

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Thursday, September 27, 1956.

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

**QUESTIONS.****SPEED LIMIT OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Premier consider amending the Road Traffic Act to increase the speed limit by five miles an hour for vehicles weighing between five and 10 tons? The vehicles concerned are principally used for carting building sand and metals for buildings and roads and are mainly Ford and Chevrolet type trucks. At 20 miles an hour many of them are labouring and 25 miles an hour would be a better speed.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—About a week or 10 days ago I received a deputation which requested that the speed limit for intermediate type commercial vehicles be increased by five miles an hour in built-up areas. The deputation pointed out that on the last occasion the Act was before Parliament the speed limit of vehicles outside the metropolitan area was increased by about five miles an hour for each class, but that through grouping the middle class commercial vehicles the previous speed limit of 30 miles an hour in built-up areas was reduced to 20 miles. I informed the deputation that I believed it would be hard to justify a speed of 25 miles an hour for these vehicles in the city proper—in Rundle Street, for instance, where there is traffic congestion. The deputation countered that by indicating they would be prepared to accept an increase of five miles an hour in built-up areas excluding the city square mile. The question has been referred to the Commissioner of Police to ascertain whether he has any objection to an increase and as soon as his views are received the matter will be considered by Cabinet and probably this House will be asked to consider an increase.

**FUEL TRANSPORT ON EYRE PENINSULA.**

Mr. BOCKELBERG—Can the Premier say why fuel is being carried to Ceduna and intervening towns by road transport when there is a railway line available for the purpose? I understand that the railways are not very keen to carry fuel and that agents complain that there is too long a delay by rail after they have ordered the fuel. Would

it be possible for the railways to speed up the carriage of fuel and so save the roads?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Contrary to what the honourable member has been informed, the railways regard liquid fuel as a very important item of freight and cart large quantities of it and desire to continue that traffic. As to the difficulty which may have arisen on Eyre Peninsula, I will see whether it arises out of a shortage of tankers or what the difficulty is, and ask the Railways Commissioner to see whether he can rectify it.

**DELAY IN ISSUING LAND TITLES.**

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In reply to earlier questions regarding delay in issuing land titles at Elizabeth the Premier said that the titles were being numbered and would be issued by the end of September. That time has almost arrived and I am reliably informed that very few have been issued. Will the Premier see whether it is possible to expedite their issue?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

**ATOMIC BOMB EXPLOSION.**

Mr. STOTT—There have been many delays in the explosion of an atomic bomb at Maralinga and there seems to be doubt whether the wind is blowing in the right direction at the right time. That has been the reason given by scientists for the postponements, which would indicate to the layman that there is some doubt as to the radio-active fall-out and whether the wind is in the right direction or not. In view of the delays, will the Premier make representations to the responsible Commonwealth Minister to have the question re-examined to see whether the explosion could take place at Monte Bello, Okinawa or Guadalcanal?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The standard set down for safety in Australia in these tests is probably the highest in the world. Similar tests are carried out by the Atomic Energy Commission of America on the Colorado plateau in the area where scarcely any wind could not fail to take the effects of the bomb to numerous settled areas which are relatively close compared with Maralinga. The Commonwealth Government has undoubtedly taken very great care to see that under no circumstances whatsoever can any radio-active fall-out take place in settled areas. It is inevitable, particularly at this time of the year, that the wind pattern should change and on occasions be perverse. The tests have

been postponed until the wind pattern is such that any possible radio-active fall-out will be carried to totally uninhabited areas. Under these circumstances there is no need whatever for any public apprehension regarding the safety measures being followed. It would not be practicable to transfer the trials to another place. The cost involved in preparing the ground alone has been about £6,000,000, and there must be certain facilities available to enable the tests to be successfully carried out. I assure the honourable member that from information I have received I have no doubt that the safety committee, which comprises really high class scientists from overseas and Australia, is taking no risks whatever of radio-active fall-out being present in inhabited areas.

#### ANZAC HIGHWAY TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Yesterday I asked the Premier a question regarding lighting at the corner of Anzac Highway and South Road and he gave me a very good reply, saying who should pay for them and the reasons why the Government should not do so. There is no doubt as to who will pay, but we want to know when the work will be done. Will the Premier ascertain when the lights will be installed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yesterday when asking the question, and again today, the honourable member mentioned lighting. I immediately assumed that it concerned street lighting. If he had mentioned traffic control lights I would have understood precisely what was involved in his question and given him the assurance that I would have an investigation made. I now give him that assurance.

#### PORT PIRIE LOCOMOTIVE SHED DRAIN.

Mr. DAVIS—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Works obtained a reply to the question I asked on September 18 regarding the drain running from the locomotive shed at Port Pirie into the harbour?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Minister of Railways has forwarded the following reply from the Railways Commissioner:—

The discharge of oil into the harbour at Port Pirie through the main drain leading from the railway yards was first reported in 1953. An examination revealed that oil could be discharged into this drain from any one of the following sources:—

- (1) State railway locomotive depot.
- (2) Commonwealth railways locomotive depot.
- (3) Gas company.
- (4) Various oil pipelines operated by State and Commonwealth departments.

In an effort to trace the source of the trouble inspections of the drain have been made by a railway officer at least once a week for a year or more, and samples of oil substance have, from time to time, been collected and forwarded to Adelaide for examination. The particular samples examined appear to indicate that the contamination is not from either of the Railways Departments at Port Pirie, and verbal representations have been made to the organization which is believed to be concerned. Spillage of cut-back bitumen has also occurred in the region where loading operations are being performed by an oil company. It is believed by the railway engineers to be extremely unlikely that any of the oil contamination referred to has originated from railway installations within the last 12 months. However, the position will be carefully watched, as hitherto.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF IN COUNTRY.

Mr. RICHES—My question relates to the distribution of relief by the Children's Welfare & Public Relief Department in country centres. At present we at Port Augusta are having the unfortunate experience of seeing families arriving under distressing circumstances without food or clothing. After they apply for relief the local representing officer has to send their claims to Adelaide for consideration, and these people are without food for upwards of a week. I have been asked to inquire whether the Department's representative at Port Augusta could not be the authority in cases of emergency to issue relief forthwith.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I did not know that an emergency had arisen at Port Augusta. I presume that the families referred to are coming by the East-West line from some other places. I will have the matter investigated, and advise the honourable member in due course.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE INQUIRY.

Mr. TAPPING—In last night's *News* was an article headed "Public Service Inquiry Urged," which reported statements allegedly made by the member for Light in his Budget speech on Tuesday.

THE SPEAKER—The honourable member cannot refer to any debate that took place in this House during the present session.

Mr. TAPPING—I wish only to read an extract from the *News*, if you will let me do so. In that paper the member for Light was reported as having said:—

We should have an investigation into the organization of the Department, for instance. I have no knowledge of the Architect-in-Chief himself, and have never met him, but I have heard many complaints about that department. They may be all wrong and unjust.

Although I do not suggest that an attack has been made on the Architect-in-Chief, I do suggest that these words contain an inference that something is not right. As a member of the Public Works Committee, I think I am in a position to know just how hard the Architect-in-Chief and his staff work. At times the department has been working 24 architects understaffed, and the officers have had to work a great deal of overtime. Would the Premier make inquiries to see whether the statement is unjust or otherwise?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I did not read the report in the press nor did I hear the statement made by the member for Light. The Architect-in-Chief's Department has been working under a very great disability for a considerable period. Throughout the length and breadth of Australia there has been a big level of building, and as a result the architectural services available to the public have been totally inadequate. The Architect-in-Chief, together with other architects in Australia, has been extremely short staffed. More than that he is also handicapped because he is limited to the rates of pay awarded by the tribunal. On occasions when he has been able to secure the services of overseas architects he has found that some of those officers have been attracted away by the higher rates offered by private architects whose offices are also short-staffed. From my observations of the working of the Architect-in-Chief's Department I believe that it deserves commendation for the large amount of work carried out under difficult circumstances. I think the honourable member raised the question as one that might be considered. I do not believe he attacked the Architect-in-Chief's Department.

#### RETURN OF MINISTER OF WORKS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—All members know that the Minister of Works has been away ill for some time and, on their behalf, I assure him that we are pleased to see him back. I should like to ask him, will he be in a position to answer questions next week?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I accept with much gratitude the kindness extended to me, and assure honourable members that I am in such a condition of health that I hope to be able to carry on the same as, with this one exception, I have done over the last 25 years.

#### SOILS RESEARCH.

Mr. STOTT—Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked yesterday concerning the future of the Soils Division at the Waite Research Institute?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am now able to give further information on this question. Firstly, at no stage has it been suggested that the Soils Division of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization should be abolished or disbanded. The question arose, however, whether it could continue to be accommodated, as it had been for a number of years, in buildings at the Waite Research Institute. The increasing demands on building space there due to the increased accommodation required for University students has rendered somewhat urgent the provision of further accommodation, and to that end the C.S.I.R.O. has been asked to vacate the premises it occupies at the institute in favour of our own University work. Those discussions have continued since 1953 and now the position is that the Soils Division will remain at the institute and be housed in its own building, for the Minister in charge of the C.S.I.R.O. (the Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey) has advised that he has approved of the erection of a building in the institute grounds to house the Soils Division. I am therefore pleased to say that the close liaison between the Waite Research Institute and the C.S.I.R.O., which has been a feature of the successful work carried on by both institutions in the past, will be able to continue. It is expected that the new building will be commenced shortly and be ready for occupation by the C.S.I.R.O. by March, 1958. We in South Australia, from the agricultural point of view, are particularly pleased that this arrangement has come to fruition and that the headquarters of the Soils Division will remain in this State. I express satisfaction that this arrangement has been achieved.

#### CENTENARY OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. JENKINS—Next year will mark 100 years of Parliament in this State, and I understand that preparations are being made to celebrate that occasion. Can the Premier inform the House of the date this will take place and what notable visitors will be present, and give any other information that may be of interest?

The SPEAKER—Preparations are in hand for celebrations next year, and I ask the Premier, who has information on the subject, to be good enough to impart it to members.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The executive committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association has considered this matter and has made some arrangements which are fairly well advanced. In order that members can make their arrangements I think it would be advantageous if a circular were prepared setting out what is proposed, the functions that will be held and the dates of those functions as far as we can give them at present. I will see that every honourable member is provided with a copy of the proposed programme so that they can make reservations for that time.

#### QUEENSLAND GRAIN BOARDS.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Agriculture, in delivering his opening address at the conference of the South Australian Woolgrowers' Association, made a statement which was subsequently taken out of its context in a press report and given a different meaning from what the Minister intended. I have had some communication regarding that statement, which was taken to mean that the Barley Board and the Grain and Sorghum Board in Queensland were no longer in existence, and as that is not in accordance with fact, I ask the Minister if he will clear up that misunderstanding?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I noticed in the press that it had been recorded that I had said that the Barley Board in Queensland had been abandoned. Apparently there was a misunderstanding about what I actually said. What I intended to convey in giving that address was that various commodity boards had been under some pressure and, indeed, some attack perhaps, from outside interests, and that in some cases the standing and stability of those boards had been affected. I said something about the producers who had stated that they wanted adequate support from their boards, but it was not my intention to convey that the Barley Board or the Grain and Sorghum Board had been abolished, because that is not a fact.

#### CONTROL OF TAXIS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Does the Government intend introducing legislation to control taxis and, if so, when will it be introduced?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some time ago the Government introduced a Bill dealing with taxi control in the metropolitan area. The Government has always been firmly of the opinion that it is desirable to have one authority to control the taxi industry so as to overcome the existing difficulty of the numerous authorities which have been exercising various degrees of control. Towards getting some

unanimity in this matter it was instrumental in getting an advisory committee appointed, and we hoped that as a result an organization would spring up which could in due course become the subject of further consideration by the House. I am pleased to report that I have now received a communication from interested parties to the effect that there is substantial agreement between the suburban and city councils and the taxi industry on the desirability of having one controlling authority in the metropolitan area and also that a good deal of unanimity has been reached on the authority that should be set up and the method of control.

I have authorized the authorities concerned to consult the Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman with a view to drawing up a Bill to be submitted to Cabinet, I hope on Monday week, and if the authorities are able to resolve their slight differences I shall be able to come to the House with a Bill this session and assure it that it is acceptable to the authorities concerned. Those differences of opinion are very small and I have no doubt that complete agreement will be reached, not only among the municipal authorities but also among the various taxi authorities. There are a number of different taxi licences, company licences and individual licences, which are run by a separate authority, but I believe the Government will be able to bring down a Bill which has the almost complete support of the industry and municipal authorities.

#### PARINGA-RENMARK RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. STOTT—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Roads a reply to the question I asked recently about the Paringa-Renmark railway shuttle service?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have received the following reply from my colleague:—

Following reports of an occasional banking up of vehicles and delay on one occasion of up to three hours, the Commissioner has had the traffic count carefully watched. At present he considers additional equipment is not warranted, particularly in view of the cost involved and the few occasions on which it would be required.

#### PORT AUGUSTA PRE-SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN.

Mr. RICHES—Some time ago the Port Augusta Pre-School Kindergarten was unfortunate in losing the services of its trained teacher and, as a result, the subsidy it had been receiving from the Kindergarten Union was

discontinued. An approach was made to the kindergarten authorities, but the school was told the subsidy could not be reinstated until the services of a fully qualified teacher had been obtained. The onus is on the local committee to obtain a qualified person. It has not been able to secure one in South Australia, but has reason to believe it can procure the services of a teacher from Germany who would be quite capable of teaching English and who holds certificates which would be acceptable here. When the Union was approached for an assurance that the subsidy would be restored if the services of this teacher were obtained, the Union intimated it could not give an assurance until it knew what grant it would receive from the Government this year. According to the Budget the grant is increased by £10,000. Will the Minister of Education take up with the Kindergarten Union Port Augusta's request for an assurance that the subsidy will be restored if they go to the trouble of securing the services of this lady teacher from Germany who, incidentally, has connections in Port Augusta?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The honourable member is aware that the Government does not accept responsibility for pre-school education nor does it control—or seek to control—the Kindergarten Union. Some years ago when the Union was formed the Government showed its appreciation of the laudable work undertaken by that body and its constituent members by making a grant. In 1945 it was a token grant of £3,000. In the intervening years the grant has been increased until it has now reached the all time record of £120,000. Of course, the Government—or Parliament—is supplying the overwhelming proportion of the total funds of the Union. At the same time, the Government still does not seek to impose its views on the Union. I do not think Parliament would desire it to do so. Therefore, I feel that at this stage I cannot do more than refer the honourable member's question and statement to the Union as I did once before. I would not seek to direct the Union in any way. I am sure the Union will be only too pleased to comply with the wishes of the honourable member and of the local branch as far as is possible. I have found the President, Sir Herbert Mayo, and the secretary, Miss Dorothy Hughes, and all members of the Union most co-operative and I am sure that if it is humanly possible to comply with the request they will be pleased to do so. As soon as I have received a reply I will let the honourable member have it.

## THE BUDGET.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from September 26. Page 765.)

Legislative Council, £10,094.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—I said last night that one or two important matters had been introduced into this debate that necessitated a reply and, to some extent, a refutation. The member for Millicent (Mr. Corcoran) was rather critical of the fact that loans were floated at interest rates that were too high. Be that as it may, I remind him that in 1930-31 the Scullin Labor Government borrowed £85,000,000, of which £13,000,000 was secured from London. The significant feature of those loans was that the average rate of interest was 5 per cent and £26,000,000 was borrowed at 6 per cent.

Mr. Frank Walsh—That was during the depression.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—No loans today approach the figure of 6 per cent. The honourable member will recall the infamous act of the then Federal Government which asked people to voluntarily reduce the rate of interest on their loans. A substantial number did, but those who elected not to voluntarily convert their interest rates were deemed to have consented to the conversion by Act of Federal Parliament and their loans were compulsorily converted. References have been made to the borrowing of money from overseas as though that, in itself, was a bad thing. I remind the House that in 1955 the New South Wales Labor Government owed £10,500,000 in New York and £122,000,000 in London. Moreover, during Labor's term of office in New South Wales, the public debt and its consequent interest and sinking fund charges rose from £122 per capita in 1944 to £187 in 1955, and 22 per cent of its public debt is due overseas.

The member for Burra (Mr. Quirke) raised some interesting matters. We all appreciate the sincerity and enthusiasm he brings to his advocacy of a new financial system and respect his earnestness in that regard. It is true, as he said, that the Commonwealth Bank could lend money without any cost. It could do it without any direct cost, but the issuing of notes unbacked by production is the most cruel form of indirect taxation that can be devised.

Mr. Quirke—I never mentioned the issue of notes. I said it is possible to issue credit.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—The honourable member said that the Commonwealth Bank

could issue credit. Whatever form credit takes—whether it be cheques, notes which are another form of order to pay, or issuing goods in order that people may trade in them—the term “notes” can be used to describe the tokens which are issued to put that credit into circulation. There must be some kind of token, and whether it be notes, coinage, bonds or vouchers, I do not think that the term ‘notes’ is far astray if we use it in the broad sense of the word. The Government can issue credit costlessly by one or other of these diverse means, but whatever means are used in the issuance of credit, without the extraordinarily careful safeguards which the honourable member himself last night said were necessary, one could go too far in making credit available.

The whole problem rests on what is the nicety of balance and what is too little or too much, and that is an extremely delicate problem. The issue of credit in either one form or another could be done, but at what cost. It would depreciate the value of investments and savings, lower living standards, affect the value of goods and services and fantastically speed up the inflationary processes. Maybe new techniques in banking can be evolved which will tend to soften the sudden impact of credit controls and other artificial means of tampering with the economy, but in my view the issue of credit, whether by notes, tokens or whatever the form, is not the answer to the problem.

Several honourable members during the debate have referred to the fact that in the Budget speech there is no provision for decentralization as would be carried out by the Labor Party if it produced, which Heaven forbid, a Budget to this House. I have before me a copy of the Budget speech for 1955-56 of the Tasmanian Labor Government, which was recently in office. Its Treasurer said:—

In previous years I have referred to the drift of population to the cities and there is evidence that this still continues. Eight years ago 99,051 people or 38½ per cent lived in the rural areas. By last year the number had risen to 104,768, but the percentage of the population of Tasmania which lived in rural areas had fallen to 34 per cent. . . . . In the 12 months ended March 31, 1955, the natural increase of Tasmania was 5,077. Over the same period the population increased actually by only 3,334, indicating a loss by migration from Tasmania of 1,743.

It is indeed fortunate for Tasmania that the over-long rule of a Labor Government is going to end if during that time there has been a continuous move to the city. We can only judge the position by the facts. The Labor

Party has had an uninterrupted term of office for many years in Tasmania where the rural economy is somewhat akin to that of South Australia

There is a tendency in discussing the Budget to take a parochial view. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as one of the prime duties of a member is to represent his constituency in particular, while at the same time he must have general regard for the welfare of the whole of the State and its taxpayers. It is indeed very easy to find new ways of spending taxpayers' money, but so far no one has invented an easy way of raising it, for there is in fact no such thing as painless taxation. Also the ingenuity of the Treasurers the world over has been strained to the limit to devise new taxes. When one exhausts the possibility of raising more from income tax, or is in fact precluded from using income tax at all, as we are, then the burden of additional taxation, as new means have to be found to get it, accords less and less with the generally accepted doctrine of ability to pay.

In devising the new or additional taxes involved in this Budget the Treasurer has, I believe, adopted the least of several painful alternatives. But even stretched to their limits, these new taxes do not provide the funds either to balance the Budget on the present scale of spending or meet the demands which are put upon the Treasury for projects which could conceivably raise the standards of living in this State beyond the enviable standard which has been achieved over the last 15 or 20 years. The root of this problem is, of course, uniform taxation. Long before I came to this House I was convinced that uniform taxation undermined the principles of responsibility in government, and divorced from the spending authority the responsibility of raising the greater part of its revenue. One cannot say too often that a Government has no money of its own—no nest egg put away for a rainy day. The established practice of the annual balance of accounts precludes this as well as constantly growing demand which an expanding economy places on the limited resources available to the Treasury.

Mr. Riches—Where would you say the irresponsible Government is?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I could name several States quite easily, but do not want to draw invidious comparisons. One sees in local government the great virtue of taxing and spending in immediate relationship to each other. Rates are balanced against services,

in the mind of every ratepayer. He is immediately conscious of an increase in rates to meet a particular service. This is a good check. It ensures that in the main something like value for money is demanded. But when one taxing authority has to bear the criticism of imposing taxation for another authority (the States) to spend, this completely prevents the proper scrutiny which taxpayers should be able to give services in relation to taxes.

I support to the hilt the Treasurer's view that income taxing powers should revert to the State. The longer we leave the problem the more difficult it is to resolve. I have no doubt that science today might do something to unscramble an egg or rather re-constituting it and it should not be beyond the competence of our best brains to devise a formula for the restoration of our taxing powers. Apart altogether from the fact that we would almost certainly be better off financially, as we could impose lower rates of tax than we now pay, due to our very high taxable capacity, the inestimable boon of responsibility in public finance would be restored to this Parliament and the people of the State. They would see some direct relationship between taxing and spending. This, too, would be a valuable brake on hasty spending and would allow pressure groups to see clearly the effect on the finances of the State which their pet project would have.

I want to say a few words about the Grants Commission. Firstly, I want to pay a tribute to the integrity and competence of the men who have served on it over the years. Some I have been proud to know as friends; but this esteem in which we hold the members individually should not be allowed to develop into a deification of the Grants Commission and deny us criticism. It may have been true in the early years of the Commission's work that the grant was in the nature of a compensation for disabilities under Federation. Indeed, that was the purpose of the Commission, to make up to the claimant States (all principally agricultural) for the disabilities which they suffered as a result of the then widely supported tariff policy designed to support the infant industries particularly of the eastern States. But disabilities as a doctrine on which the Commission now makes its recommendations is out-moded. The standard budget theory forms the basis of the very complicated financial structure on which grants are ultimately determined. But we must not allow our thinking to accept everything the Commission says and does as gospel. Indeed, the current difference of opinion between the

Government and the Commission about an appropriation for access roads a year or so ago is a case in point.

Unfortunately, if one may vary an old tag, the Commission has become paid informer, Crown Prosecutor and Supreme Court all rolled into one. While it may have been true before the advent of the Playford Government that the non-claimant States were contributing to maintain comparable standards in this State, in broad terms it may now be said that this State does not get back, either through the uniform tax refunds or the Commonwealth grants, or from the two of them added together, anything like the amount which the taxpayers of this State pay into the Commonwealth pool of taxation revenue. I do not blame the Commonwealth for this. Indeed, the Commonwealth has increased, under the formula, our reimbursement grant and has always accepted the submissions of the Grants Commission. The evil lies in the system which cannot be altered unless all States and the Commonwealth freely and purposefully apply themselves to a reform of Commonwealth and State financial relationships, and a return of State income taxing powers.

Touching upon the Grants Commission's findings, I would like to see some way in which the contentions of the Commission could be tested by some independent authority, who could be an acceptable arbitrator between the Commission and a claimant State where different views are honestly expressed. I have a mild criticism to make of the Commission, which on page 11, paragraph 6, of its 22nd report said:—

It was suggested this year that there was serious risk of misunderstanding of the commission's calculations of the relative severity of State non-income taxes. This risk of misunderstanding arose because it was not generally appreciated that the commission's calculations set out to measure the relative effort which the claimant States were making and were not based merely on strict comparisons of rates of each tax in each claimant State with the average rates of the same tax in non-claimant States. To avoid misunderstanding of this nature the commission has decided to omit the details of its taxation calculations from this report.

I repeat that the Commission said that to avoid misunderstanding it had decided to omit details of its taxation calculations. That is rather self-condemnatory I think, and here lies my criticism. If the report is to be of use to members of this House and to members of the other Parliaments it must be so written as to be capable of being understood by the

private member as well as the Treasury expert. I concede that this is a very complex subject and that it is difficult to avoid technicalities and the jargon of the economist and public financial expert. But it must be done if this report is to be of any use to most of us. I make this suggestion. I feel that the Commission has needlessly complicated the text of its report by attempting to deal with all the claimant States together in each particular detail that comes under review. I will quote from paragraph 54 of the 22nd report dealing with one feature of claims. It has no significance in this context, but I quote it as an example of the confusion which can be brought into the matter by attempting to contrast all the States in each particular aspect. The paragraph said:—

The commission decided that the allowance should be increased as follows: For South Australia from four per cent to five per cent; for Western Australia from 10 per cent to 11 per cent; and for Tasmania from six per cent to nine per cent.

Examples of this appear right through the report. It would be far better if the chapters sought to deal with one State only. They could be numbered identically and this would avoid the overlong sentences now used and would permit ready comparison if one needed to make it. The power to punish, which now is in the hands of the Commission, makes it a kind of super authority outside the control of Sovereign States but on whose good grace our very solvency depends.

I have heard it said in this Chamber by members of the Opposition, and I have heard it said by others who should know better, that if we can get money for war we can get it for peace. I will concede that it could be done, but the advocates of this easy sounding catch phrase would probably be the last willingly to accept the ingredients which would make this formula work. Let us look at the essentials of this suggestion. Firstly war is a calamity and it touches all, some even more than others. The only slightly comparable disaster we can imagine is the devastating floods, or fearsome bush fires. Great as these disasters are, they are not within measurable distance of the cost in life, suffering and property involved in war. When war strikes, and when floods or bush fires threaten, we throw all our resources into the ring. If a bush fire threatens every drop of water will be used without thought of the morrow. If illness threatens our families and they are involved in heavy expenditure for surgery we spend to the last penny. When the nation is in danger

in war we make every sacrifice and accept every control. Even then there were complaints, strikes or blackmarketing during the war. To get money for war this is what we had to do:—

1. First of all there was the mobilization of man power. Thousands of men and women went into the services and their normal purchasing power was dried up.
2. Men were directed into employment.
3. The seller of labour gave up his free market for services.
4. Jobs were pegged.
5. Foodstuffs, tobacco and petrol supplies for use or manufacture were rationed.
6. Public works were stopped or undertaken only for war purposes.
7. Home building virtually ceased.
8. Capital investment was strictly controlled.
9. Consumer goods, motor cars and so on were unprocurable.
10. Travel was restricted, funds frozen and so on.

Yes, we can get money for war if we agree to all these things and the countless regulations, inspectors, forms and registrations that go with them. If honourable members go to the library they will see the countless hundreds of regulations which had to be issued in order to get the money. No-one liked the restraints of controls even then; how much less would they like them now! Then, too, the war greatly increased the public debt. Its burden of interest and sinking fund will be carried for years. Deficit financing by Treasury bills caused considerable inflation during the war, even with its pegged economy. The limitation of investment left public loans as the only source of investment income, and those on fixed incomes suffered then as they do now. However, these steps were necessary to obtain money, and they helped to create the problems that we have today. The pent-up demand for houses, buildings, amenities, roads, schools and hospitals very substantially flowed from the very measures which, if put into effect in peace time, might find money comparable with that found in war-time. After all, no peace-time emergency can be imagined that would assure any Government of support for the measures necessary to find money on a war-time scale. I support the Estimates.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—This Budget has been described by the various members in various ways, possibly depending to some extent on which side of the House they sit. The member for Senaphore, with a great deal



of justification, described it as a "sorrow" Budget. On the other side of the House the member for Torrens (Mr. Coumbe), who has perhaps a different way of looking at it, described it with perhaps less justification as a "courageous" Budget. I will not attempt to describe it or to say whether it is courageous or outrageous, but will simply speak on one particular subject.

This is the eighteenth Budget presented by the present Treasurer, and I think I could say that it is not his happiest Budget either for himself or the people of South Australia. I do not intend to make a speech on the remarks of other members. That practice is becoming increasingly popular, unfortunately, but if we examine everything that is said by everyone else and disagree with it we are not adding much to the debate. Before I come to the main part of my speech, however, I wish to say a word or two about other members who have spoken. I was disappointed in the honourable member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke). I was to a great extent in agreement with the first section of his speech made last night. He made some interesting remarks about what was said by other members in relation to the university, and mentioned the criticism of the recent university procession on the rag. I firmly believe that, although a number of people may have been hurt or offended by the rag, just as many people enjoyed it. However, I am inclined to the view that the raving of somebody purporting to be a somewhat well-developed film star on the steps of Parliament House is not very fitting, any more than it would be on the steps of the university. However, I cannot agree with the member for Light, who said that the university was virtually a marriage bureau, although he may not have used those words. I am a graduate of the university, and for quite a time was a member of the council. I do not think the university has changed since I attended it, and I know that we were kept too busy to be interested in marriage bureaux, except for the normal male or female attractions in our spare time.

I commend the member for Chaffey (Mr. King), for the picture he gave, appalling though it was, of the devastation caused by floods in his area. The House is indebted to him for his information. I know that the member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) will give a picture of what has happened in his area when he speaks. I believe it is good that we have members who are qualified, who have the knowledge and experience of what has gone on, and who are

doing their best to help their constituents during this flood. They are doing the House a service by providing the information they have.

The member for Light (Mr. Hambour) worries me a little in these times of financial stringency because of his suggestion to appoint a number of select committees. I believe that he openly advocated a number, and implied that there should be many others. Although I have not attempted to work out how many committees there would be, they would probably be a great financial burden because, if they were all appointed, the Government would have to use the Myer Emporium building as well as Foy and Gibson's building to accommodate them. I could not support the suggestion because of the expense that would be involved.

I believe it is good that if anyone in this Chamber has a close acquaintanceship with a particular matter he should say something about it. I have often noticed that, whatever subject comes before us, usually some member has special knowledge to contribute to the debate.

Members have probably guessed that I intend to speak on education. I want to make it plain that I will not do so to criticize what has not been done in this State. I do not wish members to think that I am presuming to be an expert on this subject, because I am not. I have simply been associated with education for many years, and because of my various contacts and friends who are practising teachers and officers of the department, I have been able to keep in reasonably close touch with the matter. When introducing the Budget, the Treasurer said the following about education:—

*Education Department, £6,838,000*—an increase of £675,000 over last year. The principal increase is made in relation to salaries and wages where, at £5,546,000, the provision exceeds last year's payments by £525,000. In some part this increase is due to the fact that a new award for teachers, effective from October 1, 1955, will have to be met for a full year in 1956-57. However, the principal factor making for this increase is the necessity to increase the teaching staff to cope with increased enrolments. During the past 10 years enrolments in both primary and secondary schools have nearly doubled from 70,000 to 137,000 pupils, and during that same period approximately 65 new schools have been provided. In addition to providing further accommodation by extending and altering existing schools, about 1,300 prefabricated timber classrooms have been brought into use. In the light of this information the need for obtaining the services of more trained teachers is all the more obvious.

That is true, but honourable members should ask themselves two questions. Firstly, in the light of the Treasurer's statement, is the increase enough? Secondly, is it as much as we can afford? The answer to the first question is that it is not enough, and the Treasurer's words prove that. He said that increased salaries would have to be paid, and the deduction of that increase from the increase in the amount of the total grant for education shows that there is very little increase left. In answer to the second question, I am afraid the increase is all we can afford under the present financial set-up. That leads me to a third possible question: Why can't we afford more? I believe it is because we are denied our rights by the present Menzies-Fadden Federal Government.

The net result of this year's Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meetings is that probably even less relief will be given this year to overcrowded schools and overburdened teachers than in previous years. These annual skirmishes in the Federal capital mean much more than the unseemly clashes suggested by the press reports for they have unfortunately become a primary feature—indeed an overriding feature—of our economic life. Why? Because they determine to an increasingly large degree the allocation of national income and how much is spent on each essential service. Each year the States' representatives, including our perennial Treasurer, claim more of the money their citizens provide, and unless these increased amounts are allocated States cannot possibly overtake the lag in their essential services, a lag which, to a large extent, has been caused by similar inadequate grants in past years. Consequently, these services cannot be expanded to meet the needs of a growing population.

In no other subject is this more evident than in education. In our present precarious position State Governments, including our own, are forced to turn to their own limited taxation fields to wring or extort additional revenue from their own already overburdened people. In this regard I remind members that these people are in the main excluded by law from obtaining additional increases in their earnings, but "The taxes must come from somewhere" must be the State Governments' attitude following their treatment by the Federal Government. Although I do not oppose uniform taxation, I oppose its misuse in the hands of a Federal Government that is apparently unsympathetic, unheeding, unreliable and incompetent.

A searching review and analysis of our national economy in the light of the basic needs of our people is long overdue so that we may see where we are going. The future welfare of our State and nation, based as it is on the provision of education for the people, should never depend on the outcome of this yearly haggling for funds in Canberra, yet year after year, flustered and frustrated States' representatives advance insistent and seemingly unanswerable demands for more adequate allocations, and even though that money is for essential services, they are continually being denied and frustrated by the Federal Government.

Sufficient funds for education cannot possibly be allocated under the present set-up. We must, as I am sure the Minister does, ask ourselves some questions: Shall there be new and better schools? Shall the people be educated adequately? Shall Australia hold her place among the nations of the world? After all, in the final analysis the answer to the last question depends to an enormous extent on the type of education we are willing and able to give our coming citizens. Admittedly, we have made some progress in this State over the last few years, but that progress has unfortunately been almost cancelled out by the increase in the number of scholars and the consequent necessity for more buildings. If the money were available—and, of course, that is a mighty big "if"—what could not be done for education in this and other States?

I wish to tell the House what are considered by teachers to be the aims most desirable for education in this State, and I quote from the policy of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, which was recently adopted at the annual conference of the Institute. Teachers maintain that these are the ideals to be aimed at in South Australia. I stress the fact that I do not consider these aims to be idealistic by any means; they are a simple statement of the rights of South Australian children and, I believe, South Australian teachers, drawn up and endorsed by a responsible body of people engaged in the teaching profession. The aim is the best possible deal for the children under their care and, incidentally, for themselves, because they maintain that good schools and good educational systems cannot exist unless teachers are satisfied with their conditions and therefore working to their maximum capacity.

I will quote from a copy of this particular policy, and I point out that a few of the things I am going to mention have already

been done in part. The policy deals with the educational rights of South Australian children, and the introduction is as follows:—

The South Australian Institute of Teachers affirm the right of every child to the best form and highest degree of education for which he is suited.

To this end it proposes as follows:—

That conditions should be created whereby every child will have an equal opportunity of benefiting from modern educational methods. It goes on to itemize the things which should be implemented:—

- (a) Completely free education for all children in infant, primary and secondary schools, and allowances for students in all forms of post-secondary educational institutions sufficient to attract all who will profit from further education. This refers to the public educational system as at present constituted.

It should be obvious to all members that in South Australia, and indeed in other States, we do not have completely free education, but it is something to be aimed for. The policy continues:—

- (b) Special schools and classes, residential where necessary, for handicapped, retarded, subnormal or delinquent children.
- (c) A progressive reduction in the size of large primary schools and large secondary schools so that each child can have a place in the school community.

We have unfortunately come to the stage where many of our schools are growing bigger and bigger. An example of that is to be found in the Forbes school, which I think is our biggest primary school. The numbers have grown to such an extent that I submit that the headmaster of Forbes, for whom I have every respect and who is doing a particularly good job, would find it impossible to become as closely associated with the teachers and the children as he should be. I was teaching at Gawler for a number of years, and it was my boast that I knew every child in the school. Any teacher in a large school today would find that quite impossible, and indeed the staffs of some of these schools have become so large that I believe the headmaster would be on little more than nodding terms with some of his assistants. I am not criticizing the Government for that because I realize that circumstances have shaped this result, but I entirely endorse that plank of the policy with regard to reduction of the size of schools. Let me continue with this policy:—

- (d) A continuation in the policy of consolidation of small schools, so that country children may enjoy the benefits of membership in a large group and be

provided economically with the best equipment and specialist instruction.

I know that some members have said at times that the passing of the little country school is not a good thing, and in some senses I agree with them. I believe that something has possibly been lost in country areas through the closing of small schools because the small school was often the centre of the community, and with the right type of teacher and an interested body of people in the district the school itself could become the nucleus for whatever social life there was in the community. I believe that consolidating or bringing together of the children into one larger school has given them opportunities that were denied them to a great extent before. The policy goes on:—

- (e) The facilities should be provided to implement the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 and later 16, with possible part-time compulsory attendance to 18, as in other advanced countries.

I believe that with the introduction of automation, which is inevitable, that item will become more and more important in the social life as well as the industrial life of our State and indeed of our nation. The next point is:—

- (f) A progressive reduction in the maximum size of classes to 30, the maximum size to be progressively limited by law.

That seems to me a fairly obvious matter to put into this policy. The policy continues:—

- (g) Short and long term planning to ensure adequate and modern accommodation for children.

We certainly need funds for that purpose. The next point is:—

- (h) The replacement or remodelling of old school buildings, toilets, drinking facilities, etc., to make them conform to modern standards.

There are quite a number of schools whose toilets, drinking facilities and such things are not adequate for the numbers attending. The next items are:—

- (i) The provision of sick room, workshop, library and assembly hall in all large schools.
- (j) The provision, without cost to parents, of basic equipment, including public address system, sewing machine, strip film projector and piano in all schools when the attendance warrants it.

These things are necessities for modern education and should not be a burden on the parents of the children attending the schools. The next point is:—

- (k) An extension of the facilities provided for physical education—playing fields and equipment.

And finally in this section, something which is very important:—

- (1) A minimum training period of two years for teachers and the abolition of the junior teacher system.

I now come to the second part of the policy under that heading of "Education Rights of South Australian Children". The first point is:—

That the content of learning should be enriched in the following ways:—

- (a) The appointment of more specialist teachers (music, art, craft and physical education) to advise and demonstrate in schools throughout the State and the field be extended to include library and speech training specialists.
- (b) That the secondary school courses and organization be examined by a committee including secondary school teachers.
- (c) That special facilities be provided in central locations for instruction of new Australian children in English language for half a day per week.
- (d) The facilities for vocational guidance and psychological assistance to children be extended.

In the second section of this policy the preamble is as follows:—

That the South Australian Institute of Teachers affirms that to overcome the shortage of teachers improvements in teaching conditions are necessary.

I know that the Minister and all members are vitally concerned about the shortage of teachers. Great efforts have been made, and are being made, to get more teachers. This is what the institute thinks is the best way to overcome the shortage:—

1. Salaries should be more attractive:—(a) The top positions warrant a much higher maximum to attract and retain greater numbers of the most able people.

I have said that in this House on many occasions. The policy continues:—

- (b) Minimum starting salaries should be increased for all grades of teachers to attract a higher proportion of the more able youth.

Again, I have mentioned that on many occasions. I maintain that we have to compete with other services that attract people with similar qualifications. The policy then says:—

- (c) Cost of living adjustments should be restored; (d) Teachers College allowances should be increased to a living wage; (e) Equal pay for men and women.

In the second section of this part of the policy the heading is:—

2. Living conditions of teachers should be improved. The disabilities of country service should be alleviated by:—

The comments that follow this heading are most important. I am sure that the shortage of teachers is largely because young people leaving the college know they will have to go to the country because the semi-trained or temporary teachers must teach close to their homes. I am not criticising the temporary teachers, for they have been a blessing to the department, but we hoped originally that they would be used only as a temporary expedient. However, they are becoming a permanent part of the education system, and I am sure this is hindering recruitment.

I have often felt it would be advisable for young people fresh from the Teachers College to be sent to schools and work with experienced assistants for a few years to learn the ropes. I do not suggest that young teachers know nothing about the job, but by mixing with older teachers they would soon learn more about their profession, whereas under our present set-up that cannot happen. Most young teachers go to country appointments and have to learn teaching the hard way. In regard to living conditions, the policy urges:—

- (a) Adequate special living allowances.
- (b) A concessional rent based on an equitable points system.

As a result of indignation expressed about increased rents Sir Kingsley Paine was asked last year to conduct an inquiry. Members are awaiting his recommendations with great interest, but they have been delayed because he has been given another important task in connection with the Murray flood. The policy of the Teachers Institute continues:—

- (c) The provision of a removal allowance over and above carriers' costs to cover actual expense of blinds, floor coverings, etc.
- (d) Improvements in boarding conditions.
- (e) The provision of more modern residences for married teachers, hostels for single teachers, and flats for senior women.
- (f) The remodelling of and provision of amenities for older residences.

Country members realize that there is certainly a need for the remodelling of amenities in country residences. The policy then says:—

- (g) Increased excess boarding allowance.

It then lists the general conditions that need revision, as follows:—

- (a) Promotion opportunities should be improved for primary, secondary, and art and craft teachers.
- (b) A better promotion system is needed in the primary branch.
- (c) The growth in numbers and size of schools necessitates an annual reclassification of schools with more in the upper classes.
- (d) Long service leave should be brought into line with that granted to teachers in other States.

I have repeatedly said in the House that the long service leave provisions for our teachers compare unfavourably with those of other States. The policy continues:—

- (e) If their services are required, married women should be permitted to continue in the service without resignation and the consequent loss of privileges. (f) Sick leave for Teachers College students should be cumulative. (g) Reasonable amenities for staffs should be provided—staff rooms, sick rooms, toilets, etc. (h) Higher duties allowance should be paid immediately a teacher assumes higher duties. (i) The system of promotion to staff and executive positions in the Education Department should be modified so that practising teachers of long service and outstanding ability can be promoted to executive positions.

If we appointed men and women who had served through the various branches of the Education Department to the higher positions the department would benefit greatly. The policy of the Teachers Institute then states:—

In view of the lag in school buildings, etc., brought about by the war, and of the rapid growth in schools' population since the war, the Teachers Institute considers that special Commonwealth financial aid for education is necessary to establish schools on a proper basis.

I do not know how many of the improvements requested by the Teachers Institute are considered necessary or desirable by the Minister of Education. I do not particularly care either, for under our present set-up, it does not matter now what he thinks because we know that most of the improvements cannot be effected. The difficulty is that we just cannot afford them under our present financial system. Despite constant pressure the Commonwealth refuses to give—or says it cannot give—such specific help. This problem is not confined to South Australia: it is Australia-wide. The New South Wales Minister of Education, the Honourable Mr. Heffron, said recently:—

I owe it to the honourable members who are making insistent demands for more schools to advise them of the difficulties confronting me. We have not the necessary finance to provide the required buildings. The essential requirement is a recognition of the fact by those who control the nation's purse strings that education is the nation's best investment and the greatest insurance of its progress and safety. I say to all honourable members and to everyone interested in the public life of this country, and to those who control the purse strings of the nation that finance must not stand in the way of education.

I hope that more responsible persons will take up that cry. Finance has stood in the way of education for years. Such a position should

not be permitted to continue. I have examined the effect of Federal niggardliness on only one aspect of our State's life. I consider it an important aspect. I have not tried, as some members have, to refer to about 40 different matters in this debate, but I believe that my remarks on education apply, to a great degree, to other Government departments. I support the first line.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—I take this opportunity of congratulating the Treasurer on presenting his eighteenth Budget and on the outstanding service he has rendered this State in his capacity as Treasurer during that time. It is truly said that finance is Government and Government is finance. The Treasurer's approach to this State's financial affairs embraces all the attributes of good government, as is revealed in the marked progress that has been made during his tenure of office. If, for a moment, Sir, we forget the regrettable uniform tax arrangements as between Commonwealth and States, which unfortunately do not adequately reflect to the Treasury the degree of prosperity arrived at through the sound development of the State's resources and administration of its affairs, and peruse the proposed allocation of the total expenditure of £65,982,000, we cannot but be impressed with the judicious and well-balanced apportionments to the many and diverse requirements for the current year.

As I reflect on impressions gained since I was privileged to enter this assembly, one stands pre-eminent in my mind: the assiduity with which the Treasurer and his Ministers attend to the numerous interests of their respective departments and the sound, practical, down-to-earth approach to the problems and difficulties which beset them. To my mind the approach to Government expenditure should differ little from that of ordinary business. The same basic principles determine State or personal financial stability within available resources. I congratulate the Treasurer on the rather remarkable achievement of holding last year's expenditure within .52 per cent of the estimated figure of £60,513,000.

The two major problems confronting Australia today are firstly, the rising inflationary spiral, which is being accentuated by ever-increasing costs of production and, secondly, the maintenance of a stable external balance of trade. Rising costs are the greatest threat to the maintenance and expansion of our primary and secondary industries and the

adequate provision of State utilities and services. There is a widespread tendency to accept the increase in costs as inevitable and to discount the seriousness of the cost angle in the belief that high costs and economic progress are not incompatible.

We depend greatly on our exports to obtain the wherewithal to assist in the vigorous pursuit of the development of this country and for the maintenance of a high living standard for all sections of the community. The fact that exports contribute approximately 25 per cent of our national income underlines their vital importance to our economy. There must be a nation-wide attack on costs. There is no single cure. Cost reductions which are so vitally necessary can be achieved only by the co-operation of, and contribution from, all sections including managements and employees, suppliers of goods and services and Government and semi-governmental authorities. We all have a common destiny. Modern complex society is an intricate machine which can function properly and for the benefit of all only if all parties pull together for the common good. The realistic approach to this problem has resulted in this State being more successful than most of the other States in stabilizing and holding costs of living and production, thereby ensuring higher levels of employment and enabling increasing entry of our primary and secondary industries into interstate and overseas markets.

In the vitally important overseas trade balance position, South Australia has acquitted itself particularly well in exceeding the value of its imports—mainly with the export of primary products—by £35,000,000. The efficiency attained by our primary industries through a consistent and purposeful pressure for cost reductions has enabled this State's balance of trade to be so favourably placed. I have no doubt that the depreciation allowances made to primary producers and other concessions enabling capital improvement have had a big bearing on the ability of our primary industries to compete effectively on overseas markets. I believe that secondary industries could be similarly assisted in keeping costs down by more generous depreciation allowances, recognition of obsolescence as a substantial element of depreciation, and by allowing depreciation on buildings. I have a clear—and I hope fair and just—appreciation of the dignity of man and am utterly opposed to any idea of sweated labour.

Mr. Davis—I am pleased to hear that.

Mr. LAUCKE—I am not a grinder of man, but a grinder of wheat. I cannot understand the unwillingness of so many employees to accept various incentive schemes that are adaptable to our production methods. I have no doubt that proper incentive schemes profit the employee, reduce costs per unit of production and are essential if Australia is to be competitive in overseas markets. I do not intend to refer to particular lines in the Estimates other than in respect of general purpose loans to the University of Adelaide and to flood relief. The amount to be allocated to the University is £660,000 and I heartily commend the Government for its action. The University is of inestimable value to this State, and is an institution of which every citizen may be justly proud. It has received world-wide renown for its very high standard in the arts, the sciences and the professions. It has produced men who have made their mark at top world-levels, men who have rendered modern society real and permanent service.

I trust that we shall never be so bereft of a sense of humour as to take unreasonable exceptions to exuberant spirits enjoying ragging at certain times. I say this because I feel a very unfair harm can be done to our honourable institution, the University, by needless criticism of a bit of fun. This criticism could, in some quarters, be very erroneously and unjustly construed.

I am keenly disappointed that this State is not competent to raise a loan for the specific purpose of flood rehabilitation. I had envisaged that the proceeds of such a loan could be applied to a long-range, imaginative rehabilitation scheme. I fear that the amount required to rehabilitate, with a view to the interests of posterity, will not be forthcoming without the added assistance of some form of long-term loan to individual flood victims. Quite apart from the humanitarian aspect, and herein the spirit of the people of South Australia and this Government, in spontaneously rallying to the help of the distressed areas, has been an inspiration, the loss of national income is a matter for major concern.

The diminution of personal income production and excise revenue will have a heavy impact on the Federal Treasury and in the final analysis on the State Treasury. It is interesting to note that in excise revenue alone a 10 ton per acre crop of Doradillo grapes yields approximately £2,000 in excise on spirit produced, and that hundreds of acres of vineyards are inundated or threatened with destruction

by seepage. It is very evident that it is in the national interest to return the flood-damaged areas to production as rapidly as may be possible. I hope that some system of long-term loans for the rehabilitation of flood victims may still be evolved. I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the first line.

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla)—The question of keeping before the public mind questions relating to flood damage and rehabilitation before memories become blunted has been mentioned. The importance must also be stressed of keeping sharply before the public notice the question of the appointment of a Federal authority, with the necessary powers to act, to cover the problems associated with the prevention of floods, with particular relation to re-afforestation and grazing control on watersheds throughout Australia and to promote action in whatever other steps may be necessary to control floods and minimize their impact on our economy, and the lives of our people. This matter is one which should be taken up as soon as possible by the State Government whilst the present disaster is fresh in our minds.

This Budget shows on every page the effects of the inflationary pressures that have been at work. In his Budget speech the Treasurer said, "It is much to be deplored that it has so far proved impracticable to develop a common and coherent Commonwealth-State approach to the problems involved in stabilizing costs and prices." This complaint of the Treasurer is a particularly unconvincing one in view of his own statements in the past that State price control would be effective and his Party's support of a Federal Government which has proved so inept at handling this country's economic affairs, and the inflationary situation in particular. The inflationary trend about which the Treasurer and other members opposite have complained has been greatly aggravated by the increase in interest rates. These increases have been imposed ostensibly to curtail demands for financial advances, but the lack of proper discrimination in applying this policy is clearly shown in the increased interest rates applicable to home building. This has been reflected in greatly increased rents for Housing Trust homes and home building generally, and is causing even greater difficulties in a vital section of our development which needs much greater expansion and not curtailment.

One distinguished authority on home life, a recent visitor to this country, has described the conditions confronting young people in this

country, desirous of setting up a home as "brutally difficult"; and our Federal Government aided and supported by this State Government is making those conditions even more brutally difficult. Whilst condemning juvenile delinquents in the strongest terms, these Governments are pursuing a policy in regard to the cost of home building which must cause that problem to be accentuated.

As to the inflationary effect of increased interest rates, that is apparent on all sides, and the steep increases in Housing Trust rents will cause State-wide discontent, which must and will be expressed in increased pressure to adjust wage levels to meet this new addition to wage earners' costs of living. Once again we have an increase of costs which hits most heavily the people in the lowest income brackets, and in addition will add to the social evils arising from a lack of sufficient homes for our people.

Then we have the spectacle of the Federal Government, having destroyed the confidence of small and large investors in Government bonds, taxing the people to provide loans for the States to the tune of £100,000,000. The charging of interest on this loan money to the States is a shining example of the utter stupidity of many of our current financial methods—in this case the people charging themselves interest on their own money, and all with the avowed intention of defeating inflation. After listening with interest to the member for Burra on this particular point, I should like to quote one more eminent authority whose statements are relevant to the particular point I am making. Incidentally, his remarks run entirely counter to those of the member for Burnside this afternoon and contradict his allegation that such reforms in our monetary system are impossible or impracticable. I refer to a book written in 1939 by Vincent Cartwright Vickers entitled *Economic Tribulation*. He was Deputy Lieutenant of the City of London, a director of Vickers Limited, for 22 years, and a director of the London Assurance Company from which he resigned in January, 1939. In 1910 he was made a governor of the Bank of England, and resigned this appointment in 1919. Later, he became President of the Economic Reform Club and Institute. After discussing monetary problems in Great Britain, he concludes by discussing the question of the direction of future policy, and in relation to monetary policy he says:—

The main objectives, however, should include: State control and State issue of currency and

credit through a central organization managed and controlled by the State . . . Any additional supply of money should be issued as a clear asset to the State; so that money will be spent into existence, and not lent into existence . . . The abolition of the debt system where all credit is created by the banks and hired out at interest to the country.

These points are relevant to the matter under discussion. Now, whilst we have the Treasurer introducing a measure to put a penny on the cost of each cheque used we have a Federal defence expenditure of £200,000,000 a year and a recent Public Accounts Committee has found that the services responsible for handling this vast sum have only the vaguest ideas concerning how many millions of the money have been spent. For the £1,000,000,000 spent in this direction in the last five years we have very little to show for it, and much of that consists of equipment already obsolete.

I agree entirely with the suggestion that a large proportion of this expenditure should be immediately diverted to standardising our rail gauges and to reconstructing our main interstate highways to provide rapid communication for strategic and civil purposes. However, despite the Federal Government's incompetence in these matters we can expect the Treasurer and his Party to continue to support politically the very Government about which he so bitterly complains.

I want now to deal with a matter that concerns my electorate and in view of the number of new members in the House I shall describe its operations at some length. I refer to the Ceduna Flying Medical Service. This year the service approached the Government for an increase in the Government contribution towards the cost of its operations. I shall describe the work of the service in detail to show how it has increased and how valuable it is to the people in the very sparsely populated areas in my electorate. The Ceduna Flying Medical Service was founded some years ago and it is carried on by the Bush Church Aid Society. In its application to the Chief Secretary this year for an increased grant the society provided a statement of accounts, and gave full information concerning the service to the Auditor-General and to the Chief Secretary's Department. The request was that the Government should increase the grant from £500 to £1,000 in order to meet an increase of £2,000 in maintenance costs. The following is an extract from the letter forwarded by the organizing missionary:—

The increasing costs of fuel and overhaul charges, together with the necessity of an assistant operator for the radio section due

to the growing calls for medical consultations, will cause, we estimate, a further £2,000 increase in maintenance costs.

The service employs two pilots who fly two aircraft, a DH Dragon and Percival Proctor. The service has an aeroplane on charter with W. Bedford of Kyancutta as pilot, so if one of its machines is down for overhaul the machine on charter can be used. Two doctors are available, a radio officer and an assistant. In addition, the Education Department supplies a school teacher who attends the radio station each morning of the school week for correspondence lessons conducted through the department. In answer to the request by the Government for information concerning last year's operations the following was given in the letter written by the organizing missionary to the Under-Secretary:—

For the year ended December 31, 1955, the aeroplanes of the service flew 38,853 miles for a total period of 400 hours in the air. The total number of air trips for the year was 143. By this means advice and treatment were given by the doctors to 1,476 patients at Cook, Tarcoola, Penong, Coorabie, Mulgathing, Coober Pedy and for a period of the year at Oodnadatta. Additional to these figures 46 urgent cases were flown to hospital. At the radio base 1,034 consultations were given over the air, 4,334 telegrams were handled and 220 messages from or to fishing boats were handled. There are at this date 26 outpost radios connected to the radio base and also 12 fishing boats.

The efficiency of the service is bringing added calls as instanced in the recent agreement to give Kingoonya a regular monthly medical service, and it is now operating. I shall now outline some of the other features of the service. I speak first in relation to the service provided to the fishing boats by the radio stations run by the organization. I have ascertained that since this letter was received by the Under-Secretary the number of fishing boats in the vicinity being served has risen to 15. They receive a service by means of their transceivers three sessions daily, at 10.30 a.m., 12.25 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. From the 12.25 p.m. service they get a valuable weather forecast on local conditions and by means of the other sessions they are able to make arrangements for trucks to be waiting to receive their hauls of fish when they make port, thus obviating wasteful delays and the deterioration of the fish. By this means of intercommunication they receive a great assistance towards their security and the service not only helps local fishermen but also Port Lincoln fishermen who may be in the vicinity of Fowlers Bay.



The highly successful radio correspondence school was inaugurated by the society and enables 62 children to have correspondence lessons by radio. The only Government expense in this venture is that the Department of Education pays the salary of the teacher, while the society has spent over £2,000 in the provision of radio sets for the children. These are rented at £12 per annum to the families by agreement with the P.M.G. Department, which does not desire that sets be owned by the parents. This system enables the teacher to speak personally to the children explaining difficult lessons and particular problems, thereby relieving the mothers of attempting problems in teaching for which they have not been trained. The children answer a roll call and ask and answer questions personally of the teacher. This is a great advantage under such conditions. It must be realized that many mothers in the area do not see their neighbours for months. They live in an isolation difficult for many city dwellers to realize and appreciate. The mothers are able to listen in to the lessons and gain much valuable knowledge in assisting the children during the course of the correspondence lessons.

Mr. Jennings—Did you say the only responsibility the Education Department takes is the salary of the teacher?

Mr. LOVEDAY—All it does is to provide the teacher. By this means the children are able to conduct a concert in a similar way to ordinary schools. The lessons are given through the usual correspondence school channels and departmental officers are enthusiastic about the outstanding success of this new method of handling correspondence lessons. This is a tremendous advance and a great benefit to the children and parents in these isolated areas. This is a most important factor in the successful development of these areas and in decentralization, and should be receiving much more financial support than has been forthcoming in the past. The Government should certainly reconsider this item, and provide at the very least the modest £500 requested by the organization responsible for inaugurating this remarkable service. No increase has been granted this year compared with last year; in fact, no increase has been made in the grant of £500 since the Government first gave this service any assistance.

Let us consider the increased amount of work the service has done. I have only the figures for 1951 and 1955, but they are quite sufficient. In 1951 the average year's flying

was 250 to 300 hours on the medical service; it is now 400 hours. The average number of patients attended in 1951 was 1,100 to 1,200; that has now risen to 1,476, plus 46 urgent cases flown to hospital. The area covered extends all along the East-West line and over Eyre's Peninsula, an approximate area of 100,000 square miles. One of the pilots, who has been with this service for a long time, has had about 18 years' accident-free flying. He is so competent that he undertakes as much of the overhaul work of the machines as can be done under the regulations, but certain overhaul work has to be carried out each year by other people, and this costs over £1,000 for each machine.

It is interesting to see just how much money the organization itself has put into this service and to compare it with what the Government is contributing. I have received a letter from the Organizing Missioner in which he said:—

"It is now costing about £15,000 per annum to run this service. This includes doctors, nurses, radio, planes and pilots. I think you will agree that that is not expensive. In order to meet the costs we had to subsidize it from general funds of the society by £2,738, and another amount of £3,671 from other centres of our work. You will also see from the enclosed financial statement that from our Christmas Appeal, legacies and the annual rally of friends of the society another £2,356 was supplied. I think you will agree that a mere £500 from the South Australian Government is a very small contribution towards this necessary service.

Before I make any comparisons with the way other departments under the control of the Chief Secretary have been treated, I want to point out just how different this flying medical service is from another service operating over some, but not all, of this territory. If that service receives a call for an urgent case, it has to get in touch with Guinea Airways to obtain a plane, which might cause up to 12 or even 24 hours' delay; but the Ceduna Flying Medical Service has two planes available at any given time, and another machine on charter. The importance of this was borne out recently when there was a very severe case of burning at Ingemar Station. An appeal was made for a plane from the other service, but the delay that would have been incurred in obtaining a plane from Guinea Airways was too great, so the people concerned applied to the Ceduna Flying Medical Service and a plane was forthcoming immediately. But for this the result might have been fatal. This service

stands on its own for outstanding and immediate service to urgent cases. The planes make regular trips to the centres I have mentioned, and for that there is no charge, but when they make a special trip a charge of 1s. an air mile is made. Surely that is a most economical service, and it covers an area where people are in a difficult position in relation to hospital and medical treatment.

I will now compare the treatment of this service with that of other departments coming under the control of the Chief Secretary to show the lack of appreciation of this valuable organization. This year £4,047,000 will be provided for the Hospitals Department, an increase of £541,780 over last year's expenditure, with only negligible decreases on a few lines. An amount of £577,707 will be provided this year for the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, an increase of £55,281, with only negligible decreases in some items. The Department of Public Health will receive £200,676, an increase of £66,970. Miscellaneous medical and health services will receive a total of £1,459,150, an increase of £222,733. Despite all these increases the service I have mentioned will still receive only £500, yet the total increases in all departments coming under the control of the Chief Secretary amount to £986,764 on a total expenditure of £6,285,212. Surely another £500 could have been found, as requested for this organization.

Let me now point out what is happening in other directions to see whether our sense of relative values has gone astray. It is proposed to spend £3,500 on aerial baiting of wild dogs in the channel country and Lake Eyre region, an increase of £383 from last year, and a grant of £25,000 will be made to the Glenelg Corporation towards the construction of a boat haven. Surely £500 could be taken off the latter amount and given to the valuable service I have been discussing. Apparently we can afford £2,500 towards improvements and additions to the zoo, but I venture to say that this flying medical service is far more important than any of the matters I have mentioned.

Some time ago I was informed by a friend who does not live on the aboriginal station at Point Pearce that the children there were getting too little to eat and not attending school in consequence. Similar representations were made to the member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan), and with him I visited the station after advising the Minister of Works of our intention. On our return we made representations to the Acting Minister of Works, whose reply I have, but in view

of that reply and what we saw we feel that the matter should be aired in this House with a view to getting a change of policy. I intend to deal with some aspects of the matter, and my colleague will deal with others. I intend to deal with the social atmosphere of the station in relation to the welfare of the children, their educational needs and their situation after leaving school. The whole atmosphere of the station is acutely depressing and I invite other members who may doubt that statement to inspect the station. The houses, which are rent free, are mostly two and four-roomed stone houses that would, in the main, be condemned by any local council for human habitation. One hundred and nineteen families reside in 52 houses, in many of which the roofs leak, the walls are damp, and the guttering is missing. There are only about three rain water tanks. There are no bathrooms and only one or two houses contain baths. There are few laundries, and water is not laid on to most houses. Although the inhabitants do not encourage visitors to go through their houses, we were able to do so and found that in the main bathing must be done in the kitchen in a tub and washing outside in all weather. Two or three houses were recently demolished because they were in danger of falling down.

The water supply is from a soakage near the beach and the water laid on to the village with taps here and there. In the summer the soak dries back and there is insufficient water for the village, pigs and other stock, so the village is sometimes cut off from the water supply so that a supply may be maintained for the pigs. Kerosene lamps, lanterns, candles and a few pressure lamps provide illumination; there is no street lighting. There are no proper facilities for the disposal of waste household water, which simply goes on to the ground at the rear of each house. In some of these homes live families with up to nine children, and we saw in some instances the commendable efforts to make a good home under impossible conditions.

We also saw some children at school and learned that they were on a par with any other children, but they lack opportunities to develop their talents. They also lack sufficient nourishing foods and rest; in some cases two or three children sleep in a bed in overcrowded houses lacking privacy. Their economic poverty and segregation make them feel outcasts. The only secondary education available is for a few who are sent away and boarded out in the city, but they experience great homesickness and loneliness for, despite the condition of their homes, they naturally regard

them as homes and feel homesick in the city. Secondary education should be given to these children if a suitable form of transport were made available to take them to Port Victoria where they could catch the high school bus to Minlaton. Money is being made available this year to provide woodwork, domestic arts and sewing instruction in the old school building on the station, but this only touches part of the problem. At present after leaving the primary school the teenagers are only rarely employed on the station, where they may receive about 5s. a day. No proper attempt is made to secure for them regular employment prior to their reaching 18 or getting married.

Mr. John Clark—What happens to them?

Mr. LOVEDAY—Until they reach 18 years of age or get married they are not regarded as eligible for work on the station, consequently, in the main, they merely loaf around. Those precious years are wasted for they have virtually nothing to do. In the village there are about 40 girls and 30 boys over primary school age with nothing to do; there are about 265 children on the station. In the face of this situation we were told that their record of behaviour is bad and that they are irresponsible, but what else could be expected under these circumstances? The report of the Aborigines' Protection board for the year ended June 30, 1955, states:—

The conduct of the natives at the Point Pearce station has somewhat improved, but is still far from satisfactory. A number were convicted of offences, drunken natives comprising the greater number of offenders, and it was found necessary to expel several natives from the reserve.

What else could be expected under such conditions?

Mr. Riches—What happens to them when they leave the reserve?

Mr. LOVEDAY—The answer is somewhat vague. Some stay on the station and work, others do share farming, but the majority take casual employment. If they do not work they get a subsistence allowance from the station; that allowance was increased a few days before our arrival on the station. Why should not these teenagers have the advantages of secondary education and of learning a trade? If they learnt a trade, many might return to the station to help rebuild the shocking residences. The station itself could be turned into a co-operative as many of the natives are competent at farm work. The policy (if it can be called such) applied to this village appears to be to leave it in this desolate, unwholesome condition and force the children away on

reaching maturity. The environment of these people provides no solution, but simply results in a fresh crop of social problems. These children should be given the opportunity to grow up under conditions as near as possible to those existing in the world outside so that they might be able to fit themselves into the world on reaching maturity.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—Would you force those children to accept higher education? We have tried by persuasion.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I doubt whether it was tried properly and I have some suggestions on that topic. Just prior to our arrival, according to the local headmaster, one boy who had completed his primary education got into some trouble. The headmaster said to him, "We got on together very well at school, John. What about coming back to school and employing yourself usefully there?" The lad replied, "That's no good to me for I am too old to fit in with the younger children." The headmaster said, "I'll provide you with a place of your own and give you your own study for you to determine how and when to use it." Next day the lad returned and accepted the offer. That is merely one indication but I was not there long enough to learn of other similar cases. That lad, if given the opportunity, would undertake secondary education.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—We have tried again and again to ascertain who would be willing to carry on and have found that the girls wanted to marry and the boys to become fishermen or rabbiters—all laudable occupations.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Possibly, but it all depends on the conditions under which these people live. If those conditions are made as much as possible like those in the outside world they will adopt a different approach to the whole question. I definitely oppose the use of compulsion in this matter. One man there appears to have some measure of leadership and he has been instrumental, with others, in endeavouring to form a progress association, but he was told that he could do so provided he did not criticize the administration. What use is that sort of thing? The formation of a progress association ought to be encouraged so that these people can be guided in the right direction. I recognize the difficulties and I am not saying that this is an easy matter to deal with, but I do suggest that the idea of keeping the place in its present condition in order to try to force the people out is utterly useless and hopeless. They must be assisted to become citizens as nearly as possible conversant with what goes on

in the outside world. Consider the case of a girl who wants to go into domestic service on Yorke Peninsula. She goes from that environment into a home with all modern conveniences and she feels that she has gone into Buckingham Palace. How can she adapt herself from the set of conditions in which she was brought up? She immediately wants to leave that situation and go back home because she has not been accustomed to anything else. I suggest once again that the children should be given the opportunity to grow up under conditions as nearly as possible as those in the outside world into which they will have to fit when the time comes.

I was told that they did not want to be apprenticed. In most cases a child cannot be apprenticed until it has obtained the Intermediate certificate and these children cannot get that. The changes that should take place here could best be accomplished by encouraging this progress association and leading the people instead of driving them; putting suggestions to them, getting their reactions and showing that we mean business by giving them modern equipment in the shape of homes. Undoubtedly there will be disappointments, but I have been told that some of these people who have been put into Housing Trust homes have fitted themselves very well into the community, which shows conclusively that this is not something that is impossible.

I hope that attention will be given in particular to these two items I have mentioned—one in my own electorate, and one in another electorate to which I was drawn by an appeal which could not be refused. The state of the Point Pearce Mission Station has, I feel, been kept in the background; it is a blot in our community and should receive immediate attention. I support the first line.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I propose to speak only on one or two points this afternoon, the first of which is the Murray River flood, which is alleged to be the largest in white man's history. It am not sure that that is right. The 1870 flood may have been greater if it were possible to measure it under comparable conditions. The various works carried out by settlers and governments in the intervening period have impeded the flow of water, particularly at the river's mouth, and created bottlenecks which have forced the water to higher levels and possibly thereby making it appear to be a greater flood than that of 1870.

It is for this reason that I feel very perturbed as to what is the right approach in

trying to make some provision to ameliorate a similar calamity should it occur again; and we must admit that it could recur. It is useless to say that it will not happen again in a given period because, unfortunately, these things do recur and there is no specific cycle which enables us to take precautions and move people away from the danger zones or take protective measures. We know that the flood which is plaguing us now is the result of the confluence of the various rivers that feed into this big stream, and floods occur in varying degrees depending upon the severity of the influx of water from the various sources.

I suggest that the first step should be a review by the States of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and the Commonwealth with a view to enlarging the sphere of action of the River Murray Waters Commission. It might more appropriately be styled the Rivers Commission. It should endeavour to work out what should be done and what steps can be taken by people who, at the moment, are not concerned with the River Murray as it affects us, but are definitely concerned with the amount of water they are sending into the river into the Murray through the Darling and other contributing streams. If the Commission were broadened to take in a complete picture of the watershed it might be able to work out something of a constructive nature that would assist us in planning what must be done with regard to the Murray Valley development. What is being done under the Snowy River scheme will obviously be another aggravation of the amount of water that we will have to deal with in flood periods. I have no doubt that in normal years we would be very happy to have additional water and perhaps in the overall picture we will reap more benefit than harm from the river, although it may seem hard to say this now to those unfortunate people who have been doing so much to try to protect themselves in the last few months.

We cannot dream of vacating the river just because we have periodical floodings, I think steps can be taken to overcome the most harmful effects, and undoubtedly one of the most harmful is that mentioned by the member for Chaffey. I give him full marks for his persistence; in these circumstances it is not a persistence that I decry. No one who has had the experiences I have had as a member of the Public Works Committee and seen the result of seepage before ever there was a suggestion of a big flood could minimize the

danger. We know that the normal watering of blocks brings up deleterious matter from the substrata of the soil that ultimately kills out plantations. There are areas that have gone right out of production and have still not been replanted. Those areas will not be replanted for a long time, if ever. I am afraid that the seepage problem caused by the flood will be just as great as the problem we had before we installed drainage systems to take away excess water from river blocks. Today there is a greater force of water coming up through the soil, for water tries to find its own level. Therefore, the salts are coming to the surface, and in some parts the water is more salty than the sea itself. I understand that at Cobdogla the seepage water contains up to 500 grains to the gallon.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson—It is up to 700 grains now.

Mr. SHANNON—That is almost twice as salty as the sea, but the water in the river has only about five grains to the gallon. I suggest to the Ministers of Irrigation and Agriculture that the only way to get rid of these deleterious materials from the land is to leach them out. To do this by pumping water on to the land and then draining it off is most costly, and is a method that has not been tried in areas where we have had great seepage. I believe this is not the time to pump off seepage water, for that would only aggravate the problem. Seepage will continue as long as the river is high, which will be for some months yet, and if we pumped water off now more seepage water would come through and bring up the salts to the surface. I doubt whether the seepage water would carry up all the salts to the surface. A few weeks ago the Public Works Committee, and other members, flew over the flooded areas, and it seemed to me that some settlers had allowed the floodwaters to flow over their blocks, realizing that if they did not do so they would have a seepage problem.

Mr. King—I don't think any of them did that.

Mr. SHANNON—Well, that was the impression I got from the air, but I believe that those whose blocks have been flooded will be

better off, in the net result, than those whose blocks were not flooded, even if their improvements have been ruined. Their major asset, the land, will be intact and can be replanted after the water is pumped off. The improvements can and will be replaced eventually, and their loss is no greater than the losses of the people who suffered from the bush fires. I suggest to the department that it has an opportunity to find the best way to deal with seepage by assessing what effect the flood has had on areas affected by seepage. It would not be practicable to build banks high and strong enough to hold the river back at all places, but if it were we would have the greater problem of seepage under the banks. However, we may erect permanent banks to protect valuable settlements, such as at Renmark.

We must find some method to mitigate the damage caused by future floods. I hope the department will investigate my suggestion of pumping pure water from the river over some areas affected by seepage and, after the flood has subsided, assess the condition of the land. I do not think there will be any salt problem on blocks that have been flooded because there is the same weight of water on that land as in the river. The great problem will be in places where the river has been banked up 12ft. or 15ft. higher than the adjacent land, for that is where we get seepage. This problem is so serious that we should not ignore any possibility of assessing the result of allowing the river to run over the land. I believe that in the net result they will be thankful that they took that action. They will have to repair their banks, but there was no water wash over them. There will be major task of repair work at Jervois where the river washed over the top of the entire bank. The persons undertaking the investigations in an endeavour to assess what should be done in future might consider the matters I have referred to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.58 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 2, at 2 p.m.