

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, October 30, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

TAXICAB CONTROL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say whether the Government has received a report from the Metropolitan Taxicab Advisory Committee on a uniform method of controlling taxicabs in the metropolitan area, and, if so, is it intended to introduce legislation this session to implement the report?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I had an interview with the authorities concerned, who pointed out that they had reached substantial but not complete agreement on the control of taxicabs. The Government made what I believed to be useful suggestions, and a Bill has been prepared by the Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman for submission to the authorities concerned to see if it meets with their approval. It is essential for them to reach agreement on the matter. I understand the outstanding differences at present are very small, and the authorities are coming to see me either this afternoon or tomorrow afternoon to discuss them. After the interview I will be able to advise the honourable member definitely whether or not a Bill will be introduced this session.

HUNDRED OF JEFFRIES LAND.

Mr. BROOKMAN—During the weekend I passed through the hundred of Jeffries and the luxuriant pasture on the Lands Department blocks was astonishing, even though I knew what to expect from the district. Will the Minister of Lands draw the attention of the Commonwealth authorities to this growth and ask them to inspect the pastures in their present state in the hope that the Commonwealth will accept the land for war service land settlement? Secondly, what is to be done with the pastures in the next few months?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I assure the honourable member that on behalf of the Government I have made repeated representations to the Commonwealth about the excellence of the pasture and soil in the Hundred of Jeffries. Recently the Federal Deputy Director inspected the area and said he was amazed at the progress the pasture had made, particularly in parts about which previously he had not been happy. I hope within the next few days

to get a further report from the Commonwealth Minister as to the Commonwealth's accepting this area as a land settlement proposition.

As to the second question, the Lands Department and the Agriculture Department have prepared a scheme under which the pasture can be made available for the agistment of the herds of settlers along the River Murray. A scheme has been forwarded to the river area but up to the present the response has not been as I would wish. I am concerned because the pasture is now losing its bloom and unless stock are soon put in it will lose a lot of value. The Lands Department and the Agriculture Department at Murray Bridge are endeavouring to get stock owners there to make early application so that stock can soon be depastured on the land.

RISDON PARK SCHOOL ROAD.

Mr. DAVIS—Has the Minister of Education received a reply to the question I asked on October 10 regarding the condition of the road alongside the Risdon Park school, between Fitzgerald Street and Kingston Road?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have now received a report from the Architect-in-Chief indicating that the land for the Risdon Park school, purchased in 1949, was intersected by Fitzgerald Street running east and west through the site. This street was unmade and unused. The corporation was requested some years ago to agree to the closing of this portion of Fitzgerald Street and agreed on the condition that, in exchange, land for a street 40ft. wide was provided along the whole of the eastern boundary of the school property. No request has been received from the corporation for the Government to meet the cost of providing this roadway. However, although the responsibility for the forming of the road and water table rests with the corporation, it is appreciated that it is not essential for residents generally and that the Government would derive some benefit from it. Cabinet has, therefore, agreed to offer to meet half the cost of £700 to a maximum of £350 provided the corporation does not seek any further assistance from the Government in connection with the formation or making of the roadway or for the disposal of surface waters.

FENCES ACT.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Has the Minister of Education received a reply to the question I asked last week about an amendment of the Fences Act?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes. It is as follows:—

In general, the Fences Act, 1924-26, appears to deal satisfactorily with the apportionment of responsibility for the cost of erecting dividing fences, and it is difficult to see how it could be improved. Very few complaints are received regarding its operations and, in the absence of any worthwhile practical suggestions, it is not proposed to amend the Act at present.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD WORK.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Premier received advice from the Army that he will receive an account for flood protection work done by the Army, and does he believe this to be just in view of the fact that the Government already is heavily committed for flood protection work and that the Army was employed in the defence of properties of river settlers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has not received an account from the Army, but previously when it has assisted the State in various directions accounts of some sort have been sent. For instance, when the Army assisted in connection with the grasshopper plague we received an account for certain out of pocket expenses. Whether it is right for the Army to render accounts for such work is a matter I will not debate here, but we were desperately anxious to get the Army to help and the work done was invaluable. No doubt the Commonwealth Government will make a contribution in this matter, and it makes little difference whether it is in the form of money or service. It is the ultimate total that counts.

A.M.P. LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Mr. JENKINS—Can the Minister of Lands say whether the Australian Mutual Provident Society has relinquished some of its leases of land for development in the upper South-East, and if so, whether that land will be re-allocated, either by lease or sale, to farmers able and willing to develop it?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The answer to both questions is "Yes."

NEW PAYNEHAM SCHOOL.

Mr. JENNINGS—Some time ago I wrote to the Minister of Education about the proposed new Payneham School and received a reply. In answer to a request that the verandahs of the school be completely closed, as had been done in other schools, the Minister said that the matter was still being investigated by the Architect-in-Chief and he would advise me later. Has the Minister any later information

from the Architect-in-Chief, and if not, will he have the matter followed up?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have received no further information from the Architect-in-Chief, but I will willingly comply with the honourable member's request and let him have a reply in the next few days.

MURRAY VALLEY DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. KING—In view of the reported loss of half the stone fruit trees and 50,000 citrus trees in the Goulburn Valley and Murrumbidgee irrigation areas, and the profound effect this must have on the canning and citrus industries, can the Minister of Irrigation say whether the Government will press for the opening up of mallee land suitable for irrigation, of which there are ample sites on the Murray River, to settle the remaining ex-servicemen applicants and to rehabilitate fruit-growers from the flooded areas?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Some time ago—probably two years—the Government surveyed the whole of the river areas to ascertain which would be suitable for further plantings. Circulars have recently been forwarded to soldier settler applicants to ascertain whether they are still interested in blocks; not all the replies are yet to hand. The question of the future of settlers who have been flooded out is of great importance and will be discussed soon. I shall be happy to take it up with Cabinet.

RAIL CARRIAGE OF MOTOR PARTS.

Mr. STOTT—Because of the floods many people in the Murray Valley, particularly those east and south of the river, are forced to cross the river at Murray Bridge, and people from the Waikerie and Loxton districts travel by passenger service to Murray Bridge where they connect with the train. Recently some people were held up because of an accident and called at a motor garage in Karoonda to have repairs effected. The garage requested that the necessary parts be sent from Adelaide to Murray Bridge on the 11.20 a.m. train, which would connect with the passenger service. That request was refused by the Railways Department, which said that the parts could not be carried on that train. That seems to be a ridiculous state of affairs—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member cannot debate the question. I ask him to ask his question.

Mr. STOTT—Will the Minister of Education take up this matter with his colleague, the Minister of Railways, to see whether parts urgently required by people in this district

may be despatched by the 11.20 train and carried to the passenger service serving these areas in an emergency of this nature?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

RIVER MURRAY FLOOD RELIEF.

Mr. HAMBOUR—In view of Senator Buttfield's statement yesterday that the Commonwealth Government required more information on how its contribution for flood relief would be spent, will the Premier say whether that statement is correct, and, if not, what negotiations have taken place?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Prior to submitting a case to the Commonwealth Government the State contacted local authorities and departmental officers to get the best possible advice on the extent of the damage. Its own officers were sent out to secure pictures of the devastation so that the case presented to the Commonwealth Government would be based on the best information available. As a matter of interest, this morning representatives of local government authorities in the river areas submitted to me detailed information that they had subsequently prepared, and I was interested to see that the preliminary assessments based on the Government's surveys and forwarded to the Commonwealth were accurate, although, of course, not precisely accurate, for it was not possible at the height of a flood to get a precise assessment of the damage that might occur. The Commonwealth Government has asked me for no additional information, and on a number of occasions State Treasury officers have contacted Federal Treasury officers and tried to clear up any matters the Federal Treasury might have doubts about. Indeed, the lady mentioned visited the area—I believe at the instance of the Federal Treasurer—and I would have thought she would be able to advise directly. Apart from that, however, I resent the fact that the Commonwealth Government regards this as a State flood: it is affecting the citizens of the Commonwealth as well as those of the State. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government is collecting a huge amount of taxation from this area, which is being maintained by a heavy annual loss to the State. If the Commonwealth does not think it has the information it wants, it is competent for it to make its own assessment. Further, if it likes to come across, every welcome will be given to it in the river areas to make its own assessment. I very much resent the inference that the State has to dot every "i" and cross every "t" before its case can be considered. I believe that

this is one of the greatest calamities that have ever occurred in this State and on all fours with those that have occurred in other States that have received liberal Commonwealth assistance without proving anything.

INTERSTATE TRANSPORT CONTROL.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Under the heading "S.A. Transport Firm Wins Appeal" this morning's *Advertiser* contains the following report:—

The Victorian Government's attempts to exact a levy from road hauliers suffered another setback today, when the High Court ruled that an S.A. transport firm which carried wool from Naracoorte, S.A., to Geelong was engaged in interstate trade, although the wool first came from Victoria.

The report goes on to show how interstate hauliers can dodge their just commitments towards the upkeep of roads in this State. I ask the Premier whether this decision will affect South Australia and, if so, will he endeavour to secure an amendment of the Constitution in order that the States may receive some assistance from interstate hauliers towards the upkeep of their roads?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not seen the article. The decision was given only recently, but I believe it was a question of whether or not the trade concerned was interstate trade. I understand people residing in Victoria sent their wool to Naracoorte—which I believe is the only outlet for it through South Australia—and then desired for another purpose to send it to Geelong, and the court held that that constituted interstate trade. I feel that it could not be regarded as anything but interstate trade, but it does not have any direct bearing on the validity of the legislation passed in this Parliament recently, or on the important case in which the Victorian legislation as a whole is being challenged. Victoria's legislation is not precisely on all-fours with South Australia's, though it has some of the same characteristics. I believe the South Australian legislation will stand up to a test by the High Court or the Privy Council as the case may be, but the case decided this week certainly has no bearing on it.

EFFECTS OF ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Can the Premier say whether the sudden and mysterious fractures in underground concrete water tanks that occurred in recent weeks within a radius of 200 miles of Maralinga could have had any connection with recent atomic explosions?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have no information on that topic.

DIFFERENTIAL RATING.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Local Government a reply to my recent question about differential rating?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Minister of Local Government referred me to a recent opinion given by the Crown Solicitor which, amongst other things, states:—

I agree that it is competent for the council to declare a differential rate in respect of any ratable property within any portion of the area, and there are no grounds for saying that there must be more than one property within the portion of the area.

Mr. DAVIS—Does the Minister's reply mean that a different rate can be fixed in respect of a pensioner's property and that a council can rate a property according to the means of the owner?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The opinion of the Crown Solicitor means precisely what he says, and if the honourable member reads it in *Hansard* tomorrow morning he will find it abundantly clear, but I shall be only too pleased to refer the question to my colleague and get a detailed reply.

BOWMANS TRUCKING YARD.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked recently about the provision of better lighting facilities for the trucking yards at Bowmans?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Minister of Railways has supplied me with the following reply:—

The Railways Commissioner has reported that he has already approved the provision of lighting at the sheep trucking yards at Bowmans and it is anticipated that the lighting so authorized will be completed in one month.

RAILWAY SIGNALLING SYSTEM.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a reply to my recent question about the railways signalling system?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Railways Commissioner reports that, as advised previously, the provision of automatic train stops on the line between Adelaide and Woodville is being investigated. The Commissioner also states that automatic train stops provide the means whereby a train is automatically stopped short of a train occupying a section ahead.

TEROWIE MAIN ROAD.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Roads a reply to the question I asked recently about the re-sealing of the main street at Terowie?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Commissioner of Highways reports that the re-sealing of this street is planned for this summer.

CENTENARY OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. JENKINS—Can the Premier say whether invitations will be sent to the deputy mayor to attend the celebrations of responsible government where the mayor of a council is a member of this House?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government's proposal goes somewhat further than that, for it is proposed to send an invitation to the chairman of a council or the mayor who, if he so desires, may send a deputy.

HOUSES FOR MYPOLONGA SETTLERS.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked last week about temporary houses for settlers at Mypolonga who have lost their homes as a result of the flood?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have a report concerning the provision of accommodation for pumping plant employees at Mypolonga, which states:—

The decision on the provision of accommodation for the three pumping plant employees at Mypolonga who were occupying departmental houses which were flooded will be influenced by two main factors:—

1. Whether the former homes can be re-occupied when the floodwaters recede, and
2. The staff that will be needed at the pumping station in future, having regard to the anticipated early changeover to electrically-operated units.

The first question is being reported on by the department's building inspector, and the Engineer-in-Chief has been asked for early advice on the second.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD.

Mr. KING—Has the Minister of Irrigation an up-to-date report on river levels and has he anything to add to the forecast he made recently on the behaviour of the river in the next few months?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have no further information on the behaviour of the Murray, but I think the honourable member will agree that it has behaved better recently because it has fallen. Previously I gave information on the total fall of the river at various places since the peak. On October 25 the total fall

at Chaffey was 20½in., but it is now down 26in. At Renmark it had fallen 22½in., and today by 28½in. At Berri it had fallen 23in., and by today 29in., so the honourable member will see that in less than a week it has dropped at those places by about 6in. on the average, or a little more. At Cobdogla on October 25 the river had fallen 33in., and by today 42½in., and the respective figures for other towns are:—Waikerie 29½in. and 37½in.; Cadell 28½in. and 33½in.; Morgan 26in. and 32in.; and Murray Bridge 20½in. and 25½in. Members will be pleased to know that the river at last is gradually dropping.

UNIVERSITY FEES.

Mr. STEPHENS—In this morning's *Advertiser* under the heading "Ninety per cent Rise in Fees at University" mention is made of the different classes affected. The final paragraph of the article states:—

It is the intention of the council to examine any cases of real hardship to ensure that no one is prevented from pursuing university studies because of the increase in fees.

The increased fees will not only affect present University students, but may prevent future students from attending because they cannot afford to pay them. Will the Premier investigate the matter to see whether, instead of University fees being increased, they can be reduced?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The increased fees have been approved by the University Council and were not suggested by the State Government. The council, by Act of Parliament manages the affairs of the University subject, of course, to the senate. The fees in this State are much lower than in other States. Under the present set-up the Commonwealth has a liberal system of scholarships, and it is a fair assumption that probably 60 to 70 per cent of the increased fees will be paid by the Federal Government and not by the students. Apart from that, the council has for some time felt that it has relied too much on State support and it desires to be more self-supporting. The Government has approved of the regulation and has been assured by the council that no student of any quality will be debarred from University education purely because of his inability to pay fees. That would apply more to New Australians than to Australians who have been educated through our schools because, as I have already pointed out, there is no limit to the number of scholarships granted by the Federal Government provided the necessary educational standard has

been attained. In those cases, irrespective of the financial position of the parents, the Commonwealth provides free tuition at the University.

Mr. RICHES—I read of the increased fees with considerable concern because I believe it will make University education more remote for the sons and daughters of the ordinary citizens. However, I was interested to hear the Premier say that there was no limit to the number of Commonwealth bursaries that can be issued. My experience has been that there is a strict limitation, irrespective of the number of children who have the necessary qualifications. Can the Premier say whether there has been an alteration in policy concerning the issue of Commonwealth bursaries?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I can only state the position as I have been advised at various times by the University. This is not a new matter. About two or three years ago the University requested the Government to approve of a regulation to increase fees, but the Government believed it was injudicious to raise them. It has been proud of the fact that South Australia has, on a population basis, twice as many University students as the other Australian States. Even with the increase our rates are still lower than those in other States.

Mr. O'Halloran—Lower than Western Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Western Australia claims to have a free University system, but it does not exactly work out that way. On a number of occasions the University has sought permission to raise its fees, assuring the Government that there would be no hardship, that Commonwealth bursaries would adequately cater for students, and that the University would see that, if there were a case of hardship the student would qualify for a bursary. Under the circumstances the Government felt it could not capriciously withhold consent to the raising of fees.

MILLICENT POLICE STATION.

Mr. CORCORAN—During a recent visit to Millicent the chairman and clerk of the district council and other citizens drew my attention to the fact that there is actually no police station there. The old courthouse, which was built about 70 or 80 years ago, is used for local court purposes and as accommodation for the police officers who are carrying out their various duties in serving the town and district, and there is not sufficient accommodation. There is no provision in this year's Estimates, but will the Premier ascertain the Government's

intentions concerning the erection of a new police station at Millicent?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined and advise the honourable member.

BUILDING PRECAUTIONS.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on August 14 concerning the policing of the Scaffolding Act and the Factories Act, particularly in relation to saw mills in the South-East?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter was investigated and the Attorney-General has reported as follows:—

The Country Factories Act, 1945 and the Scaffolding Inspectors Act, 1935-1940, apply to the municipality of Mount Gambier. The Factories Department has an officer permanently stationed at Mount Gambier with an office there, and he carries out inspections under both Acts. He has had many years of experience and is well qualified to do these inspections. The Factories Department has knowledge of only one fatal accident in country areas in recent months and that was at a timber mill at Nangwarry and has been the subject of a coronial inquiry. The chief inspector has received no complaints regarding the lack of policing of the two Acts.

Mr. FLETCHER—Does the Premier know that the department has received requests from the Coroner that the Act be tightened up and the area specified in relation to Mount Gambier extended?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not aware of those facts, but I will ascertain the Coroner's finding in this matter and examine it.

ROADS IN GREENACRES.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Premier received a reply to the question I asked on October 23 regarding roads in the new Housing Trust settlement at Greenacres?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The following is the reply from the chairman of the Housing Trust:—

In the housing estate at Greenacres there are new roads to a total length of about 3.1 miles. By arrangement with the Enfield Council, the Housing Trust formed these roads in order to provide access for builders and the essential services. As a temporary measure, the council covered the roads with rubble and it is the intention of the council to complete the work of roadmaking as soon as circumstances permit. However, before permanent roads can be made the area in question will need to be drained and it will be necessary for the council to carry out the appropriate drainage works. The Enfield Council has, by virtue of the rapid growth of its area, extensive drainage and roadmaking problems, but it is the experience

of the trust that the council does its utmost to cope with these problems consistent with its financial and material resources.

BANK CREDIT.

Mr. STOTT—I know of specific cases where farmers have been refused further credit by their banks when it has been needed to enable them to carry on their normal operations. One farmer had an estate worth £22,000, yet the bank refused to advance him £1,000. These cases are not peculiar to South Australia. I have evidence of them from all over Australia, and each week the file of cases is getting larger. The Federal Treasurer has said that the banks have no fluid resources, yet the *Advertiser* of October 1 contained a report that Esanda Ltd. was provided with £2,000,000 from the E.S. and A. Bank to create a hire-purchase business and provided £6,500,000 at colossal rates of interest. Will the Premier take up this important matter that is affecting the national economy with a view to the Commonwealth Government easing its foolish restrictions in this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will give me details of some of the cases I will be pleased to investigate them.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICES.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Has the Minister of Education a report regarding the committee that has been inquiring into school bus services?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The school bus inquiry committee is really an inter-departmental inquiry committee and consists of senior members of various Government departments, and I referred the matter to the Public Service Commissioner. The school bus inquiry committee has met on 39 occasions and members have made inquiries concerning services operating in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia. The Minister is aware that the members of the committee are senior officers who cannot spare too much time from their other duties. One of them (Mr. Poole) has already had his normal duties greatly upset by the floods on the River Murray. Nevertheless, the members are aware of the desirability of submitting their report as soon as possible. The investigation is now in its concluding stages and it is hoped that the report will be available towards the end of November, 1956.

FRANKTON BUS ROUTE.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Has the Minister of Education anything further to report regarding the Frankton bus route?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Transport Officer of the Education Department has not approached the Highways Department concerning the new Frankton bus route. The Highways Department asked the Transport Officer regarding the Education Department's intentions in respect of school transport in this area, and was informed that, if the road for which the grant was requested by the district council was made trafficable for a large bus, the school bus would traverse it. The Commissioner of Highways reports that after the requirements of departmental works are met the remaining funds for rural areas received from the Commonwealth are allocated between the councils of the State to give assistance for district road works. The proportion of available funds given to each council depends on the comparative requirements, considered annually, of the district, having regard to the needs of roads for development, forest roads, bus routes, etc. It follows that councils in which rapid development is taking place generally require a greater proportion of the available funds.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I am not satisfied with the results of my recent questions on the Frankton bus route and I ask the Minister of Education whether he will instruct his Transport Officer to explain to the Highways Department the reason for the application and do his utmost to have the grant made?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be only too pleased to refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Local Government, discuss the matter with him in due course, and bring down a further reply

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Education, representing the Minister of Railways, a report about the men who were recently involved in railway accidents and demoted, although I believe the Railways Commissioner indicated that the accidents were due to the faulty signalling system? Will the Minister ascertain if the men can be reinstated at their former status?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I will ask my colleague to refer the request to the Railways Commissioner.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Education say whether the Minister of Railways has considered my recent request that he lay on the table a report on recent railway accidents?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague.

SECONDHAND MOTOR VEHICLES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier considered the suggestion I made recently concerning some form of examination to ensure the roadworthiness of motor vehicles sold by secondhand dealers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has examined this problem on a number of occasions. Any examination of a vehicle can only ensure its roadworthiness at the moment of examination and the Government knows of no way of providing for this matter by legislation. Although an amendment to the Road Traffic Act will be introduced, it will contain no provision regarding this matter.

FLOODED AREAS REHABILITATION.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Minister of Lands the report promised by the Premier in reply to my question of October 18, concerning financial assistance for private swamp holders in reclaimed areas?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—That matter will be further considered when we know what amount will be available from the Commonwealth Government.

BEER GLASSES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Parliamentary Labor Party has received from official sources a request that a standard size for beer glasses be fixed in South Australia and that the quantity they contain be stamped on them. I understand that similar legislation operates in New South Wales. I have taken this matter up with the Australian Standards Association, but it has pointed out there is a difficulty in arriving at a uniform Australian standard and that it would be better to amend the South Australian legislation. Will the Premier consider this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will examine the matter and advise the honourable member.

VARIATION OF COUNCIL RATES.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—

1. Has the Government's attention been drawn to any anomaly which has arisen from the limitation, by subsection (5) of section 442 of the Local Government Act, of the power of a council to vary a special rate declared in accordance with Part XXI of the Act?

2. If so, is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation for the purpose of correcting such anomaly?

The Hon. B. Pattinson for the Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The replies are:—

1. Yes.
2. This matter is receiving consideration.

DELAY IN ISSUING LAND TITLES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (on notice)—

1. How many houses built for sale at Elizabeth by the South Australian Housing Trust are occupied by purchasers who have not yet received titles to these properties?

2. What is the cause of the continued delay in issuing these titles?

3. When can these householders expect to receive these titles?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the Housing Trust reports—

1. 71.

2 and 3. Subdivisional plans of every area at Elizabeth where houses are occupied by purchasers have been deposited and certificates of title can issue without delay. However, in instances, some delay must occur before settlement with particular purchasers can be effected by reason of the fact that their applications for mortgage finance to lending institutions take time to be considered by those institutions. The time so taken varies from about two months to fifteen months, in the case of War Service finance.

RENMARK-PARINGA RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. KING (on notice)—

1. How many passengers were carried by the Renmark-Paringa shuttle service for each of the weeks ended 15th October, 1956, and 22nd October, 1956, respectively?

2. How many cars, trucks, and motor cycles were carried each week during these periods?

3. During these periods, how often was it necessary to supplement the rail car service with a steam train?

4. How many cars or motor trucks can be handled at one time by a class 55 rail car, a class 75 rail car, and a steam engine of the type use to supplement the rail car?

5. How many minutes are usually taken for the round trip Renmark-Paringa and return by:—(a) the class 55 rail car and one truck; (b) a steam engine and four of the rail trucks used on the shuttle service; (c) a class 75 rail car with two trucks for carrying motor vehicles?

6. What was the weekly revenue from each class of traffic during the periods above mentioned?

7. What were the actual direct working expenses incurred for these periods for—(a) wages to drivers, firemen and guards; (b) cost of fuel, oil and greases; (c) running repairs and renewals?

8. How much was spent in keeping the Paringa-Renmark road open during floods in the five years previous to 1956?

9. Is it the intention of the Government to consider subsidizing the Railways Department to cover any losses incidental to the provision of an ample service to road users for whom roads and bridges are normally available for no fee other than motor vehicle registration?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The replies are:—

1 and 2.

Week ending.	Passengers carried.	Cars. No.	Trucks. No.	Motor Cycles. No.
13/10/56	4,348	590	112	—
20/10/56	2,954	573	97	—

3. Week ending 13/10/56—7 times.

Week ending 20/10/56—15 times.

4. Class 55 rail car—2.

Class 75 rail car—4.

Steam locomotive—8 or more.

5. (a) 32 minutes. (b) Four supplementary return movements have been scheduled for steam trains between 10.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. (c) 48 minutes.

Answers 5 (a) and 5 (c) are based upon unrestricted return movements of these cars. Losses in time resulting from servicing or other traffic requirements are not included.

6.

Week ending.	Passengers. £	Cars. £	Trucks. £	Motor Cycles. £
13/10/56	102	415	181	—
20/10/56	72	374	146	—

The earnings during the fortnight under review represent the heaviest traffic experienced since the shuttle service was introduced.

7. (a) £570. (b) £190. (c) £394.

8. Grants made to the Renmark Irrigation Trust for the Renmark-Paringa section of the Sturt Highway for five years ended June 30, 1956:—

	£
1951-52	300
1952-53	4,950
1953-54	1,000
1954-55	—
1955-56	(D.C. Paringa) 3,939

The greater part of these grants has been expended to keep the road open during high river and the remainder on surface maintenance. These expenditures are not recorded separately.

9. Cabinet has provided £800,000 for assistance to meet conditions arising out of the floods. However, the Railways Commissioner has not requested any subsidy in connection with the service.

FISH CATCHES.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—What is the known quantity of fish and crayfish caught in South Australian waters for each of the years ended June 30, 1955 and 1956?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The known production of fish and crayfish was as follows:—

Year ended.	Fish. lb.	Crayfish. lb.
30/6/55	6,500,000	4,295,000
30/6/56	6,530,000	4,000,000

HOUSING TRUST COTTAGE FLATS.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—Is it the intention of the South Australian Housing Trust to build further cottage flats for elderly persons in the Semaphore and Albert Park areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the Housing Trust reports:—

The Housing Trust has no land at Semaphore or Albert Park on which to build cottage flats and has no immediate prospects of obtaining any further land although it realizes that these localities are eminently suitable for cottage flats.

ENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the final report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on the Enfield High School (including woodwork and domestic art centres), together with minutes of evidence.

Ordered that report be printed.

STOCK LICKS ACT REPEAL BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee's report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

BARLEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1132.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill provides for the continuance of the Barley Marketing Board until the end of the 1962-63 harvest season. It is desirable to continue the board's activities because of its excellent achievements in marketing barley. I have heard no complaints of the way in which it has handled difficult situations, but considerable praise for the way it has conducted the marketing of barley. I understand that this legislation was introduced as a result of an agreement between South Australia and Victoria for the establishment of an Australian Barley Board, and I understand that that agreement is still extant. I do not know whether Victoria has passed legislation similar to the Bill before the House.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson—It has agreed to introduce legislation this session.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Minister's reply resolves that point. Another provision in the Bill places the responsibility for an offence on both the seller and the buyer, and I see no objection to that. The Bill also provides that offences may be dealt with summarily, and that is desirable. This matter could have been dealt with by regulation, but it is wise to amend the Act because people concerned usually know what is contained in an Act, but they are usually not so familiar with regulations. I support the second reading.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—I support the second reading. The Barley Board has done an excellent job, and it is the almost unanimous wish of South Australian growers that it be kept in existence. Growers have received good prices during the postwar years, and barley has become a most important crop in South Australia. This year the total production in this State may exceed wheat production because many farmers have not been able to sow wheat on account of the wet winter, and sowed barley instead. It seems that the present price of barley will be maintained, and the general manager of the board, Mr. Ken Martin, reported on his return from Japan that that country wishes to purchase 300,000 tons this year from Victoria and South Australia.

The board operates only in South Australia and Victoria, and other States take some umbrage because it is called the Australian Barley Board. Barley growers are concerned

because of increased freight rates and other charges. The Stevedoring Commission advised recently that the rates for handling barley and wheat will be raised by the payment of an additional £3 9s. 8d. a week for every individual employed, so growers' costs are rising. I am not quite satisfied with the Bill, and in Committee I will move to extend the operations of the Barley Board until 1967-68.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member may not at this stage refer to any proposed amendments.

Mr. STOTT—I understand that, and was only indicating what I would move in Committee. There is no need to debate this Bill at length. It is essential that the board's life should be extended and I think that if Victorian growers knew that the South Australian growers favoured a greater extension than is proposed they would be wholeheartedly behind any move to obtain it.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I believe that the board has acted at all times in the best interests of the growers, but clause 4 provides that "a person shall not buy barley from the grower thereof except with the written approval of the board." That can obviously apply to any quantity of barley—to as little as one bag. I presume that a barley grower would have to sell all his produce to the board and if a pig producer wanted, say, 10 bags he would have to obtain it through the board, even if the barleygrower lived next door to him. If that is the position, I think it is carrying it a bit too far. There are pig markets at Clare and Auburn and in that district many farmers grow 20 acres or less of barley and sell their produce to the pig producers. If the barley has to be sold through the board the costs will be increased by the board's charges. It would destroy free trade between the grower of barley and the producer of pigs and it would be a definite restraint on production. Unless the Minister explains this clause to my satisfaction I will not support the Bill.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I would not have spoken if Mr. Quirke had not raised doubts about the board's policy on sale of barley. It may be desirable for the barley-grower to be able to sell his produce to another grower who may require better seed or to a pig producer, but I do not believe the board is capriciously withholding consent to such transactions. This legislation has been operative since 1947 and the Barley Board, I point out, has had much less criticism of its

policy in disposing of the grower's produce than has the Australian Wheat Board.

Mr. Heaslip—It is easier to sell barley.

Mr. SHANNON—That may be so, but I think the explanation is that the Barley Board has sought markets and has met them. If overseas prices have dropped the board has disposed of the produce promptly, which has been to the growers' advantage, but the Wheat Board's policy of holding out for a definite price has resulted in the loss of markets. In some instances it has not sold because of a decrease of 3d. or 4d. a bushel when the price has been about 18s. a bushel. Had the wheat been sold the growers would have benefited materially. I do not complain about the power given to the Barley Board under clause 4. Without it the door would be left open for abuse and growers would be able to make sales without the consent of the board. I remind Mr. Quirke of what happened in the dried fruits industry in this regard. Some growers did not play the game with their fellows and they sought markets at any price and broke down the price structure of their industry. The Barley Board has carried on its business efficiently and I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Purchase of barley from growers."

Mr. QUIRKE—Since the second reading debate the Minister has resolved my objections to this clause. A provision in the principal Act enables the board to readily consent to the sale of barley. The board has done a good job in handling barley, but when any administrative authority of that type seeks absolute power I am always hesitant. That was my sole reason for querying this clause.

Clause passed.

Clause 5 passed.

Clause 6—"Extension of principal Act."

Mr. STOTT—I move:—

To strike out the figures "1962-63" and to insert in lieu thereof "1967-68."

The effect of the amendment will be to extend the life of the board for 10 years and not five years as proposed. Meetings of barley-growers have been held throughout the State and at those meetings resolutions have been passed recommending the extension of the board's life for 10 years. A record meeting

was held at Minlaton recently and this suggestion was carried unanimously. Meetings in other parts of the State including the Murray Valley and the West Coast reacted similarly. The growers are wholeheartedly behind the board. The board's life must be extended to enable it to effectively carry out its work; it must have security of tenure. At present the manager goes to Japan to make long-term contracts. This is necessary because of the increasing competition from Canada and the United States. However, if in 1960 or 1961 the board desires to make contracts with Japan for three or four years it will not, without the amendment, be able to do so. It could only arrange contracts for the term of the board, which would have greater security if the term were 10 years. Our board could in, say, 1960 negotiate with Japan for contracts, and at the same time the U.S.A. and Canadian boards could do so. We could only make contracts for one year, whereas the other boards could make them for longer periods. The Minister may say that Victoria has not considered my proposal and that therefore it cannot be accepted. The Victorian Parliament meets in February and if my amendment were accepted that Parliament would no doubt increase the life of the board to 10 years, for that is what Victorian growers want. The board is doing a magnificent job and should continue for another 10 years. Soon it will be negotiating with S.A. Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited about the handling of barley in bulk, starting off probably at Ardrossan and then Wallaroo. In these negotiations the board will be handicapped if its term of office is limited. If the experiments of the board in the storage of barley at country sidings is successful it might want to enter into contracts with S.A. Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, but because of its short life it will have difficulty in doing so. It needs a longer period of security.

Mr. HEASLIP—Despite Mr. Stott's statement that his move has the support of all barleygrowers, I, as a barleygrower, am opposed to extending the life of the board for longer than is proposed in the Bill. The board has done a good job and sold its barley whilst the Wheat Board waited for buyers to come to it, but barley has been in demand and has therefore been easier to sell than wheat. There have not been the same surpluses of barley as of wheat. Ten years is too long a time for a board to operate without its operations being reviewed. If its life were 10 years the board might do a job different from what it would if its life were only five years.

If its life were extended for five years the position could be reviewed at the end of three years, which would still leave the board with two years in which to make contracts. With the world position as it is, who would want to make contracts for three, four or five years ahead?

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I do not doubt that Mr. Stott was right when he said that growers' organizations throughout the State support the move to extend the board's life for another 10 years, but why did they not ask for 20 years? If there is merit in their argument, a term of 20 years would enable the board to do greater things. The people who desire a life of 10 years did not place their views before members of Parliament, except through Mr. Stott this afternoon. When an important matter like this is discussed members should have prior notice of any amendment. We should have more information and time to consider the matter. Mr. Stott said the board should have security of tenure so that in 1966 it could make contracts two years ahead, but I point out that, if Parliament does not pass this legislation either this week or next week, the board will have no security of tenure at all.

The Minister said earlier that the Victorian Government had agreed to introduce similar legislation, and this Bill will give at least six years' additional life to this very good board. Surely during that six years the wisdom of making long term contracts can be considered. Personally, I doubt the wisdom of that practice, for we cannot foresee seasonal conditions. For instance, if we made a contract for five years ahead with Japan we might run into a drought and have to buy barley from another country to fulfil that contract. Further, overseas interests will insert a price fluctuation clause in the contract, which will reduce its effectiveness. Mr. Stott should not proceed with his amendment, for there is no doubt about the continuance of the life of the board. I assure him that after a Labor Government is elected at the next election the life of the board will be continued.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Agriculture)—I hope members will not accept the amendment. The Government appreciates the valuable work done by the board and the success it has achieved, but the prime reason for opposing the amendment is the Government's belief that, because it has been constituted by Act of Parliament, the board should

remain answerable to Parliament for its continuation. The Government is aware of representations made by growers at meetings and conferences, and it is gratifying to know that the board is held in such high esteem.

Mr. Heaslip said the Barley Board had fewer problems than other boards, but although that may be true, it has been faced with grave surpluses. Indeed, the United States of America must at present hold sufficient barley to supply the world's requirements for the best part of a year. Fortunately for Australia, however, that barley in the main is not of the two-row type and therefore is not competitive with Australian barley, but it is competitive in the feed markets of the world and we have had intense competition from North American sources in the Japanese field. The superior quality of our barley and the board's willingness to sell it at the best price obtainable has allowed our stocks to be liquidated during the year following production.

This legislation has been introduced a year earlier than necessary, not only to extend the board's life for five years, but in order to give it that extension a year before it was necessary so that the board would have a tenure of six years. A period of 10 years has been suggested, but the Parliamentary Draftsman has said that rather than amend the Bill in that way it would be better to take out the period altogether; therefore the Government, together with the Victorian Government, has decided that five years is the proper term.

Mr. STOTT—Mr. Heaslip mentioned the Wheat Board, but I point out that the marketing positions of wheat and barley are not analogous. Firstly, the Barley Board is controlled by only two State Parliaments, whereas the Wheat Board is controlled by all. Secondly, the Wheat Board has been up against the fierce competition of up to 1,000,000,000 bushels throughout the world. Thirdly, the Wheat Board is tied to the limiting forces of an international agreement, whereas the Barley Board is not so controlled and does not have to meet quality and trade differentials. In other words, the Barley Board is free to meet the market. I was glad to hear the assurance given by Mr. O'Halloran that a Labor Government would extend the life of the Barley Board for that indicates that all members agree on the wisdom of extending this legislation.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Title passed. Bill read a third time and passed.

FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1133.)

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the Bill, which I believe is a step in the right direction as it transfers from the Harbors Board to the Minister of Agriculture powers relating to the construction of fishing havens and other facilities for fishermen. It is rather odd that for many years the board has been entrusted with these powers, although the Minister has controlled matters relating to the fishing industry. In saying that, I do not reflect on the board, which has done, and I believe always will do, excellent work on wharf and jetty construction throughout the State. Indeed, the wharves constructed at Port Adelaide and the Outer Harbour are equal to those in any other part of the world and credit must be given to the General Manager of the board and his engineers, who have shown themselves to be abreast of modern trends in harbour construction. Nevertheless, the Minister of Agriculture should control fishing havens.

After their visit to South Australia last year the Jangaard brothers made it clear in their report that the South Australian fishing industry had a great future because of its enormous potential. They said we had an abundance of pilchards in South Australian waters, and I am sure that industry will be developed and the State will be the richer for it. At present we have to import most of our sardines and pilchards, and if we can produce them in South Australia our overseas balances will be improved. If our fishing facilities and havens are improved more men will be induced into the industry.

The Jangaard brothers reported that tuna was plentiful in South Australian waters, and I am sure tuna fishing will become an important industry and earn many dollars for us. In 1954 Parliament voted £15,000 for building havens for the use of fishermen, and in 1955 the vote was £24,800. That proves that the Government, and Parliament, realizes the wisdom of spending money to provide better facilities for fishermen. The Minister told us today that for the year ended June 30, 1956, South Australia produced 6,500,000 lb. of fish. I think that is the most we have produced for many years, and I am confident that the tonnages in future will increase. Every year we produce a few more tons of crayfish, which is earning dollars for us and will help the State's finances.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

FORESTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1133.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill gives the Government the permissive right to enlarge the Forestry Board from three to five members. I say "permissive right" advisedly, because the board may consist of any number between three and five. The Bill also provides that the quorum may be any number over two, but we should be definite in saying how many members there shall be on the board. The growth of the department's activities warrants a board of five. The value of the department's assets in 1950 was £1,992,000; production was 85,000,000 super feet; and sales of logs and processed timber realized £524,000. Today the department's assets are worth £4,867,000; production has reached 136,000,000 super feet a year; and sales of processed timber and logs have realized £1,291,000. Those figures warrant an increase in the number of members of the board to five, with a quorum of three. I shall not move to amend the Bill because I think five members will be appointed to the board, but that should be stated in the Bill. I support the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—The Forestry Board supervises the activities of the Forestry Department, and this Bill is of some importance. I do not know of any industry that has been successful and not well directed. The State has invested much money in its forestry undertakings, and we are not now over-supplied with native timbers. In the future we shall depend on harvesting the crops we have sown ourselves. Some years ago the Public Works Committee agreed to a project put forward by the Forestry Department for the establishment of a large mill at Mount Gambier capable of milling as much timber as all other mills in South Australia. That mill has now reached the stage where full production can be expected in a year or two. The Government would be well advised to appoint a first-class commercial man to the Forestry Board. The growing of timber is not the be all and end all of forestry, for profits depend largely on successful milling and marketing.

It has been proved that South Australia can grow first-class softwoods. A former Conservator of Forests, Mr. Gill, was called "Insignis" because he was a strong advocate for growing pine in this State, and since his day tremendous strides have been made in finding suitable soil and fertilizers. We have also discovered we can replant immediately on the same soil, and the next crop is just as good as the one taken off. I think we now harvest about 4,000 acres annually, and the department plans its plantings so that the demand can be satisfied. The department's activities have grown to such an extent and the opportunities offering in this field are so vast that the Government should be particularly careful when selecting the new members of the board. I suggest that the best brains we can get from the commercial world be appointed.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—Can the Minister indicate the duties of the board? His second reading speech does not set out those duties, nor, from a cursory examination of the principal Act, do they appear to be defined in any way. I notice that the annual report on the operations of the Woods and Forests Department is presented by the Conservator of Forests. I assume he is a member of the board, but why does not the board make that report? Can the Minister also indicate why it is necessary to increase the number of board members from three to five?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—Our forestry undertaking is a most successful business. At the moment we are constructing the largest sawmill in Australia—if not in the Southern Hemisphere. Our forests earn large sums annually. I think the honourable member will realize that it would be difficult for the Minister of Agriculture, under whose control forests operations come, to study all the problems associated with the industry. The board investigates such matters as what type of mill will give the best results; what is the best type of contract; what rate of milling should be undertaken and whether as a matter of policy we should provide for Government mills only or sell a proportion of our timber to private mills. There are hundreds of questions requiring detailed examinations and it would be impossible for any Minister to carry them out unless it was his full-time job. We do not desire to remove forestry operations from Parliamentary control and Parliament has provided a board to assist the Minister. I remind members that we have a Hospitals Board, a Harbours Board and other

similar bodies. The Forestry Board has worked extremely well for a number of years but the Government believes it would be advisable to increase the personnel. There is no criticism of the present board, but we believe we can gain a greater variety of experience and a greater variety of qualifications by increasing the number of members. It would be advisable to have an accountant on the board. None of the present members is an accountant and accountancy plays an important part in a trading venture. The Government hopes also to appoint an additional technical man. We believe that by enlarging the board we shall increase its value and not impair it.

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

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 25. Page 1242.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the second reading, but hope that when this Bill is next before the House for consideration greater concessions will be provided. As I understand the position, members of the police force retire at 60 years of age, although the Commissioner is permitted to remain in office until 65 years. I think members will agree that it costs as much to maintain the wife of an ordinary police officer as to maintain the wife of a commissioned officer, and the same applies to their widows. At present the widow of the rank and file officer would receive only £3 10s. a week. I believe we should provide for a minimum pension of £10 10s., irrespective of rank. I understand that in the railways and in the Public Service an officer is compelled to take a specified number of units and that when his salary increases he has the right to take additional units. I believe the Minister's second reading could have been more explanatory. The Minister said that for the inspector, third class, the increase would be 20 per cent of the base rate, which today is £7 a week. This puts him on £8 8s. a week. The inspector, second class, will meet his commitments in accordance with section 14 of the principal Act. At 22 years of age he pays £41 a year and at 27 and over £52, which entitles him to a pension of £7 a week. Under the Bill inspectors will subscribe more but get an increased pension. There will be an additional one-quarter of the £7 for the inspector, second class, and an

additional one-third for the inspector first class, which would bring him to a pension of £9 6s. 8d. a week. There would be an additional two-fifths for the senior inspector, which would entitle him to £9 16s. 8d. a week. The maximum retiring allowance for the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent is £10 10s. a week as against £7 for the rank and file.

The present Commissioner and his deputy have never done any actual police work. The present Commissioner was previously the secretary to Police Commissioners. The deputy came from Quarries Industries Ltd. and I wonder whether we will continue to go to that firm for our future police officers. I am not reflecting upon the Deputy Police Commissioner in any way. The Superintendent of Police acted as Commissioner for a long time before a deputy was appointed. I do not know why the Superintendent was overlooked when the appointment of the deputy was made. Was the Government responsible for it? If there was to be any reward for services rendered the Superintendent should have had preference in the appointment. No one can say that he did not perform good work when acting as Commissioner. The standard of the force was improved whilst he had charge of it, because of the ability and knowledge he possessed. For people who joined the force as a career years of service do not count when higher appointments are made. The passing over of the Superintendent was a miscarriage of justice. I am not in any way judging the ability of the present Deputy. I am concerned about the Superintendent and I wonder why the Commissioner did not recommend his appointment as Deputy. The Government should have recognized his valuable work.

I am fearful of what will happen to our police force in the future. I am worried about the physique of some of the men wearing the police uniform today. Physique, intelligence, and knowledge are three fundamentals that go to make up an efficient police officer. If there should be another Royal visit or some celebration I doubt whether some of our present police officers would be seen in the crowd. In the past we have always had officers that could be seen because of their physique. Bearing in mind the height of some of the present officers we cannot say that it is now a man-size job. They would need to be on a raised platform to see them in a crowd. Under the Bill commissioned officers are to get a slightly higher status, but what will be the position of the present junior officers who are so short? In a

few years when they become commissioned officers will they command respect? I doubt whether they will be seen in a crowd. In order that they may be seen they will have to raise the braid on their shoulders, wear high peaked caps and high heels, or even stand on stilts.

The members of our police force in the first five years of service receive the lowest salaries of any police officers in the Commonwealth, excluding Western Australia. If the pay for policemen were more attractive we would get men of better physique. Now we get a type in accordance with the salary paid. The Superintendent of Police has frequently lectured to school children on safety precautions and the importance of the police officer is stressed. He should be looked up to at all times and not condemned. He is there to do an important job for all sections of the community. Given the physique, intelligence and knowledge, a man could make this a satisfactory career. Although I do not reflect on the physique or character of recent recruits to the force, I believe this Government is not measuring up to its responsibilities in the matter. A vigorous campaign could be conducted to recruit men of manly physique wishing to make the police force a lifetime career, but it is necessary to reconsider the emoluments held out to such men.

A police officer is on duty 24 hours a day for seven days a week, and even on his vacation he may be called on in an emergency. He must work Saturdays and Sundays, but he is not adequately compensated for the long hours he works. Under this legislation a rank and file police officer should be granted additional superannuation benefits; after all, the Police Pensions Fund is not insolvent. The base pension payable to a constable today is £7, but it should be at least £10 10s., the same as provided in this Bill. The Government should inquire why the physical standard of recruits has been lowered. Indeed, many honourable members would measure up to the physical standard required today, and I do not consider there are any giants in this place.

I condemn the Government for ignoring the claims of a police officer who has done a splendid job on many occasions. As Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I must often know what is in the mind of my Leader on certain matters and then make a decision that will receive the support of the Opposition. In the same way the Superintendent who previously deputized for the Commissioner had to make many decisions that would be later substantiated by the Commissioner. He had to analyse the Commissioner's mind and then decide what

was the right thing to do, knowing that his decision would be subject to review by the Commissioner. Because he had to consider the wishes of his superior, it may be said that his job was a dual-purpose one.

Does the Government believe that a policeman's job should be a career? Does it believe that the physical standard of recruits should be raised? A police officer should be able to be seen in a crowd, yet many of our immigrants who are being naturalized have a better physique than recruits who have recently joined the force. I support the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I, too, support the Bill, but join with the Deputy Leader in expressing disappointment at recent acts, particularly the appointment of an outsider as Deputy Commissioner of Police, which has discouraged potential recruits from joining the police force. A policeman's work is dangerous; he is called on to do the most risky jobs; he must perform shiftwork; he is obliged to go to any part of the State; he must set an example to the community. He is therefore an exceptional person who must make sacrifices unknown to the average citizen. Every encouragement should be given to those who wish to serve the community in this capacity, and yet, because of the inability or unwillingness of the Government to offer attractive terms and adequate promotional opportunities, the Police Commissioner is obliged to accept some persons who may be quite unsuitable as constables.

In saying this, I do not wish to reflect on policemen who are not up to the physical standards required a few years ago; indeed, I consider they should be treated with respect and encouraged. This legislation will do something to correct the errors of the past and encourage the right type of man to join the force. Mr. Walsh referred to the disappointment of many citizens that one who had served loyally, made great sacrifices, and even deputized for the Commissioner, was denied the right of promotion.

Mr. John Clark—A similar thing was done a few years ago in the Education Department.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes, and once the precedent is established it soon becomes a practice. The recent appointment of an outsider as Deputy Police Commissioner gives no encouragement to men in the police force to give of their best in order to prove themselves worthy of the highest appointment. I issue a warning to those in responsible positions that this dangerous practice must result in reduced efficiency and help break down the high

standard established in the South Australian public service.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—I support the Bill, but believe that it does not go far enough, for it applies only to commissioned officers. Sergeants and other ranks are left out, although at present they receive a pension of only £7 a week, which I believe is inadequate. At present four retired police sergeants live at Murray Bridge, but these gentlemen find it difficult to exist on their inadequate pension. The Bill does not apply to sergeants and other ranks. It has been suggested that they should contribute more so that they can receive higher pensions, but policemen, especially in their younger days, would find it difficult to contribute more to the Superannuation Fund. They now pay between £44 and £52 a year, which is a large sum on their salaries, though perhaps they could contribute more when their families had grown up. Policemen retire at 60, and they find it hard to meet the high cost of living on their inadequate pension of £7 a week. I hope that in the not distant future something will be done to increase the pension of retired sergeants and other ranks.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the size of policemen.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I said it was declining.

Mr. HAMBOUR—He probably meant that the police force was accepting smaller men, but I do not know that that reflects on the quality of the force. If a man measures up to the requirements of the Police Department that should be sufficient. We have a police force of which we can be proud, and I am sure the member for Edwardstown is proud of it. In these days of mechanization I cannot see the necessity for having such big policemen. Our police recruits go through a course of Judo, and the smaller, active man is probably just as useful in a crowd as a big man.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I said policemen should be of adequate physique, intelligence and knowledge.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I was going to credit policemen with knowledge, commonsense and adequate physique. No mistake was made by whoever was responsible for reducing the stature qualification for entry into the police force. We can have an efficient police force with men even of my size. The main criticism of the Bill has been that it does not go far enough, but if there is a good case for extending it I believe the Government will consider doing so in the future.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Would the back benchers agree to that?

Mr. HAMBOUR—I would like to hear the facts first. We can be proud of the standard of the police force, and I have no objection to the physique qualification laid down.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 25. Page 1243.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the second reading, though I think the proposals go a little too far. The Bill increases the payment of members of the Renmark Irrigation Trust from £50 to £100, and I support that provision because the fee was fixed in 1945; the sum of £50 at that time was worth more than £100 is today. One need only visit the Renmark area to appreciate the great services members of the trust are rendering to the public there. Some of them are sacrificing their own interests to help their fellows who are in need. I understand some have neglected their blocks to such an extent that they will lose the production therefrom for the next two years. I do not think any member will argue that £100 would reimburse trust members for their losses.

Every man in public office nowadays faces personal loss. I think the time is not far distant when we will have to consider making provision to reimburse men who serve on councils. Many devote considerable time at great personal cost to their districts. No man can serve in such a capacity without incurring losses. Sometimes it is difficult to persuade a person to accept a responsible office. He may want to, but is reluctant to incur the losses involved.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—The trust members frequently have to employ labour while attending meetings.

Mr. HUTCHENS—That is true. The Bill also proposes relieving the trust of the responsibility of publishing its balance-sheets in a newspaper and in the *Government Gazette*. The trust will only have to post them to every person whose name is shown in the assessment book. However, there are many persons living outside the district who are very interested

in this matter. Many people own blocks and lease them and they will be obliged to find ways and means of securing copies of the balance-sheets. I suggest that the trust publish them in the local newspaper, the *Renmark Pioneer*. I have conversed privately with the member for Chaffey (Mr. King) and I understand he has a proposal in relation to this matter.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—This question will be discussed by the Select Committee.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In that case I will support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon. C. S. Hincks and Messrs. Frank Walsh, Bywaters, King, and Hambour; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records and to report on Tuesday, November 6.

STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1135.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is a formidable-looking Bill of 20 clauses, but an examination reveals that it relates mainly to matters of administration. Slight alterations of the law have been found necessary as a result of experience of recent years. The Bill strengthens the regulation-making power of the Government. However, these regulations are subject to scrutiny by the Subordinate Legislation Committee and, if found to impinge on the rights of any person, to disallowance by this Parliament. It is possibly more expeditious to handle the various problems associated with stock diseases by regulation than by amendment of the Act. Some of the power conferred by this Bill may appear extreme, but as it is necessary to protect clean stock and clean areas I can see no danger of injustice being done to any landholder, stockholder or any person affected by it. Consequently, I support its general provisions.

I have referred one other matter to the Minister's attention and I have an amendment on the files. Clause 12 at present provides that it shall be the duty of those who become cognizant of the fact that their stock is infected with disease to notify the nearest inspector and also the chief inspector. That seems to me to be a duplication of effort. Later in the same clause both inspectors are mentioned again. I think it would be sufficient

to provide that whichever inspector is the most readily available should be notified, and I propose to introduce an amendment to that effect. I will do so because in sparsely populated areas it may be easier to get in touch with the Chief Inspector than the district inspector, whereas in more closely settled areas it would perhaps be easier to get in touch with the district inspector. I see no reason why they should both be notified. Obviously, if the district inspector is notified, it would be his duty to inform the Chief Inspector, and if the Chief Inspector is notified he would notify the district inspector. I do not know if the Minister is prepared to accept the amendment, but I think he should be, because if both have to be notified there is unnecessary duplication of effort, and I do not think we should insist on any effort being duplicated unless it is necessary for that to be done.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I support this Bill. It contains nothing of a far-reaching nature, but most of its provisions will bring about an improvement. There is no doubt that the matters dealt with by the Bill are very important to South Australia. Foot and mouth disease could have disastrous effects if the Government did not have power to control it, and this legislation gives full authority to deal with an outbreak. This disease is most serious, and it is a good move to make it notifiable. Another serious disease is pleuropneumonia in cattle, which has a great effect on production. It exists in the central parts of Australia and there is a fear that it will get into our dairy herds. I think it will not be very long before we will see through the effect of the regulations that this disease will be of considerably less importance, and there will be more incentive to produce beef in the wetter districts.

Mr. JENKINS (Stirling)—I support this Bill, which I think must meet with the approval of all members. During the last winter I spoke to the Minister of Agriculture about the prevalence of footrot. Section 19 is to be amended to provide that this will be a notifiable disease. I believe that will meet this menace to a very great extent, although no doubt it will create hardship on some people. In answer to Mr. Brookman recently, the Minister said that in Australia 20,000,000 sheep are suffering from footrot, so it can be realized how serious the disease is. With wet conditions it will be harder to stamp out. Sheep only have to go along a road that has perhaps only been crossed by diseased sheep to go to another paddock

and they will become affected. Unless this disease is strictly notifiable we will be faced with further trouble, so I am pleased that it is to be made notifiable.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 11 passed.

Clause 12—"Duty to notify disease."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I move—

In paragraph (a) to delete "and also" second occurring and to insert "or."

It is provided in the principal legislation that notice in the form mentioned in the first schedule should be sent by post. It is suggested now that the notice be sent by the quickest practicable means, which is desirable. I understand my amendments are approved by the Minister.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The amendments improve the clause. The purpose of the Bill is to bring the legislation up to date and make it more workable. The notification can now be given in any way, and not in a specified form.

Amendments carried.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I move—

In paragraph (b) to delete "and" where second occurring and to insert "or."

This means that either the Chief Inspector or the district inspector can be notified.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (13 to 20) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WEEDS BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 18. Page 1102.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill is even more formidable than the previous Bill, containing as it does 43 clauses; but when it is realized that it repeals the Noxious Weeds Act of 1931 and the Noxious Weeds Amendment Acts of 1935, 1938 and 1939, one can readily understand that it leaves nothing in the legislation dealing with the control and destruction of noxious weeds, but substitutes an entirely new measure. It will be recalled that the former Minister of Agriculture, the late Mr. Christian, introduced a similar comprehensive Bill in the last session of Parliament and indicated that it was not the Government's desire to proceed beyond the second reading stage so that in the meantime the councils who are vitally interested in

this legislation and other interested parties would have an opportunity to consider the proposals now suggested.

I understand that during the interim many suggestions have been made by councils and other interested persons, and I notice in comparing this Bill with that introduced by the former Minister several of the suggestions then made have been included, but in the main the structure of the former Bill has been retained. I have four councils and portion of two other councils within my electoral district and they cover a substantial portion of the northern area of the State. Despite this, I have had no suggestion from them complaining about the provisions in either Bill. So, I have come to the conclusion that those most vitally concerned in my electorate are reasonably happy about the proposed tightening up of controls.

However, I am not altogether happy about the general structure of the legislation. In my opinion the responsibility of exercising control should not be placed on councils, but should be tackled on a State-wide basis under a department or an organization which would have a chief executive officer and district inspectors charged with the responsibility of seeing that the law was given effect to. From my experience in country areas I found that many councillors were the worst offenders in not insisting on the destruction of noxious weeds in their district. They took no practical steps to destroy weeds on their own properties, and of course the district inspector employed by their council was naturally stultified in his efforts to give effect to the law. However, I have noticed evidence in recent years of improvement, and I hope it will continue.

Here we have a Bill which goes at least a little way along the road I desire to travel. For instance, there is to be an advisory committee to advise the Minister and to hear appeals against decisions and actions which may be taken under the legislation. That is a good provision and will provide for some co-ordination of action throughout the State. We are also to have a form of inspection which will be centrally controlled and which will see that the various councils in the respective districts will pay due regard and attention to the law relating to the destruction of noxious weeds. That also is a good thing. It is wise that the same powers substantially should apply, and that we should differentiate between dangerous weeds and noxious weeds, with a little more stringent control of the former than of

the latter. It is largely a matter of administration, which is provided for fairly adequately in the Bill.

I understand that the legislation we are now seeking to repeal provided that on three-chain roads and stock routes the responsibility for the destruction of noxious weeds rested with the Government, which used to assist councils by providing a subsidy for the destruction of weeds on these roads. Under the Bill I understand that a similar position will apply as under the original legislation, but on the other roads up to and including three-chain roads there is to be divided responsibility. The division is to be on the basis of one-third on the local council with one-third each on the landholders whose land abuts the road, with the proviso that where a landholder on one side of the road destroys his noxious weeds he shall not be called on to meet a charge, but the local authority and the other landholder shall provide for the destruction on the remaining part of the road. I believe, however, that the old provision relating to roads of three chains or more should apply and that in the case of ordinary district roads, which are usually roads of a chain or less, the old provision imposing on the adjoining landholders the responsibility of destroying noxious weeds should continue.

I do not believe that the local council should be brought into the picture on the basis of one-third of the cost. The new legislation seems to create the possibility of injustice, for a group of landholders may carry out the letter of the law, whereas a small group may not, and the council will be charged with the responsibility of finding one-third of the cost of clearing the roads in the infested area. Further, the cost of that work must come from rate revenue which must be paid by both the just and the unjust, those who destroy their noxious weeds and those who do not. I do not, however, oppose the new provision sufficiently to move an amendment, but the position should be considered.

A difficulty also arises, particularly in electoral districts such as Frome, where tremendous areas lie outside local government areas but where the Act still applies. In some of these areas the spread of noxious weeds is due to circumstances beyond the control of individual landholders. For instance, huge watercourses run for hundreds of miles and a landholder along the watercourse may do his best to kill noxious weeds in his section, but people further up—probably 50 miles or more away—who fail to kill theirs may send down

a prolific quantity of seed with each flood, with the result that the country will be impregnated with noxious weed seeds. That happened to me on almost innumerable occasions, because I had a watercourse that ran through my property after draining rough country further out where nobody grubbed noxious weeds. After every flood I had a man-sized job grubbing burrs that I had no part in propagating. I notice, however, that the legislation empowers the Minister, on the advice of the advisory committee, to relax the conditions pertaining to the destruction of weeds where the conditions are unduly onerous. This does not apply to dangerous weeds, nor do I think it should, but consideration should be given to outback areas where circumstances are such as I have enumerated. I support the Bill.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—The Noxious Weeds Act, which is repealed by this Bill, has been tried and tested, but has failed in almost every way. The law itself can scarcely check weeds. I do not deny that there has been much weed control in the last few years, particularly on farms belonging to good farmers, but this had been largely due to the incentive of the good farmer to look after his land and to the great advances made in weedicides and the chemical treatment of weeds generally. Even in such cases, however, weeds have spread and many good farms have noxious weeds which still grow despite the efforts of owners. Apart from those efforts very little has been done.

This is not a problem which district councils should be responsible to solve, and I agree entirely in that regard with the Leader of the Opposition. The power under this legislation is really a burden on district councils, which generally do not want it. I do not see why weed control should have any more relation to local government than soil erosion or the eradication of fruit fly or phyloxera, all of which are controlled by other means.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson—What about vermin?

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is too big a question to discuss here, but I do not think weed control and local government have much in common. The list of noxious weeds is formidable. Shortly some are to be renamed "dangerous weeds." These have spread rapidly in the last few years and include Cape Tulip, onion weed, Salvation Jane, and dozens of others that trouble farmers, good and bad alike.

I expect some arguments will be advanced in this debate on whether a landowner should be responsible for roads adjacent to his property. At present he is responsible for removing weeds from the frontage of his property. Generally speaking, properties are infested by weeds coming in from the roads, and the roads are not infested by weeds coming from the property. Further, good farmers try to control the worst weeds in front of their properties whether they are forced to or not. One of the worst weeds I can think of in this respect is Cape Tulip. It has been in South Australia for nearly a century and was originally cultivated in the Botanic Garden. It was also prized in European hot-houses and was sold at a penny a bulb.

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

Mr. BROOKMAN—Cape Tulip has become a great pest. It has been in South Australia for many years, but its spread in recent times has been far more rapid than before. In 1939 it was described by the Waite Institute botanist (Mr. G. H. Clarke) as constituting South Australia's most serious weed problem, and probably it still merits that description. It came here nearly 100 years ago; I think it originated in South Africa. At the turn of the century it was in demand in Europe, and sold at about a penny a bulb. This weed kills stock quickly. As a rule stock brought up in an infested area learn to avoid it, but other stock coming into the area will eat it if hungry and soon die if they take any quantity of it. It spreads by seeds or cormils. It comes up in winter and is usually not noticed until it is due to flower. After flowering it dies above ground fairly quickly.

Cape Tulip can easily be spotted when in flower, and that is the time to combat it. If an area is not heavily infested the Cape Tulip can be grubbed out, but how can councils deal with areas that are badly affected? A process of holding meetings and serving notices is too cumbersome because Cape Tulip can hardly be dealt with before it has disappeared from view. The Highways Department has a gravel pit in the Adelaide Hills used for supplying gravel for many of the roads in the hills. That pit was infested with Cape Tulip, which has spread along the roads for miles around. Landholders adjoining the roads have to go out every spring looking for Cape Tulip and trying to combat it. It is of no use grubbing the pest in one year only. Inevitably some plants are missed, so grubbing has to go on for years.

The blackberry was at one time considered to be almost ineradicable. Every visible plant may be grubbed out, but somehow new plants come up later. I have heard that goats will get rid of blackberries, but I have seen blackberries and goats in certain areas, both doing well. I think goats may keep blackberries down, but not get rid of them. I think some new sprays will kill the blackberry, but it is still difficult to control. Some councils in the badly infested areas have an almost impossible task in dealing with it. Gorse, or furze, is another bad plant that comes up year after year. New sprays are alleged to get rid of it, but it is still a serious problem.

I believe that many weeds have spread on Government land, and in some instances few attempts have been made to check them. The Engineering and Water Supply Department has areas in the Adelaide Hills where weeds have been allowed to spread, and even some councils own land where noxious weeds are to be found. Almost every farmer has a problem in dealing with noxious weeds, and we may ask, why should local government have this burden placed on it? I have asked some experienced councillors whether councils wanted the power to administer the legislation, and the usual reply is "No, we don't want it. If someone else will do the job let them do it." That is a sensible approach. Councils are not in a good position to administer legislation such as the Noxious Weeds Act, or this Bill. The Government has shown some desire to handle the problem of noxious weeds. On December 19, 1949, the secretary to the Minister of Agriculture wrote the following letter to all local government bodies:—

I am directed by the Minister of Agriculture to inform you that consideration has been given to the question of amending the existing Noxious Weeds legislation and a draft Bill has been prepared, copy of which is enclosed. The main provisions of the Bill are as follows:—

1. The duty of councils to enforce destruction of noxious weeds is abolished.
2. Provision is made for a central committee, to be called The Noxious Weeds Committee, to advise the Minister and assist generally in the administration of the Bill.
3. Provision is made for the establishment of noxious weeds districts and the appointment by the Governor of a Noxious Weeds Board for each district. A board will consist of not less than three and not more than seven members.
4. The main duties of a district board will be to foster local interest, investigate and advise the Minister, enforce the Act against landowners and occupiers in its district, and destroy weeds on various public land in its district.

5. The Minister, on the recommendation of the Committee, is empowered to declare noxious weeds rates so as to build up a Noxious Weeds fund to pay the cost of administering the Act. The noxious weeds rates will be raised and collected by the Commissioner of Land Tax in the same way as land tax.

6. Private owners and occupiers of land are placed under the same duty as at present to destroy noxious weeds on their lands and on half the width of the adjoining roads. In addition, they must comply with any special or general notices issued by the District Noxious Weeds Board for the control or destruction of noxious weeds on all or any part of their land.

7. The district boards are given the duty of destroying noxious weeds on breakwind and drainage reserves and other lands in their areas on which private owners and occupiers are not liable to destroy weeds.

8. The Minister is empowered to prohibit the movement of animals and substances from one place to another, in order to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.

9. For the same purpose the Minister is empowered to prohibit the cutting or destruction of trees.

10. Persons using agricultural machines are required to take reasonable precautions to ensure that machines are free from noxious weed seeds, before moving the machines from their land.

As the local governing bodies are vitally concerned in whether the control should be vested in them or in another authority, the Minister desires to ask your council for an expression of opinion on the provisions of the draft Bill.

In reply to that letter 56 councils favoured the draft Bill—that is 46 district councils and 10 municipal corporations—and 70 opposed it—43 district councils and 27 municipal corporations. Two councils were neutral and 15 did not reply. The Minister of Agriculture decided not to introduce the Bill because of the majority decision against it, although actually the majority of district councils favoured it. Weeds are primarily an agricultural problem and of necessity affect district councils more than municipal corporations and I suggest that the opinion of the district councils should receive more weight than that of the municipal corporations. I think the draft Bill then suggested was a good Bill and although the Minister's attitude at that time possibly has set the tone of the department's policy, the whole position should be reviewed in view of the rapid spread of weeds since 1949. I have very little to say about the present Bill. The existing legislation should be repealed because it could hardly be worse. I support this Bill although I doubt if it will effectively meet the position. It is too late to attempt to amend it as I have suggested.

Mr. Fletcher—Don't you think it was too late to introduce this Bill?

Mr. BROOKMAN—I think it is too late to amend it as I have suggested. It would mean substituting an entirely new Bill and of course it is too late for that. I hope that from now on the Minister will have strict observations made of the spread of weeds to ascertain the effects of this legislation. The Minister has made an honest attempt to rectify a problem that is increasing in seriousness, but the burden of administering the Act should not be placed on local government. The existing legislation has done little to control weeds. It has only been through the efforts of good farmers, chemists and companies manufacturing weedicides that any control has been attempted. The problem should be tackled by some authority acting under the direct control of the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—This type of legislation is not new. On previous occasions we have discussed the Noxious Weeds Act which has been totally ineffective in combating the problem. Under that Act certain powers were vested in councils, but they have not exercised them and noxious weeds have spread until today they cover thousands of acres. I appreciate the Government's action in introducing this measure in time to enable members and councils to examine it and express their views upon it. No councils in my district have approached me about it and although I have spoken to several councillors they have not expressed any direct opinion on it. They are lukewarm, but are not hostile.

Under this Bill councils will be responsible for making the legislation work. I do not know whether it will work, but I believe it has a chance whereas the previous legislation never did work. It relates more to dangerous weeds. The Noxious Weeds Act is embodied in this Bill. Noxious weeds at present are completely out of control and this Bill attempts to prevent their further spread. I sincerely hope this will be effective. Although I support the Bill, I do not agree with some parts of it, which would not work equitably.

Mr. Corcoran—To what do you attribute the failure of the administration in the past?

Mr. HEASLIP—The fact that local government bodies have been left to themselves without anyone to direct them. They are composed of local people, mainly landowners, and it is pretty hard for one farmer to tell another that he must eradicate weeds. That is why the legislation has not worked. Under

this Bill a committee is to be set up to report to the Minister, and also act as a court of appeal. This body will not be composed of local people. Inspectors can be sent out to any district, and on their reports the council is supposed to act. If it does not, the Minister is entitled to act. Clause 13 is one of the provisions I do not like. If it is left as it is I think the measure will break down. It provides:—

If—

- (a) any land is vested in or occupied by a Minister of the Crown or a Government department; and
- (b) the Minister of the Crown or, as the case may be, the Minister of the Crown by whom the Government department is administered is satisfied that the land adjoining the land of the Crown is free from proclaimed weeds or that the owner or occupier of the adjoining land has taken reasonable action to destroy or, as the case may be, control the proclaimed weeds on the adjoining land,

the said Minister of the Crown may take such action as he deems necessary to destroy or, as the case may be, control any proclaimed weeds which may be on such land of the Crown.

Landholders cannot be expected to eradicate weeds if there are weeds on adjoining Government property and no attempt is made to eradicate them. This clause should be amended to provide that the Minister shall take the action, because we shall not get co-operation unless he does. When explaining the Bill, the Minister said:—

The Bill makes no mandatory provision as regards land of instrumentalities of the Crown, such as the Railways Commissioner.

One of the weaknesses of the existing legislation is that the Railways Department does not destroy weeds, and they creep on to adjoining properties. If landholders are expected to eradicate weeds the Railways Department should be responsible for weeds growing on railway property. During the grasshopper plague the department would not take action, although owners of adjoining land were forced to do so. This one weak link will cause the whole scheme to break down. To be effective the Bill should provide that the Railways Department will be compelled to eradicate weeds. I would like the Minister to explain clause 19, which reads:—

19. (1) If a district council, pursuant to subsection (1) of section 17, incurs any expense in destroying or controlling any proclaimed weeds upon any public road, the expense shall be borne as follows:—

- I. One-third of the expense shall be borne by the district council:
- II. The remaining two-thirds of the expense shall be borne by the owners and occupiers of land abutting the part of the road upon which the weeds were growing so that one-third thereof shall be borne by the owners and occupiers of land on one side of the public road and one-third by the owners and occupiers of land on the other side of the public road, ratably according to the frontage of their land abutting the public road:

This means that if landholders do not eradicate weeds on roads the council will get rid of them, and one-third of the cost will be borne by the council and one-third by each of the landholders of adjoining properties. If the strip costs £9 to clear, each landholder and the district council would have to pay £3. This is reasonable enough, but the clause further provides:—

- III. If the council is satisfied that that half of the public road which abuts one side hereof was free from weeds at the time the expense was incurred, then the expense shall be borne as to one-third by the council and as to two-thirds by the owners and occupiers of land abutting the other side of the public road:

If I live on one side of a 3-chain road and clear 1½ chains, and the council clears the rest, one-third has to be paid by the council and two-thirds by the owner of the adjoining land. The cost is £9. The cost of clearing half the land by the landowner is £4 10s. The council has to pay £1 10s. and £3 comes from the adjoining landowner, thus making up the remaining £4 10s. That is definitely a penalty, for it costs more for the worker than for the man who does nothing at all. I do not know why it should be a half, and there seems to be something wrong in the drafting of the Bill. The man who clears his side of the road should not be penalized for doing so. If I were on one side of the road I would do nothing and would leave it to the council. The time of the farmer is valuable, particularly when the weeds are growing. His time can be more profitably spent on his own farm. A spraying unit to do half a mile would cost about £250, whereas if the council had the unit it could do all the clearing work, and it would have to be terribly inefficient not to do it at a cheaper cost than the farmer. The provision should be amended or re-drafted to make it more effective.

The clause dealing with the carrying of weeds by implements is good in theory but

ineffective in practice. Most weeds are carried by graders or other council implements, by stock, or by motor car. The clause does not cover any of these, only the implements of farmers. I do not know how the provision could be policed. How could it be said that a farmer's implement had weeds on it when it left his property? Motor cars, council machinery and stock are the biggest spreaders of noxious weeds. With a motor car weeds could be dropped 10 miles away. I do not know how the provision could be effective, but by making councils responsible it may become more effective. This Bill is an improvement on previous legislation, which could not be said to be in any way effective. Each year noxious weeds are spreading and causing greater losses to primary producers. Any measure that has a chance of controlling weeds has my whole-hearted support.

Mr. KING (Chaffey)—I support the Bill in the hope that it may be amended. It is based on the assumption that councils have money and men available for the work of clearing noxious weeds. I can speak from experience of the work of councils in my area. They have had great difficulty in obtaining competent persons to act as inspectors of noxious weeds and find it hard to justify heavy expenditure without much result. With the amount of money councils will have to spend on this work they may find they cannot get sufficient coverage for the areas likely to be affected by noxious weeds. In my district council area there are 600 landholders, all of whom would be subject to being prosecuted for growing one or more varieties of noxious weeds. The councils in the district are very much alive to the danger of dried fruits on the drying grounds being contaminated by noxious weed seeds. What might be a noxious weed in my district is regarded as stock feed by farmers on the other side of the river. Fruitgrowers can visualize weeds which may be noxious to them, but are not noxious to the dairying or sheep industry. Some of the plants we grow for cover crops would contaminate cereal crops in other districts.

I think councils are well qualified to take some part in the administration of the Act. I did not agree altogether with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that it should be given to an outside authority because there are very few people with sufficient experience and knowledge to speak with authority on all aspects, because we are apt to look at a thing from our

own point of view, and lose sight of the other fellow's trouble. I cannot see where councils can find the money to finance the scheme in the way the Minister envisages under the Bill. It is proposed that there shall be a committee consisting of seven, whom the Minister may determine. I consider that the councils should have some say in it. The Minister has not said from what section of the community he will draw his committee. I maintain that although the committee should necessarily have experts on it, it should also have representatives of the councils, who would have to consider the implementation of the legislation.

A matter which worries the councils more than anything else is clause 17, which relates to the duty of councils to destroy all dangerous and noxious weeds upon all lands vested in it or under its care, control or management and upon all public roads and travelling stock reserves within its area. In clause 18 it is provided that the Minister may, out of the money to be provided by Parliament, pay to the councils a subsidy on the money expended by them. That presupposes that a council has sufficient money in the first place to do the job and is able to do it. At times we have had considerable difficulty in arranging staff to control noxious weeds even on council roads. If there are noxious weeds on Crown lands that have to be destroyed, the councils should be fully reimbursed for doing the work. The clause provides that the Minister may subsidize the councils. It should be provided that he shall reimburse the councils for the amounts spent by them. That would leave no doubt in their minds as to whether they were to be reimbursed or not.

Elsewhere in the Bill it is provided that councils may strike a rate to help pay for the cost of eradicating weeds that would give them the power to exceed the ordinary statutory limit. There is not only a statutory limit, but a financial limit above which ratepayers can be rated. It may be true that some councils may not be rating as high as they could be, but in the main the River Murray councils are rated as high as the industry can bear, particularly now that they have the cost of rehabilitating their roads and other amenities. I doubt whether they could stand the financial load of a further rate which would have to be struck under this Bill. Portion of clause 19 provides:—

If any of the land abutting the public road is land vested in or under the care, control, or management of the council or is land of the Crown such as is referred to in section 13, or is land in respect of which the council is under

liability pursuant to subsection (2) of section 17, the council shall bear that portion of the expense which would otherwise be contributed by the owners or occupiers of the land.

In the irrigation areas the roads usually follow the irrigation channels, which are on Government land and on which often noxious weeds are growing. There is no landholder on one side of the road and the council would have to pay the cost of eradicating the weeds. In my district council area there are 80 miles of roads and the council may be in the invidious position of having to meet the cost of removing weeds on those roads. In a Government irrigation area the burden upon the councils would be proportionately much greater than in an area which was not under Government administration. Under clause 20 a council is placed under the heel of the Government as regards penalties. It is provided:—

If any such council fails to comply with such a notice the Minister may himself strictly carry out and enforce within its area the provision of this Act as to the destruction or control of proclaimed weeds, and may recover from the council by action in any court of competent jurisdiction the cost of so doing, and, without limiting the right to recover as aforesaid, may withhold Government grants of any description or any subsidy which the council is entitled to be paid under any Act. That could interfere with road grants and with councils' finances and place them in a difficult position, because they may not have been able to comply with the provisions of this legislation. That is rather onerous and I hope that the Minister will reconsider it, as it is a little too far-fetched. Perhaps the position can be met under clause 27, where it is provided:—

The Minister on the recommendation of the committee, may by notice in writing, exempt any person from the duty of complying with all or some of the obligations placed on that person by this Act or any notice given under this Act.

Can a person be regarded as a district council, or a district council as a person? I would like the clause to read:—

The Minister on the recommendation of the committee may, by notice in writing, exempt any person or council . . .

Mr. Shannon—The Acts Interpretation Act covers that.

Mr. KING—Possibly, but it is better to be sure than sorry. Clause 29 refers to trees, but as a member representing constituents many of whom make their living from growing trees, I would not like to see many trees cut down merely for the sake of getting rid of a couple of "Cousin Jacks." Clause 30 provides that a person who removes any vehicle, machine,

implement or equipment without taking reasonable precautions to ensure that it is free from any seeds or viable portions of a proclaimed weed shall be guilty of an offence. One of the most dangerous weeds in the dried fruits industry is caltrop, which was introduced into the district by wood merchants on the tyres of their vehicles. I should not be surprised if innocent weed were introduced in the same way. It is only right that travellers should take care to see that the wheels of their vehicles are free from the seeds of noxious weeds. Subject to those few remarks I support the Bill in the hope that it will be amended to make it more acceptable to councils in my district.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I commend the Minister for a courageous attempt to deal with a knotty problem. His predecessor in office (the late Hon. Arthur Christian) introduced a similar Bill last session to give interested parties an opportunity to examine it and express their views on it. They have had 12 months, an adequate period, in which to do so. Although no local councils have approached me on this matter, I intend to say a little about the desirability of a more equitable distribution of charges.

In such cases as this, complaints generally arise only after the legislation has been enacted; therefore members should carefully examine the Bill to ensure that obvious safeguards are inserted. This problem is not easy, and I agree with the member for Chaffey (Mr. King) that it is difficult for any advisory council, however wise and experienced its members, to understand the problems relating to noxious weeds in every area of the State. Indeed, what the honourable member said about his district is true about mine. Salvation Jane is a curse to the average hills landowner who wants to cultivate a pasture, whereas in northern areas it is itself satisfactory feed for stock. I could quote a number of plants which it would be wise to proclaim dangerous or noxious in one area, but not on a State-wide basis, otherwise there would be heart-burnings. Secondly, problems are associated with the method to be adopted to destroy these weeds. Surely the method will vary from district to district. Some noxious weeds can be destroyed by ploughing, but in some parts a plough cannot operate.

Mr. O'Halloran—It is an effective way to get rid of Cape Tulip.

Mr. SHANNON—Yes, and we are worried by Cape Tulip in the hills. No formula to

eradicate weeds can be adopted on a State-wide basis. District councils will require much technical advice on this matter, and clause 33 empowers the Minister to provide such advice. A council may employ unsuitable methods and incur unwarranted costs, which will result in the landholder being mulcted in charges for methods yielding little or no result. Before we place in councils' hands the power to do this we should ensure that steps are taken to determine economic methods of approach that will give the maximum results. That can be done only by a properly informed central authority, and the Minister has competent officers at his disposal.

We also have research institutions, such as Waite Research Institute, which can give helpful advice. Indeed, they have done much valuable work in this field and have enabled landholders to attack these problems without outside assistance; but we should safeguard landholders who will ultimately have to pay the bill by providing that, before councils embark on the eradication of weeds along roads and involve landholders in costs, a competent authority shall advise on the methods to be used and whether the council has the necessary equipment. The member for Chaffey (Mr. King) mentioned the important point of getting adequate equipment and manpower to attack this problem. Equipment is not the only thing. In the Adelaide Hills many thousands of pounds' worth of equipment is lying idle along the road, and I would hate to think that we are doing the same thing with noxious weeds as we are at the moment on the widening of the Mount Barker road. If that is the approach to this problem, the Lord help the landholders.

These are more or less technical matters that should not be left to the decision of non-technical personnel. This evening I had a private conversation with the Premier on these matters. He is a considerable user of various types of fungicides and hormone mixtures used in orchards, and he pointed out that there are so many trade names used to describe various mixtures that the average landholder is almost bemused as to which is the right substance for a particular job. The law provides that the label shall contain some description of the contents, but that is not much help to the average man on the land.

These are aspects of a problem which can only be properly tackled by a central authority with officers skilled in weed control. If the Department of Agriculture has not

enough of these officers it should engage more, for the State can afford to have a panel to see that adequate steps are taken to eradicate noxious weeds.

We would then get the best value for our expenditure, and obviously we shall spend much money in combating noxious weeds, and some of it will be the money of the people, who will have no voice in the methods to be adopted. For instance, it is conceivable that a landowner, by his own ingenuity, may have eradicated noxious weeds on his land, but passing vehicles may infest the roadside with the result that other people will be taking steps to eradicate weeds by methods different from his. All sorts of arguments may arise in this matter.

Clause 18 gives the Minister power to subsidize a council for the destruction of weeds on Crown lands. I hope I am wrong, but I do not think there is a clause giving the Minister the right to subsidize a council for work of an extraordinary nature. I think we should trust the executive and give the Minister power to decide whether he should subsidize councils for performing certain work. Clause 13 has some connection with paragraph IV of clause 19 (1), which states:—

..... the council shall bear that portion of the expense which would otherwise be contributed by the owners or occupiers of the land.

Again, that deals with Crown lands. Councils may be prepared to accept this responsibility, but I doubt whether it is just to burden them with it. The Crown should be liable for the cost of eradicating weeds on Crown Lands, but clause 19 provides that councils shall be reimbursed for only half the cost. Several speakers have said it is most difficult to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. The railways have been blamed often for the spread of these weeds, and I think they must take their share of the blame. Stock travelling from one part of the State to another are frequently responsible for spreading weeds. Any animal with cloven feet may carry seeds, and seeds often travel in the wool of sheep. The Minister will have power to prevent the moving of stock under certain circumstances, but I hope that power will be used with discretion.

It would be much better to take stock to an abattoirs for slaughter than hold them indefinitely on land. By moving stock to an abattoirs the risks of infesting land with noxious weeds are minimized. The provisions relating to the carriage of weeds on vehicles is another valuable safeguard. The Minister has power to

prohibit the destruction of trees. The member for Chaffey referred to fruit trees, but it is obvious that in view of the recent flood we will not be destroying any fruit trees. In some areas a belt of timber is a barrier to the spread of noxious weeds and I wholeheartedly support the provision that the Minister may absolutely deny the owner of such timber the right to destroy it until it is safe to do so.

I think this Bill represents a sound approach to a sticky problem and I believe councils should be expected to shoulder some of the responsibility for controlling dangerous weeds. I appreciate that councils sometimes experience difficulty in carrying resolutions compelling a person to get rid of weeds on his property. A councillor's land could abut that property and he could have a similar problem. However, this matter is provided for, because the Minister, upon receiving a report that a council has disregarded its obligations, can take suitable action for the removal of dangerous or noxious weeds. I do not think the Minister will have to take many such actions against councils before they appreciate their responsibilities. If people are to be compelled to obey the law the penalty for non-observance should be sufficient to act as a deterrent.

This legislation may result in less expenditure on district roads, but if we can free lands in agricultural areas from weeds the landowner will be recompensed as a result and that will offset the loss he may experience because his road is not kept in proper repair. Of course, if councils are financially embarrassed and are obliged to maintain their roads in trafficable order there is power for a special rate to be imposed for the clearing of noxious weeds. Although that may represent a financial burden on property owners they will reap the benefit indirectly if the clearing work is properly carried out. I may attempt to make some minor amendments in Committee, but I am prepared to give this legislation a trial to see what happens.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—I support the Bill. It is an involved measure regarding which a person requires a good knowledge of the subject. The Leader of the Opposition said that he believes the noxious weeds problem is too great for councils to control, and I am inclined to agree with him. It is vital, in the interests of the State, that the problem should be combatted. I think it has been regarded too lightly, and frequently

councils are the main offenders. Frequently councillors, because they are landowners, have neglected to control the noxious weeds on their own properties and the council inspector is naturally loth to prosecute those who are, in effect, his employers. I am pleased that an inspector of the Department of Agriculture will have power to prosecute persons who are not trying to clear their land of noxious weeds. Some of the councils in my area are concerned about clause 17 which makes every council responsible for the control of noxious weeds on Crown lands and travelling stock reserves in its area. Although provision is made for a grant to be made to a council, it may be financially embarrassed, especially if its finances are committed to the hilt as a result of the recent flood. Some of these councils are financially embarrassed at the moment. They cannot draw further from the banks because they have spent up to their limit, and they are concerned about when they will receive the Government subsidy. Most councils have a problem with roads, because some have several hundred miles to keep clear. Now that the onus will be on them to keep one third of the road clear of weeds, they will be financially embarrassed and will probably have to increase rates, although some councils are fully taxed in that regard. Often the spread of noxious weeds and vermin has been caused by people having large holdings. One cure is closer settlement, and trying to cut down these big holdings.

On the main road to Tailem Bend horehound is practically out of control, and it will be a big job to clean it up. A Government body should attempt to eradicate it. Onion weed is also a problem in my district, and it must be tackled before the flowering stage or it will grow again the next year. Councils, of course, cannot do all the roads at one time, and if the landholders fail to clear the roads and the weed flowers it will increase in the following year. The council in my district is perturbed about some provisions in the Bill, and I hope some will be altered in Committee.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—The control of noxious weeds is one of the few controls that have my full support. This State's economy is vitally dependent on the maintenance and expansion of primary production, so it is necessary to ensure that noxious weeds do not reduce the productivity of the land or burden the landowner with high recurring costs of eradication arising through carelessness, irresponsibility or ineffectual control. This Bill

could well be more effective than the Act it will replace, but it seems to me that the onus of responsibility bears heavily on councils in spite of some relaxation of responsibility in their favour. For instance, clause 13 provides that in relation to land vested in or occupied by a Minister of the Crown or a Government department the Minister may take such action as he deems necessary to destroy or, as the case may be, control the proclaimed weeds on any such land. In striking contrast to the word "may" in relation to the Crown, clause 16 provides that every council "shall" strictly carry out and enforce the provisions of the Act. Clause 19 provides that councils will be called upon to bear the liability of the Crown in the first instance. Clause 18 provides that the Crown may, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, pay to councils a subsidy on the amount expended by them. "Subsidy" is a very vague term; it does not imply full reimbursement, and could lead to serious dissatisfaction among councils; and the uncertainty of any reimbursement being made at all, arising from the use of the word of doubt "may," could further that dissatisfaction.

In my opinion control of noxious weeds goes beyond the ambit of local government; it is a national responsibility, and should be approached by the Government as such. Councils have limited finances with which to conduct the duties required of them, and through financial stringency cannot employ on a full-time basis more men than they urgently need for immediate council work. I cannot see how councils under these conditions can even temporarily finance the work of weed eradication desired of them under this legislation, or how it will be physically possible for councils spread over a large area to attend to noxious weed control at the correct time. I have in mind one district council that has 2,000 ratepayers and 1,800 miles of roadway. It will be utterly impossible for this council adequately to fulfil the duties required of it under this Bill.

Under clause 26 work carried out by a council when there is default by the owner will not be a charge on the land, as is the case in regard to rates and road moieties. Our laws should be consistent in these matters, and the interests of councils should be safeguarded in relation to moneys expended in weed control as they are in relation to ordinary rates. The Crown should relieve councils of much of the responsibility that will be placed on them by this legislation. I trust that amendments will be made to make it more acceptable to councils,

and I support the measure at this stage in anticipation of such amendments.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I believe the Minister has put forward what he and his department believe to be the solution to this problem. I have had some experience in the administration of noxious weeds legislation, and I, like all local government officers who have had experience of it, agree that it is difficult to deal with the matter. Some people are keen to see that the provisions of the Act are carried out, but others do not show such interest. I think the most pertinent point about the Bill is that the department will have authorized officers who will see that its provisions are carried out. To be fair to the Minister I point out that I will refrain from saying what I think is good in it, because that would take much too long; I will confine my remarks to what I think is not good. I have received letters from officers who have administered the Weeds Act in the past, and these will give the Minister and members some idea how these people will react to the Bill. In a letter from the District Council of Saddleworth, the following opinion was expressed:—

It seems to me that everybody should be treated in a similar manner for the legislation to function efficiently. I know that in the past I have had complaints from landowners adjoining railways that it is not encouraging for them to destroy either weeds or vermin if the co-operation of the railways is not forthcoming, and I think this would be your opinion as well. Therefore I consider the word "shall" should be substituted for "may" when reference is made to any Crown lands. Another letter says:—

It is apparent to me that the usual procedure has been carried out regarding Crown lands or Government-owned lands. We are of opinion that the same provisions should apply to all lands, whether owned by the Government or privately owned. We have had some difficulty in the past in our endeavour to enforce the destruction of noxious weeds on land owned by ratepayers alongside Government-owned land. The ratepayers declare that the weeds have come from Government-owned land through the neglect of departments to destroy their noxious weeds. You will realize that it is difficult to enforce the provisions of the Act when Government property adjacent is not under the same provisions.

Mr. Lawn—Does not the Act give power to councils?

Mr. HAMBOUR—They have always had power to deal with land other than Government land. They have no power over Government instrumentalities. It would be ridiculous to think that one Minister was prosecuting another for not carrying out the provisions of

an Act. There must be co-operation. The railways are not altogether co-operative, but they are a little tardy.

Mr. Lawn—Have a look at clause 17, sub-clause 2.

Mr. HAMBOUR—The Minister said he would endeavour to get the co-operation of other departments. It has been the responsibility of councils to clear all unoccupied Crown lands within their boundaries, but there is no authority to compel the railways to take action. The Minister expects to get co-operation from other departments. He indicates that I am right in saying that, and he knows more about the position than Mr. Lawn. In the main this is a good Bill. I do not think a committee is necessary, only authorized officers, to help councils in the administration of the legislation.

Mr. Davis—Why not help them financially?

Mr. HAMBOUR—If a committee is appointed it will have to be paid. Money spent on the eradication of noxious weeds should be paid to the men who see that the work is done. The Minister through the Department of Agriculture should appoint full time officers to carry out the duties of authorized persons under the Act. We need activity and not seat warmers, as members of committees can be. It would be impossible for the committee sitting in Adelaide to decide what should be done in connection with the eradication of weeds, but authorized officers moving around the country could say what should be done. There should be enough officers to form a committee, which in turn could report to the Minister.

Mr. Lawn—Do you say that there is insufficient power or that the power available has not been exercised?

Mr. HAMBOUR—There is sufficient power, but the administration is not good. The control of weeds on unoccupied Crown lands is the responsibility of councils. Occupied Crown lands are not their responsibility.

Mr. Lawn—Do you say that the Bill does not give sufficient power or that the power available has not been exercised?

Mr. HAMBOUR—No legislation could give the Minister power to deal with another Minister. If the Minister of Railways refused to clear noxious weeds from his property action could not be taken against him by another Minister. It would merely be a matter of taking money from one pocket and putting it in another.

In the past it has been the responsibility of district councils to see that adjoining landowners keep noxious weeds cleared from their half of the road. In the Bill it is provided

that each landholder shall share one-third of the cost and the council one-third. One industrious landowner may make it his business to clear half of the road, whereas the other decides to do nothing. Under the Bill it becomes the responsibility of the council to step in and clear the other half. In effect the Minister is protecting the person who will not help himself, and whereas the man who clears his half has to pay the full cost, the other pays only two-thirds. That is an anomaly to which I object.

I suggest that the Minister should revert to the old Act and let the owners pay half each, without bringing the councils into it. The only officer at the disposal of a council to supervise this work is the clerk, who already has enough to do, as in addition he is often the inspector of buildings and is associated with the destruction of vermin and many other things. I would welcome the appointment of authorized officers who could see that the noxious weeds were eliminated. Councils will resist being burdened with the financial responsibility. It is stated that the department or the Minister may make some contribution toward the cost, but if there is a way for a Government department to get out of a liability, it will do so.

The appointment of authorized officers is the answer to keeping roads and Crown lands clear of noxious weeds. If a landowner does not attend to his half of the road, why make him a present of one-third of the cost of eradication whereas the other man who accepts the responsibility has to foot the bill? The provision in regard to keeping Crown lands clear is more generous than under the old Act in that a subsidy is to be paid.

I suggest that there should be no change in the legislation regarding the responsibility of councils, but they should be assisted. An authorized officer could go to the clerk of a council for the service of a notice on a landowner to get rid of noxious weeds, and if he did not do it the council could be authorized to do so, the offender having to meet the cost. I think the appointment of the committee is superfluous as it will serve no useful purpose.

Mr. Quirke—It would be a court of appeal and prevent a landowner from having to appeal to Caesar.

Mr. HAMBOUR—The Minister would be the supreme authority. I would be happy not to have a committee. It would consist of departmental officers, who would receive no extra remuneration. We should not, however, authorize the payment of more money to the seven

persons comprising a committee to decide whether weeds shall be dug out. Today councils decide that, but they are reluctant to do so because councillors may be offenders. At one council meeting, as chairman of the council I told councillors I had a list of 39 breaches of the Vermin Act and, before reading the names of offenders, asked whether they would substantiate the inspector's report. They unanimously decided to do so and later found that four of the offenders were councillors. Frequently such matters are deferred merely because councillors know they are offenders. Councils will accept their responsibilities, and landholders will have to face up to theirs.

Mr. Bywaters—What if a council charges a landowner too much?

Mr. HAMBOUR—In every case where the council does the work the charge will be too high, for a gang cannot be sent out to do the work as cheaply as the individual can do it as he has no transport costs. The cost will be objected to whatever it is. If an appeal board is right under this legislation then it is right under the Prices Act. On the other hand, if members have no confidence in the Minister they should throw out the Bill. Should a right of appeal be allowed in this matter? There are practical difficulties. For instance, which sparrow dropped the seed and where did it come from? Seeds may be carried in thousands of ways, such as by bird, animal or machine. The authority given by the Bill is a good thing and responsible officers should be allowed to do the job. Sufficient officers should be appointed to see that the work is done throughout the State.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—This Bill should be dealt with thoroughly in Committee. Many members have referred to the question of the two-thirds contribution and I agree with the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) in this respect. A good farmer who is anxious to see that noxious weeds do not spread onto or around his property will clear his half of the road and bear the full cost of that work, whereas the council will have to pay one-third of the cost of clearing the other half of the road for which the dilatory farmer is responsible. In that case the ratepayers must find the council's contribution, whereas I would sooner see the responsibility rest solely on the landholders on either side of the road.

The most important part of the Bill concerns the appointment of officers to supervise the

eradication of weeds. Some councils have been dilatory but I do not think it wise under a Bill to force councils to act unless the Railways Department is also forced to act, because the department is as dilatory as any council in this matter. The Minister may decide that action should be taken on Crown lands, but the onus is to be placed on the council, which may be subsidized for the cost of the work, but why should the council have to bear some of the cost? The Government should bear the total cost. Why should the onus be placed on ratepayers to get a Government subsidy?

Mr. Hambour—They use the Crown lands.

Mr. STOTT—Some do, but in many cases they do not. The Loxton district contains soldier settlement areas and there are also such settlements in the Moorook, Lyrup and Waikerie areas. The land is being developed by the use of channels, and who will bear the cost of the work on those? How much subsidy will the council receive? Take the case of a district council area that abuts the Murray River. The whole of the council area along the east of the Murray is practically Crown lands to the river's edge. What a tremendous cost will be incurred by councils and what will the subsidy be? Councils should not be put to that expense; it should be borne entirely by the Government. Paragraph IV of clause 19 states:—

If any of the land abutting the public road is land vested in or under the care, control, or management of the council or is land of the Crown such as is referred to in section 13 or is land in respect of which the council is under liability pursuant to subsection (2) of section 17, the council shall bear that portion of the expense which would otherwise be contributed by the owners or occupiers of the land.

In other words, a council is responsible for eradicating the weeds, and the Government is getting off lightly. The responsibility for eradicating weeds on Crown lands should be borne entirely by the Government. The Minister may subsidize a council for this work, but that is not good enough. I hope this provision will be amended in Committee so that councils will be fully reimbursed. I am opposed to sub-clause (2) of clause 17, and in Committee I will move to delete it. Some members have said that their councils are not greatly concerned about this Bill, but I have heard many complaints about it. No council in my district is happy about the Bill, but all councils are prepared to co-operate with departmental officers to eradicate noxious weeds. I believe that councils are not in a position to be saddled with additional burdens.

The eradication of weeds is becoming easier because of the great work the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization is doing in research on weedicides. The principal manufacturers of these chemicals are carrying out experiments on different kinds of plants, and the Department of Agriculture is playing an important part. I pay a tribute to the officers of the weeds control division of the department in carrying out an educational campaign to encourage farmers to use hormones and weed sprays to eradicate weeds from crops. Mellow lotus has caused a great headache to the Wheat Board and the Barley Board. Samples of wheat with mellow lotus have been found at the Ardrossan silo, and we do not want to get bad reports on the wheat sold to New Zealand. South Australian millers are also worried about mellow lotus, which has such an aroma that it is easy to ascertain whether a load of wheat has it even when one walks alongside it. If wheat has mellow lotus the flour or bread made from it is tainted. In the early part of this season there were some complaints from growers that their barley had been classified in a lower grade. The wet season had the effect of pinching the grain, and I was called in to investigate some samples in tin trays.

If the wheat is brushed one can often see wild turnip, wild oats, or other seeds on the bottom of the tray. This may be due to the fact that the harvester did not have a proper screen, or the brush of the screen may not have been working correctly. Some growers said the harvester manufacturers do not now put proper screens on their machines to enable them to get rid of weeds, but there is no excuse for having a large quantity of weed seeds in barley or wheat. Farmers can use sprays to eradicate weeds from their crops, and it is estimated that crops that have been sprayed will yield an additional four bushels to the acre. I agree that officers should be appointed by the Minister to ensure that eradication work is carried out, but I do not agree that councils should be asked to contribute financially towards the work. I believe the Bill could best be debated in Committee and I support the second reading. I hope that in Committee we will be able to improve it sufficiently to ensure that the whole onus is not placed on councils.

Mr. JENKINS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.41 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 31, at 2 p.m.