

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 4, 1956.

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

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN ACT.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

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

QUESTIONS.**HOUSING TRUST BUILDING SCHEME.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Recently a scheme was inaugurated for the Housing Trust to build houses on blocks owned by applicants. I read in today's *Advertiser* that the first house under the scheme had been completed the day before yesterday. Can the Premier say how many such houses are in course of erection?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Twenty-five.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD RELIEF.

Mr. BYWATERS—Two or three people in the orchard district of Mypolonga who have vacated their homes because of the flood may be able to get back to them eventually, but we do not know when that will be. It was suggested to me that some army huts may be available for them, but so far I have not been able to ascertain whether that is so. Is the Premier aware of any huts that may be available to these people?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. At the conclusion of the war the Government took over from the Commonwealth the huts at Warradale and established a temporary housing scheme there. Later, we also took over other huts, but in one instance the army again required them and we had to vacate them. I do not know of any huts belonging to the Commonwealth or the State that are unoccupied or that can be obtained.

SOUTH-EASTERN FREEZING WORKS.

Mr. HARDING—Can the Premier say when Mr. Rice is likely to visit the South-East to investigate the possibility of establishing freezing works there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I discussed this matter with Mr. Rice only this morning, but

I do not know when he will visit the South-East. He is making preliminary enquiries, and I know he will be busy on this matter in the near future.

ADDITIONAL NORTHERN ROAD.

Mr. COUMBE—On September 19 I asked the Minister representing the Minister of Roads a question concerning the possibility of extending Prospect Road through some stock paddocks to the vicinity of the Cavan Arms Hotel with a view to providing another outlet from the city. Has the Minister a reply to that question?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—No. I have made inquiries from time to time from my colleague and have been informed he is preparing a reply, but it has not yet come to hand.

ATOMIC TESTS: CIVIL DEFENCE.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yesterday, in answer to a question by the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier admitted that no South Australian officer was at Maralinga to observe the recent atomic explosion from the aspect of civil defence. It seems that there is no special officer in South Australia assigned to this job, and I point out that Major-General Dougherty, who represented the New South Wales Government at the test, and who is Director of Civil Defence in that State, watches not only the civil defence aspect but also matters of national emergency, such as floods and bush fires. Can the Premier say whether a similar set-up could be introduced in South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—We have an emergency bush fire service and an officer continuously engaged in training and organizing emergency fire services throughout the State. He is attached to the Police Department, and I believe he has rendered valuable service. He certainly has the confidence of the Government and I have heard good reports from outside associations concerning his work. Immediately the flood danger became evident a special organization was set up in the Lands Department, and we have to thank that organization for the fact that work was planned and organized, and, as a result, millions of pounds of property has been saved. However, it would be impracticable to maintain a permanent organization for flood control on an economic basis because the previous flood was in 1931, so any flood organization would involve us in considerable expense, even though floods are infrequent. We have a permanent officer co-ordinating civil defence in this State. He

was appointed to this work during the war and has attended training courses in other States. He is an efficient officer. It was planned for him to go to Maralinga, but, because of weather delays, when the atomic test took place he was unable to be present. I assure the honourable member that this State is sending officers to classes in Victoria in the same way and to the same extent as other States.

APPEALS AGAINST PRICE DECISIONS.

Mr. LAUCKE—At present the Prices Commissioner's decisions in respect of applications for price variations are arbitrary and final and there is no provision in the Act for appeals. I believe this anomaly should be removed. If adequate provision were made to avoid capricious reference to arbitration, would the Premier consider setting up an independent tribunal or arbiter to whom recourse could be taken in the event of an applicant feeling that his case had been unjustly determined by the Commissioner?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The question pre-supposes that the Prices Commissioner has completely arbitrary powers, but that is not so. He makes recommendations in respect of prices and the Prices Minister decides whether or not to accept them. I have never refused to receive any deputation regarding price fixation, and that position will be maintained. The department is controlled by a Minister responsible to Parliament and any member has the right to query any determination if he believes an injustice has been done.

PYAP PUMPING STATION.

Mr. STOTT—A few days ago I asked a question about the Pyap pumping engine which was out of action, and the Minister promised to have the position examined. Can he state the result?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I took this question up with the Engineer-in-Chief's department and since then have passed through the locality. I examined the work being undertaken at Pyap and was informed by one responsible local person that the work being performed was satisfactory and when completed would prevent any trouble with the next irrigation.

HENLEY AND GRANGE SEWERAGE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Three months ago, at the request of the Health Inspector for the Henley and Grange municipality, I visited certain properties in the North Grange area

north of Terminus Street and east of Military Road which were in a bad condition from the point of view of sanitation. At that time a considerable quantity of water was lying about and effluent from a number of septic tanks was overflowing and bordering on the back entrances to the homes. In a report to the Chief Inspector of the Central Board of Health, an inspector stated:—

The areas inspected are not sewered and septic tanks have been installed at most of the premises. The sub-surface water varies from 10in. to 3ft. below the ground surface, and consequently household waste waters and septic tanks effluent cannot be disposed of effectively on most allotments. Mr. Munroe of the Engineering and Water Supply Department informed me that the area has been surveyed but no definite commencing date for sewers has been fixed. He said that once the project is approved by the Minister of Works it would take 6-12 months to complete.

The inspector had examined the area I visited. There are other areas in the municipality which are not so bad, but which will require attention in the near future. Will the Minister furnish a report concerning the department's plans for sewerage those parts of the municipality, with special reference to the areas north of Terminus Street and east of Military Road, Grange, and in the subdivision adjoining the tramways viaduct contiguous to the new Housing Trust area at Henley South?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

QUORN WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Some time ago a request was made by the Quorn Corporation and, I think, the District Council of Kanyaka, about the possibility of constructing a reservoir on Boolcunda Creek to impound water to provide surface irrigation and a water supply for Quorn. Can the Premier say whether any investigation has been made and, if so, with what result?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I believe an investigation was approved and is now under way. I will obtain a report. The Government's view is that if it can be shown to be a practical scheme it will be valuable to the town which has recently suffered a considerable loss from the transfer of railway activities. My colleague now informs me that the investigation is proceeding.

HARBORS BOARD LAND ACQUISITION.

Mr. TAPPING—During the Loan Estimate debate I queried the Premier about an amount of £100,000 for acquiring land on LeFevre Peninsula for the Harbors Board reclamation.

scheme. He said the department could not acquire further land because of lack of finance. I transmitted that answer to the Port Adelaide Council, which replied:—

The council feels that the development of this area should be continued, in view of the valuable asset to be achieved by its development and as its source of millions of cubic yards of filling material, its possession now would be an economic gain.

In view of the council's statement regarding the value of the proposition will the Government consider buying other land necessary to complete the reclamation scheme and to build a number of houses on LeFevre Peninsula?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined.

THE ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 3. Page 877.)

TREASURER AND MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION.

Miscellaneous, £5,679,360.

Mr. SHANNON—I seek information regarding Electricity Trust policy on supplies to country areas. In some areas there is a problem in putting forward what in the opinion of the trust is a reasonable economic showing for the service required. If that is to be the measuring stick adopted by the trust for all groups many people will be denied a service. The sum of £5,000 appeared on the Estimates for last year. Will it be used to assist in providing electricity supplies to small groups of people in scattered areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The Government assists in supplying electricity to the country in two ways. Firstly, it grants subsidies to councils if they are the distributing authorities. We had an example at Quorn recently where the trust took electricity to the district but the council continued as the distributing authority. The grant was used in meeting the cost of the changeover from direct to alternating current. Secondly, the Government guarantees the trust against losses on country extensions. Scarcely a week passes when the Government does not give a guarantee to enable the trust to provide an extension, and the trust receives a subsidy to meet portion of the cost. A third method was the making of a direct grant to the trust, but that was not regarded favourably by the Grants Commission because a Government

department was being subsidized by a capital grant. The Commission queried the item and it will not appear again on the Estimates.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—There is a line “S.A. Housing Trust, temporary housing accommodation, administration, maintenance, etc., £84,000.” I move that that amount be reduced by £100. In October, 1946, the Treasurer was authorized to spend £50,000 under the Building Materials Act for the provision of emergency accommodation. At Springbank Air Force huts were subdivided, and dismantled huts from other areas were re-erected there. The cost of the converted huts was about £160 each and the reconstruction of the other huts about £250 each. I will not deal with the Warradale position because the Treasurer has said that after the Government had arranged for conversion the huts were taken over by defence forces. The first emergency accommodation was occupied in 1947, but after the Government decided on the conversion there were still single-unit emergency homes and the first were occupied in April, 1950. We should examine the reason for the present increase in rents of Housing Trust accommodation. I have been to Springbank on many occasions. I have yet to meet a tenant in the Springbank emergency homes who is satisfied with the living standards there. Some of the units house two, and others three or four families. Some are unlined and some have lavatory facilities outside the building, possibly 30 or 40 yards away. The laundries were originally constructed for use by two families, but some laundries are now overtaxed whereas others are not used to their full capacity. Despite all these unsatisfactory features, rents are to be increased by 7s. 6d. a week. The emergency single-units are 12 feet wide and vary in length according to the number of families housed. They were well constructed originally and the workmanship was of a high standard. Although some fences have been provided they are not suitable for the locality.

When the area was originally surveyed and the Royal Australian Air Force took charge of it, huts were erected in certain places, but now it has been found that some of them are on private land and that in other parts where huts should have been built roads have been laid down. In 1951-1952 the Mitcham Council considered certain of these emergency homes should be rated at £4 4s. 6d., but this year that figure was increased to £5 5s. Another group were originally rated at £6 10s., but this year that was increased to £6 15s. Families

residing in the composite units are charged 18s. a week rent, and those in the single units 22s. 6d.

Mr. O'Halloran—Those rents are to be increased by 7s. 6d.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes. Over what period should the capital cost be amortized? My latest information is that the period has been fixed at 12 years. Did the single units cost more than £500 each? I point out that I am not dealing with increases in the rents of trust rental homes, for this line does not permit me to do that. Members have been told that people in emergency homes will not move when they are offered permanent accommodation in trust homes, but although I have spoken to many people at Springbank I have yet to meet a tenant who would remain there if offered decent accommodation in a solid construction trust home.

*Yesterday I received an unsolicited letter from a tenant at Springbank who has a wife and one child. He told the trust that he was willing to pay up to £3 5s. a week for a timber-frame home or the ruling rate for a semi-detached home, but he is still at Springbank. I told this tenant, as I have told many others, that he should, if possible, plant a front and back garden adjacent to his emergency home so that the trust would see he had civic pride and probably transfer him to a permanent home. This letter, however, says that there are no fences and that, if a man tries to establish a garden, other people walk over it. Further, the ground is not easy to work. A tenant has a reasonable chance of keeping his own children off the garden, but if there is no fence it is hard to keep others off. This tenant inquired from the trust whether he could have a fence erected, and was told he could if he liked to provide the £60 necessary and erect it himself, but that is not satisfactory. The council told me it was not prepared to pave the roads in that area, but the trust is not in a position to do that work. This means that tenants are inconvenienced by dust. Some footpaths are not more than 2ft. wide so, without any satisfactory front fence being provided, the tenants practically walk straight out on to the road.

In the early days of the emergency housing scheme the rent included the cost of electricity. The rents of houses in the Springbank area were from 15s. 6d. to 23s. a week, and in the Warradale area from 14s. 6d. to 22s. It was considered that the houses had a life of 12 years, with a residual value of £200 each. Can the Treasurer say when that 12-year period

commenced? The trust's report for the year ended June 30, 1953, stated:—

During the past financial year the trust built 332 temporary emergency dwellings, completing the South Australian Government's emergency housing scheme which was begun in 1950.

Does the 12-year period commence from 1950, or from 1956? I hope the Treasurer will also be able to say what rate of interest is being charged and whether the increased rents are warranted. Apparently, the trust did not report on those matters before. The trust's report for 1953 also stated that in 1950 the trust undertook the erection of a number of timber-frame demountable dwellings. That was in addition to the 332 temporary dwellings that were built that year, which made a total of 2,284 which the Government authorized the trust to construct. The trust's report continued:—

There are 2,216 dwellings in the metropolitan area, at Springbank, Semaphore South, Swansea, Draper, Woodville North, Woodville Gardens, Croydon Park, Camden, Marion, Northfield, Islington, Oaklands, Osborne, and Netley. Twenty-four dwellings have been let at Port Augusta, and 44 at Mannum, the latter for occupation by employees of the Engineering and Water Supply Department. The rents charged for the emergency dwellings are 22s. per week for those of the smallest type, and 24s., 26s., and 27s. 6d. per week for those with two, three, and four bedrooms respectively.

However, the report did not mention any special disabilities concerning emergency housing, nor that the Government was embarrassed. The Auditor-General's report for the year ended June 30, 1948, stated that in 1947-48 the rents collected from emergency houses amounted to £11,911. Costs associated with these houses, including administration costs, totalled £7,714, so there must have been a surplus on emergency houses. Has the Government fully considered whether the amortization period of 12 years has been correctly assessed, or is there some financial difficulty under the emergency housing scheme because of some type of debt that has not been explained to the people concerned? I want to know when the 12-year period commenced because the Air Force huts were first let in June, 1947. The 12-year period has almost elapsed in respect of the first group of homes. Are we to assume that a further 12-year period will operate from now? Can the Treasurer indicate the ruling rate of interest when the houses were constructed? Will the occupiers of these homes, in effect, be paying compound interest? The suggested rent increases of 7s. 6d. a week for air force hut homes and 10s. to 12s. a week

for other homes are preposterous. I have already indicated what the Mitcham Council considers fair rentals for these homes. I am opposed to the rent increases which operated from October 1.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If I correctly understand the honourable member, he proposes to reduce the amount proposed for temporary housing accommodation by £100, indicating his displeasure at the recent rent increases. If the line is reduced it will not assist the Government to provide more temporary houses or to maintain those already occupied. I assume the honourable member's move can be construed as a vote of no confidence in the Government or in temporary housing.

Mr. Frank Walsh—You can regard it as a vote of no confidence in the Government.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Members opposite have hitherto favoured the provision of temporary housing, but this move indicates a change of attitude. They object because occupants of temporary houses are asked to meet part of the cost of providing such accommodation. These costs are inescapable and are based on certain physical factors over which the Government has no control. If members examine the Auditor-General's Report, page 187, they will see detailed accounts relating to temporary housing.

Mr. Stephens—Do you think we have been treated fairly? We did not get a copy of that report until half the lines had been discussed.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some time ago the Leader asked whether the report would be available in time for discussing the Estimates. I personally made representations to the Government Printer, and as a result some copies were available yesterday afternoon. Let us examine and analyse these accounts because the basis of objection to the rent increases is that the Treasury has, in some way, fixed these accounts to reveal a loss and juggled with the period of amortization.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Be fair for once in your life and tell the truth: do not imply something I did not say.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—These accounts are public and are audited by the Audit Department. In respect of this matter the Auditor-General reports:—

The administration of temporary housing is carried out by the South Australian Housing Trust on behalf of the State Government. Total net funds provided at June 30, 1956, amounted to £2,388,004, of which £594,529 is shown as lost by annual deficits. Those annual deficits include depreciation of the temporary houses on the basis of a 12-year life (less residual value

of £200 per house). At June 30, 1956, depreciation provided and charged in the annual accounts amounted to £677,000 (more than 25 per cent of the cost of the scheme). The Revenue Statement for the year discloses a loss of £135,142, after providing £149,000 for depreciation. The average rent charged is 24s. 6d. per week and the loss for the year is equivalent to 21s. 4d. per house per week. Provision for maintenance of the houses is made on the basis of 5s. per house per week, and amounted to £31,645 for 1955-56, while the actual cost of maintenance charged against the provision was £47,788. The amount expended on maintenance exceeded the provision in each of the last two years, mainly because during that time practically all of the houses have been repainted. Insurance risks are borne by the State and no provision for insurance is included in the annual accounts.

Therefore, the accounts are not correct because the State, without charging anything, has to carry the insurance and any losses. For the year ended June 30, 1956, administration expenses amounted to £9,082. They include the cost of rent collection, salaries and wages of caretakers and office staff, and work out at 1s. 5d. a house each week. The necessary administration could not be done for a smaller amount. The maintenance cost works out at 5s. a week, and that includes the painting of houses. Last year the Auditor-General said that the amount provided was insufficient to meet actual costs. The same number of houses do not have to be painted each year but the 5s. a week has been accepted following on experience over a period. If members think it can be done for a smaller amount the Government will go out of the business.

Mr. Jennings—Is that bluff?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. It is not possible to do the work for less than 5s. a week and the Government would not attempt to do it. In addition, the cost of providing light and power has to be met and for the last financial period it was £202. Rates and taxes, levied by an outside authority, amounted to £26,776. For each house that works out at 4s. 3d. a week. No other housing scheme in the State has been able to keep the figure down so low. I express appreciation of the forbearance of councils in regard to the rating of properties. The provision for bad and doubtful debts was £203 and that was on a turnover of £155,000. If members think that figure can be reduced they have another think coming. There was an amount of £3,535 for rent, which is something we cannot avoid, for we have to pay rent for premises taken over from the Commonwealth. Sundry expenses amounted to £32, and that is on a turnover of £155,000 and a capital

expenditure of £2,300,000. If members opposite have any query about that, they will have something coming to them. We had to incur an expenditure of £276 for the removal of 12 dwellings from flooded areas. That cannot be regarded as excessive. I understand another 12 dwellings have to be removed. The amount for depreciation of dwellings, being contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund, was £149,000. That was the amount queried by Mr. Walsh. Page 26 of the Auditor-General's report has the following comment on depreciation of wasting assets:—

Section 27 of the Public Finance Act, 1936-1954, provides that out of the moneys appropriated for sinking fund purposes pursuant to the Financial Agreement the Treasurer shall, in each financial year, allocate to each Government Department such sum as the Auditor-General certifies in writing to the Treasurer to be necessary to be provided in that financial year for the depreciation of wasting assets of that department. Any amount allocated to a Government Department pursuant to this section shall be included as part of the working expenses of that department. The certificate forwarded to the Treasurer in accordance with the above Act for 1955-56 showed that the amount required for depreciation of wasting assets for that year was £1,206,750, and was made up as follows:

The figures show £149,000 for temporary housing. That is the origin of the item. I have to obey the Auditor-General in this matter, as provided for in Act of Parliament. He must give me a certificate that it is necessary to provide for depreciation, and he did so to the extent of £149,000. Does Mr. Walsh want me to defy an Act of Parliament and the Auditor-General, or do I provide the amount that is necessary to meet this item? The Auditor-General is the guiding authority. If a Treasurer had the right to say what the sinking fund payments should be he would be able to distort the position in any way he chose, which would be improper. Whatever may be my opinion on the matter, Parliament has provided that a certificate shall be issued by the Auditor-General and that I must obey it. For some time I have been conscious of the fact that these accounts have been drifting into a substantial loss, but by and large certain factors justify the loss. Contrary to what has been said by Mr. Walsh, this matter is decided on other than a pounds, shilling and pence basis. Over the years a substantial loss has been made on these homes and this year the State is not in a position to carry the loss any longer.

The total of the items I have referred to is £220,000 and the income received from

rents £155,000, leaving a deficit of £65,000, to which must be added the interest to be paid on the loan provided for the capital cost. Last year, notwithstanding the frugality of the administration, we lost £135,000, or £1 1s. 4d. every week on each occupied house. The State cannot continue to make such a heavy loss. The weekly expenses on each home are as follows:—Administrative, 1s. 5d.; maintenance (including painting), 5s.; rates and taxes, 4s. 3d.; depreciation (certified by the Auditor-General), £1 3s. 6d.; interest on capital, 11s. 7d.; sundries, 1d. The total weekly costs on each house are £2 5s. 10d. and the average rent £1 4s. 6d., leaving a loss on each house of £1 1s. 4d. The following schedule shows the old and new rents on these emergency homes:—

No. of rooms.	Old rent.			New rent.		
	s.	d.		s.	d.	
2 . .	14	6	to 22 0	22	0	to 32 6
3 . .	18	6	to 24 0	26	0	to 35 0
4 . .	20	0	to 26 0	27	6	to 37 6
5 . .	27	6		39	6	

In 107 cases rents have not been increased. How are these rents fixed? The Government realizes that it has some social responsibility and has insisted that in fixing the rents the board of the trust shall review every case on its merits taking into account the circumstances of the occupier. Members opposite have often advocated the fixation of rent on the circumstances of the occupier; that policy has been followed here. The trust is, and always has been, willing to consider any case presented by an occupier. Rents have not been increased in the case of old age and invalid pensioners, widows with no families, people suffering from disabilities that have an adverse effect on their earning capacity, and people in poor circumstances. There has been no more considerate landlord in the world than the Housing Trust in respect of this emergency accommodation. The Government has stood heavy losses year in and year out, and Mr. Walsh's motion can only lead me to assume that he is trying to make political capital out of a necessity that has been forced on the Government. If members opposite do not believe that people who are able to pay should pay, that alters my view of responsible Government and of the responsibility of members.

Policy on depreciation has been determined by the Auditor-General, who is responsible to Parliament and can only be removed by its vote. Under his Act he fixes the rates of depreciation I must provide. This is not

merely a book entry: I must pay the money into the National Debt Sinking Fund. Mr. Walsh does not do his cause any good when he moves to reduce the amount of this item in the Estimates. If the motion is carried I will regard it not only as a vote of no-confidence in the Government, but also as a vote of no-confidence in State housing, because the Government went into this scheme, not to make a profit, but to help people in distressed circumstances. I do not believe in making losses by providing accommodation for people who are able to pay.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I would not have intruded in this debate had it not been for some of Mr. Playford's remarks. The Deputy Leader moved this motion not off his own bat, but only after consultation with, and having the full support of, the Parliamentary Labor Party. His reason for moving it is that many of these houses are in his electorate, and because of his great interest in housing over the years and his personal knowledge of the position he is well fitted to move it. I support his remarks entirely and my support has not been shaken by the Treasurer's reply. The motion is not an attack on Government housing or temporary housing, nor an attempt to force the Treasurer into a position where he must defy the Auditor-General. The Opposition sincerely believe that the financial structure of the emergency housing scheme is wrong and that tenants are consequently being called on to pay rents out of all proportion to the value of the accommodation with which they are provided. The Treasurer told members the cost of interest, administration, lighting and incidental expenses on each house, and although I do not disagree with his figures or with his statement that the Audit Act requires him to satisfy the Auditor-General's certificate for the purposes of the National Debt Sinking Fund Act, I ask him, who fixed the amortization period on these houses at 12 years and who said that at the end of that time they would have a residual value of only £200? Was that done by the Auditor-General? No, but by the Government as part of its policy; the Government must therefore take the full responsibility for the inflation in rents brought about by the short amortization period.

The Treasurer told members about the interest cost, but he did not tell them the cost of that interest to the Government. The money for these homes was borrowed at a time when Government borrowing was considerably cheaper than at present, and although the necessity to raise other rents is apparently

being considered, it is wrong to raise the rents on emergency homes in sympathy with such an increase. The gravamen of the charge by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is that the amortization period is too short. Firstly, since these houses were taken over from the Commonwealth or were erected by the trust building costs have increased substantially. Therefore the value of buildings already erected has increased greatly but has that factor been considered by the Government? Secondly, who determined that at the end of 12 years these houses, which cost on an average £500 each, would be worth only £200? Many of them will still be occupied at the end of 20 or 30 years, and the tenants will still be paying interest to the Government through the Housing Trust. That is what we are complaining about.

If a proper assessment were made of the life of these houses and a proper amortization period fixed these rent increases could be reduced, if not entirely eliminated. We would not be so concerned if these houses were of ordinary standards with ordinary conveniences, but many of them are of the most primitive standard. The tenants are there only because they are the victims of an acute housing shortage. Therefore, they are entitled to more sympathetic consideration than they have received from this Government. This is a matter on which the strongest possible protest from the Opposition is justified. It is another of those belated attempts by the Government to get revenue from this, that and the other source. The Government missed an opportunity to collect additional revenue when the people were prosperous and wages were not pegged, but now, when unemployment is increasing and wages are pegged (notwithstanding cost of living increases), the Government is increasing charges on all sections of the community. I support the motion.

Mr. LAWN—I regret the necessity to support the motion, but I am pleased to support what the Treasurer was realistic enough to accept as a vote of no confidence in his Government. He said that if the motion were carried the Government would go out of the housing business, but the people would be far better pleased if it went out of business altogether.

THE CHAIRMAN—The honourable member must confine his remarks to the line.

Mr. LAWN—I am in order in saying that instead of going out of business in one activity the Treasurer should go out of business altogether. In his policy speech before the last election the Premier said:—

The Government has attempted to deal justly by all, irrespective of creed or party. If the Government had favoured any section at all it was the under-privileged, the children, the widows and old people for whom, through no fault of their own, life had become difficult. They had to be given special consideration. Because my promise of fair deal to all has been fulfilled, and because we have honestly and diligently served the people of South Australia, I believe that my Government enjoys the support of people of every section of the community.

Opposition members are now talking about a section that has not been dealt with fairly. The Government could bring down legislation to see that all employees working for it or under awards of the court received quarterly adjustments.

Mr. HAMBOUR—On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, what has cost of living to do with this line?

THE CHAIRMAN—The member for Adelaide is quite in order.

Mr. Hambour—Whose side are you on?

THE CHAIRMAN—The honourable member is out of order in making a remark such as that.

Mr. LAWN—The question before the Committee concerns a section of the community who, in the words of the Treasurer, are under-privileged. Their living conditions have been aptly described by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) can only urge them to grow their potatoes. He also supports the Government's proposals to charge them 9s. a day for hospital maintenance.

THE CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable member must confine his remarks to the line.

Mr. LAWN—The Treasurer has increased house rents, yet before the last election he said the under-privileged would receive greater consideration than any other section.

Mr. Hambour—They do, too.

Mr. LAWN—The honourable member would dump them in the bush where they would not be worried by tramcars or buses, and the Treasurer says, "If they do not go there we will bump up their rents." These people should be receiving a higher basic wage, but the Government has frozen their wages. I do not know the exact number of temporary homes.

Mr. John Clark—I think there are 2,450.

Mr. LAWN—Then the Leader of the Opposition must have summarized the position correctly when he said that because interest charges have increased recently and because

the Government is increasing rents on other homes it has decided to increase the rents on temporary houses too. Obviously, the tenants will pay off every penny of the money borrowed, plus interest, in 12 years, and the Government will make a handsome profit.

Mr. Jennings—And it will still be getting 30s. a week for those homes.

Mr. LAWN—The Government knows that the rents of these temporary houses are not included in the C series index, so the rent increases will not be reflected in the next cost of living figures.

Mr. TAPPING—I think the Treasurer was incensed because the Opposition was doing its duty in bringing this matter before the Committee. In Semaphore and Albert Park in my electorate there are about 650 temporary houses, and many of the tenants have protested to me about the increased rents. If I did not speak on this debate I would be failing in my duty. I have always claimed that the Government should build more temporary homes to expeditiously accommodate our citizens. The Housing Trust has done a yeoman job in many ways, but has revealed a serious weakness in its temporary housing scheme. At Osborne there are 15 temporary homes that have not been occupied for over 12 months. No rent has been received from them and they have fallen into disrepair. The damage to them would amount to about £2,000. That indicates maladministration of this scheme. In 1950, when the scheme was introduced, the Treasurer said that after the houses had served their primary purpose they would be transferred to country areas to provide accommodation for Government employees. Those homes at Osborne could be transferred to areas where they are not affected by tidal waters.

The Auditor-General guides Parliament and is above reproach. I do not query his report, but he cannot be blamed for the maladministration of the Housing Trust. The rent increases are exorbitant. The rent of a three-roomed house at Semaphore has been increased from £1 a week to £1 12s.—an increase of 60 per cent. The rent of a four-roomed house has been increased from £1 6s. to £1 17s. 6d.—43 per cent. There should be some consistency in these increases. The basic wage is pegged and workers will have to meet these increases from their pay envelopes. The Treasurer said that the Housing Trust has an amount of £200 on its books representing unpaid rents. I congratulate the Trust on the way it has collected its rents. I believe its

policy of demanding a fortnight's rent in advance is a necessary safeguard.

According to the Auditor-General's report the insurance of temporary homes is conducted by the Government. In recent years four of these homes have been completely destroyed by fire in Semaphore. It has been suggested that faulty wiring was responsible. The last fire was about three months ago and it razed a house within 25 minutes. The Opposition for many years has advocated a Government insurance office. Last Monday I attended a protest meeting at Albert Park where it was made abundantly clear to me that the occupants of these temporary homes were being penalized by rent increases. The Treasurer has frequently stated that some people in temporary homes have no desire to transfer to other homes. Most of those people are not in an economic position to meet higher rents for other accommodation. Some people with large families were accommodated in temporary homes because of their financial circumstances. Others do not desire to shift because they have taken a pride in their homes and have established beautiful gardens. In 1950 it cost about £700 to build a temporary home: two years later it only cost about £800. When we consider the rents paid for homes since their construction it is obvious that the tenants have paid more than one-third of the capital cost. I cannot understand how a loss of £135,000 has arisen. I do not doubt the Auditor-General's figures, but there must be some maladministration and it behoves us to rectify any weaknesses in the system.

I was told by a tenant of one of these homes that if a pane of glass is broken an officer from the Trust arrives in a motor car, makes notes and returns to Adelaide. Eventually another officer replaces that glass. Under such circumstances it is understandable that maintenance costs have increased. I believe more temporary homes should be built because we must not only provide for our local citizens but for those coming here from overseas. We should, however, guard against poor administration.

Mr. JENNINGS—I support the motion, which, in my opinion, is a vote of no confidence in the Government, not in the temporary housing scheme. The Treasurer's reply to the motion was typical in that it contained shameful misrepresentation of what was said by the Deputy Leader and scandalous imputations. He quoted statistics of varying degrees of relevancy prepared by one of his tame economists and endeavoured to shelter behind the Auditor-

General. Despite his quotations from the Auditor-General's report, it must be perfectly clear that the Auditor-General cannot be blamed for rent increases because it is not within his functions to recommend that rents of temporary homes should be in any way altered.

The Treasurer suggested that Mr. Walsh alleged that accounts had been fixed or juggled, but that was completely untrue. I suggest that the method of amortizing these temporary homes is completely unreal and is responsible for our having to subsidize them by about £100,000 annually. Last year, on the recommendation of the Government, Parliament voted £105,000 for the upkeep and administration of these homes, but only £85,000 was spent. Today the Treasurer said that the State was not in a financial position to carry the burden any longer, but the amount we are asked to vote is only £1,757 less than was actually spent last year. At the same time we are asked to agree to a proposal which savagely increases rents. Within about five years these homes will be completely paid for under our system of amortization. That system, incidentally, allows for a residual value of £200. In five years the book asset will certainly be greater than the original cost of building those homes. Instead of allowing rents to remain as they are there is to be an increase so that at the end of the period the tenants will be paying extravagant rents for houses that have already been paid for. The Treasurer spoke about a maintenance cost of 5s. a week for each house and 1s. 5d. a week for administration expenses, but have not the figures been similar for about five or six years? These figures cannot provide a justification for the rent increases. I have had enough to do with the Housing Trust to know that in many cases the temporary houses are not allocated on a temporary basis but are allocated to people who are not in a good financial position.

There are people who believe they are qualified to get permanent rental homes, but they will never get them because the trust considers them unfit for the homes, and they are allocated the so-called temporary homes. Those who occupy them are generally people who cannot pay the rent required for a permanent home. It is on them that we are inflicting this savage rent increase. We are told that the increase is due to the increase in interest rates, but the homes were built when the interest rate was 4 per cent at the most. So the increased interest has no bearing on the matter.

The increased interest rate will mean that the rents of houses built after this date will have to be increased and that is given as the reason for increasing present rents. I am confident Parliament will not agree to the line. I take the silence of members opposite as an indication of their support for the Opposition's view.

I am also interested in the rents of other trust homes. Often I have had to complain about the rents of imported prefabricated houses, particularly in my electorate. The first lot were built and could be let economically, so we were told, at £2 15s. a week. Shortly afterwards the next lot were built and we were told that they could be economically let at £3 5s. a week. In answer to questions in this House I have been informed that the rental is worked out scientifically to cover capital outlay, depreciation, maintenance, etc. A person moved into a £2 15s. a week trust home and found that the rent had been increased to £3 5s. The result was that in a block of 200 homes he was the only one paying £3 5s. All the others were paying £2 15s. That does not support the story that the rents are worked out scientifically. This makes us sceptical about accepting any of the stories about Housing Trust operations.

I am certainly sceptical of the argument advanced in support of the present rent increases. They cannot be justified and they inflict a grave hardship on a section of the community that cannot stand them. The people concerned have no way of recouping the extra expenditure. Because the rents of houses built by public housing authorities are not reflected in the C series index figures, the Government is given an opportunity to get more revenue. It is most shameful that by this backhanded method the Government should get extra revenue from people who will grievously suffer because of the rent increases.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I would be pleased to know when the Treasurer will answer some of the main points raised in the debate this afternoon on the motion of no confidence in the Government because of Housing Trust rent increases. I say definitely that the Government does not intend to continue with emergency housing. I have seen people living in these houses. There is overcrowding and the localities are unsuitable, and I could not advocate the use of more of that type of accommodation.

I previously mentioned the conversion of Air Force huts at Springbank. If the occupants should move elsewhere we could demolish the huts and replace them with units that would

house the people effectively and provide amenities, because the necessary services are there. Water, sewerage and electric light facilities are provided and some roads are made. A decent housing estate could be established there. Mr. O'Halloran dealt effectively with the amortization period, and members on this side would like to know when the amortization period of 12 years commences. I point out that, according to the 1948 report of the Auditor-General, rents totalling £11,911 were collected on emergency homes, and after paying all expenses a surplus of over £4,000 remained. If that was possible eight years ago, why are we told today that, because of a certain book-keeping method the Treasurer has probably instructed the Housing Trust to adopt, a loss is being made? I protest against the increase in rents of emergency homes.

The Committee divided on the motion:—

Ayes (13).—Messrs. Bywaters, John Clark, Davis, Dunstan, Jennings, Lawn, Loveday, O'Halloran, Riches, Stephens, Tapping, Frank Walsh (teller), and Fred Walsh.

Noes (20).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Geoffrey Clarke, Coumbe, Goldney, Hambour, Harding, Heaslip, Heath, Hinks, Jenkins, King, Laucke, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Quirke, Shannon, and Stott.

Majority of 7 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. STOTT—The sum of £510,000 is provided for the Municipal Tramways Trust. Referring to the trust's activities, at page 178 of his 1956 report the Auditor-General states:—

Remission of Debt.—During the year the Treasurer, pursuant to section 27 (5) of the Public Finance Act, reduced the trust's debt to the Government by appropriating to its Loan Account £350,000 out of reserves created through the National Debt Sinking Fund. The Treasurer has advised the trust that he proposes to allocate annually "an amount in reduction of the trust's debt based on the extent to which the cash grant is estimated to fall short of meeting the full loss of operations, including depreciation. Further, an attempt will be made to cover, in like manner, the extent of unprovided depreciation during the three years to June 30, 1955. This will be, subject, of course, to sufficient reserves being available to the Treasurer to permit such a procedure."

In view of that statement, Parliament can expect to vote an annual amount to meet the deficits of the trust. We have provided £500,000 in this year's Loan Estimates, and the amount in the Budget brings the total for the year to over £1,000,000. I am concerned that,

although we are asked to vote these large sums, we have no control over the trust through a Minister. The Auditor-General's report contained the following information:—

The amount of advances to the trust by the Treasurer at 30th June, 1956, was £6,386,000, of which £3,200,000 has been lost, leaving £3,186,000 employed in the undertaking. Features of the trust's operations for the year ended 30th June, 1956, were as follows:—

The deficit was £711,000, equivalent to 2.69d. per passenger carried. This was an improvement of £28,000 over the previous year. A Government grant of £570,000, which was £30,000 less than the previous year, reduced the trust's deficit to £141,000 compared with £139,000 for 1954-55. An increase of £172,000 in operating expenses including interest, was more than offset by a gain of £200,000 in earnings. The trusts' indebtedness to the South Australian Government decreased by £393,000 of which £350,000 was remitted by the Treasurer from the National Debt Sinking Fund. The capital expenditure included £251,000 for fuel buses; and £111,000 for land and buildings, mainly new service depots. The decline in passengers carried, estimated at 1,791,000 (2.7 per cent), was three times that of the previous year. Average passengers per traffic mile fell from 6.38 in 1954-55 to 5.9 in 1955-56, while traffic miles run increased by 504,000. Licensed bus services showed a reduction in passengers carried of 561,000, or 4.2 per cent; about one-third of which was accounted for by a service being taken over by the trust. Traffic miles run decreased by 1.4 per cent.

It is obvious from these figures that the trust is going further away from balancing its accounts. It is a public undertaking, and as Parliament is asked to meet its annual losses I think it is time an examination was made with a view to running the organization on more economic lines.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Loan Fund has to provide for a certain amount of National Debt Sinking Fund contributions. The allocation is apportioned by Parliament to the departments to which it applies. In addition certain contributions are made by the Commonwealth, and contributions are made in relation to cancelled securities. The Treasurer allocates those to departments that have no security, those whose accounts are regarded as being non-profitable. Before the establishment of the Tramways Board, there was not the slightest doubt that the losses that had occurred through obsolescence had wiped out a great deal of the security on which the loans were granted. It is necessary for the Treasury to keep on its books the value of the assets against which advances are made. These amounts were allocated out of free amounts that we have. It has not been one-way traffic. For many years we allocated amounts to wipe off advances made

for drought relief, which were in our loan accounts for many years. That was done because drought relief is irrecoverable.

I have always taken the view that it is my duty to allocate these funds to the liquidation of bad accounts. In some instances we have allocated money to accounts that perhaps could not strictly be regarded as bad from the State's point of view, but on which no income could be acquired. For instance, we have liquidated all the cost outstanding in relation to the erection of Parliamentary buildings. They are no longer any charge against the Loan Account, because I regarded them as buildings from which no income would be recovered to pay the interest that could be expected to accrue. They have been eliminated from the books by paying out amounts from the numerous sinking fund accounts. We have allocated sinking fund payments to accounts we have regarded as least revenue-earning to the Treasury.

There is one aspect which indicates that this line has more than a purely metropolitan flavour. Some members on both sides take the view that public transport in the metropolitan area is purely a metropolitan matter and that the State as a whole should not contribute towards it, but I point out that there are a number of indirect ramifications associated with this question. Only yesterday a New South Wales public servant informed me that he believed that the next quarterly adjustment of the C series index in New South Wales would show an increase of about 10s. a week, chiefly because of the increase in the cost of the public transportation. This line is directly reflected in the C series index, and if we increased fares in South Australia in order to save some of the money the Treasury is providing by way of assistance to the Trust, we would have a very understandable pressure for increased wages, not only in the metropolitan area, but throughout the entire State. I have heard some members advocate a subsidy to keep the cost of living down, and a subsidy in this instance deserves consideration because it keeps down the cost of living on a State-wide basis.

I do not hold the view that the Tramways Trust is not effectively run. It undoubtedly had run down very badly when the new board was constituted. The reports that I obtained and made available to honourable members showed that the cost of maintenance of rolling stock and the tram lines had become so great because of obsolescence that the service could not possibly be maintained effectively. The Trust was confronted with either purchasing

entirely new electrical equipment and installing new lines for a major part of its service or going into diesel traction. A decision has been taken on that, and no amount of debate now can alter it.

Mr. Quirke—Does that mean that there are no comparative figures available yet in respect of the changeover?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Comparative figures were available and were tabled. I was speaking to a world authority on transport recently and he was very scathing in his remarks regarding trams in our streets. He said that there were very many things he liked about the city but the trams appeared to him to be about 100 years behind the times.

Mr. O'Halloran—There were no diesel buses 100 years ago, so that is all he knew about it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—He was speaking figuratively, of course. I believe that the Trust is making a sincere effort to bring about effective control and provide an effective system, and, on behalf of the Government on a matter of policy, I believe that if we can subsidize the tramways to a certain extent to keep the costs of public transport at the lowest possible level we are conferring a benefit not only on the metropolitan area but on outside areas as well. I point out that the Trust has done that, and with a reducing grant from the State each year. In 1953-54 the grant was £700,000, the following year £600,000, last year £570,000 and this year it is £510,000. The honourable member will see that the movement is in the right direction, and I am led to believe that there will be further reductions when the full benefit of the new scheme is felt.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I realize that in the transition period of the changeover from fixed lines to diesel buses or some other form of transport there will be a period when we will not be able to assess the outcome. On page 178 of the Auditor-General's report the following appears:—

Remission of debt.—During the year the Treasurer, pursuant to section 27 (5) of the Public Finance Act, reduced the trust's debt to the Government by appropriating to its Loan Account £350,000 out of reserves created through the National Debt Sinking Fund. The Treasurer has advised the trust that he proposes to allocate annually "an amount in reduction of the trust's debt based on the extent to which the cash grant is estimated to fall short of meeting the full loss on operations, including depreciation."

Does that mean that whatever losses it makes in a year's operations, including depreciation, it will be made up by a grant as evidenced by the £510,000?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. Let us assume that the Tramways Trust owes the Treasury £4,000,000 borrowed by it and loaned to the trust for capital expenditure. If it makes a loss the only assets it has are those which accrued out of that £4,000,000. I have told the trust that if it makes a loss I will depreciate the amount it owes to me by that amount in order to keep my books square, in accordance with the capital asset in my security. Assuming that the trust made a loss of £100,000 and the capital debt was £1,000,000, out of the National Debt Sinking Fund I will wipe off in my books £100,000 of the debt it owes me.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I have no objections to the trust being sustained out of revenue and loan provided it is not sustained at a lower charge by the Electricity Trust at the expense of country people. I feel that the Electricity Trust is supplying the metropolitan area and the tramways at a rate which could be increased and so alleviate the lot of country people. I believe that the profit of £411,000 by the Electricity Trust on a £40,000,000 investment is insufficient, and if the price of power in the city were increased, particularly to the Tramways Trust, then the Electricity Trust could eliminate zone 5 in the country. On half the profit mentioned the trust eliminated all the surcharges prior to 1951 in three zones; so at double the profit it could at least relieve one zone of one year of the surcharge. I ask the Treasurer to look into that.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Tramways Trust pays the Electricity Trust a charge which is sufficient to meet the cost of the electricity it receives. The supply to the Tramways Trust is profitable to the Electricity Trust, and seeing that it pays all the charges I would not be prepared to burden the Tramways Trust with additional charges.

Mr. STOTT—The Auditor-General in his annual report draws attention to the fact that traffic receipts for the Tramways Trust for the year ended June 30 amounted to £2,250,902. He says:—

No provision has been made for a contingent liability of approximately another £500,000 in respect of the cost of restoring roadways following the abandonment of tram tracks.

The tramways are in a serious economic position. I do not object to a public utility being provided with money to carry on, but the position of the trust is getting so serious that we should have another look at it. We have already voted it £1,000,000 and now it is

faced with another £500,000 contingent liability for tearing up tram tracks and providing roadways, for which no provision is made. It is time Parliament considered the position of the trust, as it is getting out of hand. The Treasurer says that the Tramways Board is doing a good job, but in view of the figures placed before us by the Auditor-General and the Treasurer I consider it is time Parliament further investigated the trust's affairs so that our metropolitan transport system can be put in proper order.

No proper plan has been prepared for transport in the metropolitan area. The Housing Trust often builds on the outskirts of the metropolitan area, but without considering transport for tenants. It is time we considered introducing one-man buses; the driver collects the fares as passengers enter. Parliament should appoint a committee to see whether our public transport system is being conducted efficiently. Notwithstanding the increase in Adelaide's population the Tramways Trust's revenue is falling.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Auditor-General is quite right in being conservative when presenting his accounts to the House. The honourable member is concerned that no provision has been made for the Tramways Trust's contingent liability of £500,000 for reinstating roads after tramlines have been removed, but people rarely provide for contingencies. For instance, I have made no provision for the payment of my income tax that will fall due in the year after next. We have a contingent liability of up to £2,000,000 for the completion of the Mannum-Adelaide main, and the contingent liability on the Port Augusta power station is about £25,000,000. That does not mean that these undertakings are undesirable or unwarranted. If everyone had a motor car we could not find sufficient parking space in the city, so it is necessary to have public transport. We should keep fares as low as possible to arrest the inflationary spiral.

Mr. STEPHENS—Mr. Chairman, after hearing the suggestion put forward by Mr. Ham-bour about the grant to the Tramways Trust I ask whether a member of this House may move to increase the amount of any line on the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN—I thank the honourable member for telling me he would raise this question. Standing Order No. 434 states, *inter alia*:—

No motion shall be entertained for the increase of a Vote or item (not previously

recommended to the House by the Governor) On this point one authority states:—

No amendment can therefore be proposed, whether by a Minister of the Crown or by any other member, to increase the amount of a grant beyond the sum specified in the Estimates.

Mr. LAWN—I remind the Committee that the Tramways Trust is not the only undertaking to receive grants under the Estimates. I remind the House that losses are sustained on other services. Crown lands development reveals a deficit of £181,350; irrigation and reclaimed areas, £286,207, and the settlement of discharged soldiers on the land cost £106,867 last financial year. From pages 29 to 57 inclusive of the Auditor-General's report it can be seen that about £2,000,000 was spent on agricultural research for primary producers, on country water districts and agricultural matters solely related to the country. I agree with the Treasurer that because a scheme reveals a loss it does not necessarily follow that it is not worthwhile.

Mr. QUIRKE—Over £4,000,000 is provided for railway working expenses and debt charges. That is a considerable sum, but I do not argue its necessity. Times have caught up with the Railways Department. Very little wool is transported by the department; most of it is carried by road transport. However, I criticize the department's attitude to those who provide its revenue. Of course, most of its revenue is derived from country sources—the city contributes little. Most of its passenger services are excellent, but the line from Riverton to Spalding is almost entirely worn out. When His Excellency the Governor desired to visit Clare and take his vice-regal coach, he was advised by the department that the rail track was not suitable. If that line was repaired and diesels operated thereon the revenue derived therefrom would substantially increase. The rails were rolled in England in about 1870 and were laid on the staggered joint system. As a result there is shocking vibration and it is impossible to read in the carriages. Some people have been physically ill as a result. I have been told that when standardization takes place the rails from the Cockburn-Gladstone stretch of the Broken Hill line will be available for the Clare track. They are worn out rails and will not improve the position. In the matter of amenities I criticize the attitude of the railways towards the people who provide the revenue. When asked to install one light in a trucking yard the railways

say it is not possible because the number of trucks to be loaded does not warrant the expenditure. Railway losses would not be so great if they considered more the people who use their services.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The money is voted for the purpose of keeping down transportation costs. It is on all fours with the Tramways Trust line. The railways carry about 4,000,000 tons of goods each year. If it were carried by road our road system would become most congested within six months. On that tonnage the railways gross ton mileage cost was reduced to 1.67 pence. I have had experience of road cartage and the talk is usually about 1s. a ton mile. The rate might be reduced for a longer haul. The Auditor-General's report shows that transportation by rail increased in connection with suburban passengers, parcels and mails, general merchandise, wool to the extent of £7,000, livestock £63,000, and minerals other than coke and coal £258,000. Decreases included £118,000 for wheat, which is due to the fact that much wheat has not been sold and taken to ports. We could recoup much of the loss by putting up the transportation costs borne by primary producers but that is undesirable because it would affect the cost of living.

Mr. QUIRKE—I do not criticize the railways from the point of view of their competition with the road traffic. I said the railways were losing much traffic. An increase of about £7,000 for wool is not great considering the thousands of tons of wool that are taken over our roads each week. The major portion of the wool traffic is being carried by road. The Clare people are contributing towards this

vote, yet they have a rotten rail service and I want to know when it will be improved. The railways are losing traffic because in many places the stock cannot be loaded at night. Not one single light will be put over the trucking yards by the railways, which means that stock is carted by road. If the railways installed a few amenities more use would be made of their services. They adopt a typical bureaucratic attitude. If someone thinks of something before them the other person is wrong. The sooner we get away from that the better it will be for the railways.

Mr. HARDING—I want to say that the South-Eastern people are happy with the service they get from the railways.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MOTOR PARKING).

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

LOTTERY AND GAMING (FLOOD RELIEF) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.22 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 9, at 2 p.m.