamber on the right hand side of the Speaker.

Motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.20 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 14, at 2 p.m.