

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, February 13, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.**SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—There is a widely held feeling outside that the present meetings of Parliament constitute a special session, when, in fact, they are merely a continuation of the session commenced last year in order to complete business that was before the House prior to Christmas. Does the Government intend to call Parliament together in the autumn, possibly late autumn, to deal with general business and so avoid the end of the session rush which usually characterizes our meetings when we do not assemble until later in the year?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The calling of Parliament together is always contingent upon the business to be dealt with. This session was continued over Christmas because there were a number of Bills which members believed to be contentious and desired to examine. Rather than push them through with late sittings the Government decided to resume in the New Year after members had had the opportunity to examine them. I am not sure at present when it will be necessary to call Parliament together again. It may be necessary for appropriations and other business to be dealt with in the autumn; on the other hand it may not be necessary to call Parliament together until June. It is all contingent on when legislation requiring attention is ready.

TONSLEY RAILWAY SPUR LINE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked on February 7 regarding the Tonsley railway spur line?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The Minister of Railways has supplied the following reply from the Railways Commissioner:—

The date of commencement of the construction of the Tonsley spur line has not yet been determined. It is not intended at present to extend the line beyond the original destination at Tonsley.

STATE LAND TAX.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—On several occasions lately I have been made aware and very forcibly of what appears to be an anomaly in the

present State land tax arrangements. In 1952, under amending legislation, it was provided that the land tax payable should increase on a sliding scale according to the amount of land owned. Since then I believe assessments in some cases have risen steeply. Before that time—and it still obtains—the practice was for land tax to be paid by the tenant, and it is not on the amount of land leased, but on what the landlord owns. Will the Treasurer examine the legislation with a view to introducing a provision, perhaps similar to the one in the former Federal Act, in order to overcome the anomaly?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There is no anomaly so far as the Government is concerned. A certain amount of land tax has to be paid on a property and if the tenant, under an agreement or lease, agrees to pay it instead of the owner, that is purely a matter between the owner and the lessee, not between the Government and the lessee. The property is taxed by the Government, not the owner. The honourable member has stated that this is an alteration to the Act, but the provisions follow largely those existing when the State took over land tax from the Commonwealth. It dropped out of the field of land tax in order that the States might reoccupy it, and we reoccupied it very much in the same way as it was previously occupied by the Commonwealth. A Bill will probably be introduced next session to deal with the matter because it has been found that a number of companies are evading the payment of land tax on the aggregation of their properties. They are taking measures to evade land tax by having the properties registered in the names of different companies, although they all belong to the same people. It may be necessary to have a provision similar to the one introduced into the Victorian Parliament to deal with attempts to separate the ownership of properties by the creation of a number of companies which, in fact, have the same directors and shareholders, and the same ownership, but legally are under different registrations.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD RELIEF.

Mr. BYWATERS—Will the Government make available to private swamp owners, in order to dewater the swamps, interest-free loans similar to those made available to the Renmark Irrigation Trust?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In certain instances the Government has sought to assist authorities, such as local government authorities, but it cannot make interest-free

loans to private individuals. Where there is public ownership, the Government has assisted local government authorities to purchase road-making machinery, but its ability to do that is limited because of the paucity of funds. In recent years it has had to curtail such assistance because funds were not available, but the text of the letter from the Commonwealth Government that came to hand today discloses that it will refer to the Grants Commission the question of money being made available to the States for the relief of settlers who have suffered because of last year's floods on the River Murray. The question will therefore come within the Grants Commission's review of State finances. This State is not only making a great financial contribution this year to assist such settlers, but because of the review by the Grants Commission we may have to make great contributions in future by virtue of our reduced grant. Under those circumstances I cannot hold out any promise to make interest-free money available. The Government can only obtain money today by paying interest at about 5 per cent.

Mr. STOTT—Last week the Treasurer read a telegram he had received from the Prime Minister about the further £250,000 that the Commonwealth would make available on a pound for pound basis with the State for Murray River flood relief, and said that until he had received a letter he would not be sure of all the details. Will he make available a copy of that letter, is he satisfied that the Commonwealth will not allow any of this additional grant to be spent on personal hardship cases or rehabilitation, and is he satisfied that the State cannot make available any money for this purpose?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The letter from the Prime Minister arrived only this morning and I thought it had been put in my bag, but unfortunately it has not. It set out the categories upon which money could be spent, but they do not include any amounts for personal hardship, except the £50,000 previously contributed to the Lord Mayor's Relief

Fund by the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister stated specifically that Auditor-General's certificates would be required governing the expenditure of the money and that personal hardship expenditure could not be included.

Mr. KING—Can the Minister of Lands say whether there are any more Housing Trust homes available, if required, to accommodate people who have been displaced from their homes by the Murray flood?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Recently I had a conference with the chairman and the general manager of the trust, who informed me that they have a number of similar types of homes available for that purpose; so if any honourable member knows of people requiring this assistance he should advise me and I will contact the trust with a view to having an officer interview the people concerned to let them know the conditions under which houses can be secured.

Mr. BYWATERS—Following on my previous question, can the Premier tell me the difference between the Renmark Irrigation Trust and private irrigation boards, and whether they are both covered by an Act of Parliament? Will he make available to those interested copies of the letter written by the Prime Minister on the question of flood relief?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I can now make available the letter received from the Prime Minister, which states:—

I refer to your letter of January 4, 1957, in which you requested a further Commonwealth grant to assist your State in meeting expenditures connected with the recent Murray River floods. As indicated in my telegram of February 6 I confirm that the Commonwealth is willing to make available on a £ for £ basis with your State a further grant of £250,000 thus bringing the total Commonwealth grant for flood relief and flood damage purposes to £1,050,000.

The composition of this further grant of £250,000 and of the total grant of £1,050,000 is set out in the following table:—

	Estimated Cost.	Initial C'th. Grant.	Further Grant.	Total C'th. Grt.
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Protective measures during emergency ..	632	250	65	315
Flood damaged roads and bridges . .	695	250	50	300
Reinstatement of Government embankments	525	250	10	260
Re-siting of flood levees	250	—	125	125
	2,102	750(a)	250	1,000(a)

(a) Plus Commonwealth contribution of £50,000 towards personal hardship.

You will note that, apart from the contribution which the Commonwealth has already made towards the relief of personal hardship, the assistance which the Commonwealth has agreed to provide does not cover the items listed in your letter under the head "Personal Assistance to Settlers." As stated in my letter of November 13, 1956, the Commonwealth has always refrained from making grants to cover personal losses or the rehabilitation of private assets.

I should add that the observations which I made in the last three paragraphs of my letter of November 13, 1956, regarding such matters as assistance to local authorities, certification of expenditure by the Auditor-General and the operations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission apply also to the further grant of £250,000 which the Commonwealth has now agreed to provide.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Lands knows that local committees that were in charge during the flood crisis put up many levees across private properties. Some of them are still there, but no-one seems to know who is responsible for removing them. Will this work be a debit to the Lands Department?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Some districts have applied for assistance in this matter and others have not. The question is now being dealt with and if the honourable member will let me know the area he has in mind I will ascertain the position for him.

Mr. BYWATERS—I appreciate the Premier's reply, but he did not answer the first portion of my question concerning the difference between the Renmark Irrigation Trust and the private irrigation board. I understand both are covered by Act of Parliament. Will he explain the difference?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member examines the Act he will appreciate that the Renmark Irrigation Trust carries out the functions of local government. The board the honourable member mentions carries out purely private functions.

Mr. STOTT—The other day in connection with flood relief the Premier set out the position in regard to loans to persons with security and said that they would cover a period of eight years, but surely he realizes that is too short a term. From the information given by the Premier regarding the additional money to be made available from the Commonwealth it would appear that persons with no security have no means of rehabilitating themselves. The Premier also said that the letter from the Prime Minister intimated that the matter would go before the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Will he consider extending the period beyond eight years?

Does he intend to place before the Commonwealth Grants Commission a special disability claim? As the water comes from other States we should put forward a special disability claim in order that the settlers with no hope of getting money at present, and no security of their own, will be able to get a loan.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—An eight-year period is the longest for which we have funds available for the purpose. The State has a limited amount of long term money available to it. I have discussed the matter fully with the bank and eight years is the longest period we can allow money to be tied up. We have a commitment to repay the money and we must not go into default, for if we do the whole system breaks down. It is not possible to extend the period beyond eight years. The Commonwealth Grants Commission does not make a grant to this State on the basis of disability. The Commission is instructed to regard South Australia as a whole, compare its position with that of the non-claimant States and then recommend a special grant if it feels one is justified under section 96. That is not a hardship or disability grant but a grant to enable the Government to function on a basis comparable, in the view of the Grants Commission, with those of the non-claimant States. The Commonwealth takes the view in connection with financial assistance to the States that if the State pays its share from State revenue, which is depleted to that extent, a claim can be made to make up the leeway. It is said that in this way the Commonwealth provides 50 per cent at the outset and the other 50 per cent by way of a Commonwealth grant, and consequently the State makes no contribution. That is the argument put forward: I will not debate now whether or not it is a good argument.

Mr. STOTT—For the administration of flood relief local committees have been appointed to consider settlers' applications. There have been delays in providing grants on account of hardship suffered and local committees are concerned as they are unable to provide reports because they have not received the applications. Obviously, the applications have to go from the people concerned through the district officer to the central committee and then back to the local committee. Will the Minister of Lands see that the applications are forwarded promptly to local committees so that they may be handled expeditiously?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes, but the applications are being dealt with expeditiously.

Only last week some from the Moorook area were dealt with, but if the honourable member has any specific case in mind I will get him information on it if he will give me the details.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT: HUNDRED OF JEFFRIES.

Mr. HARDING—An area in the hundred of Jeffries, which has been developed for settlement by the Land Development Executive, has recently been inspected by Commonwealth war service land settlement authorities. Can the Minister of Repatriation say whether this land has been approved by the Commonwealth for soldier settlement, and if not, how and when will it be allotted?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Last Monday I received from the Commonwealth Government a reply to the effect that it would not accept the land as a proposition for land settlement. I am deeply disappointed with that decision and disagree entirely with the reply. The method of allotment is now being considered by the Department of Lands and in due course the land will be gazetted and advertised for allotment.

MIGRATION ON HIRE-PURCHASE.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Will the Premier obtain information concerning the extent to which controls will operate over immigrants who are assisted by the Custom Credit Corporation under a hire-purchase system for the payment of passages? Secondly, does he consider it desirable that such large sums as those suggested should be made available by financial institutions when advances for house construction are rationed and inadequate to meet the needs of Australian people?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Immigration is entirely under the control of the Commonwealth Government, but if the honourable member desires my personal views, I feel it undesirable to have unofficial migration schemes of this description, and that the proper procedure for any person desiring to nominate a friend or relation from overseas is to apply through the official channels, which no doubt would deal with the application sympathetically and, subject to the conditions of immigration being observed, give it proper attention. The State Tourist Bureau is prepared to accept such applications for submission to the Commonwealth Government.

WILD DOG TAX.

Mr. HEASLIP—Each year I receive an account for 2s. 3d. for wild dog tax. The minimum tax is 5s., and to collect this small

amount much time, labor and records must be necessary. I do not know how many of such accounts would be circulated, but I ask the Treasurer whether it pays to do so and whether this small tax is necessary?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This tax is levied to maintain wild dog protection measures. I agree that where the assessment is so small it probably does not pay for the time of the officers in making out the account, sending it out, collecting the money, and in some instances, sending a reminder later. Probably the Government is out of pocket over it. Under some Acts the Government has power to waive amounts so small that they do not meet the cost of collection, and I will examine this matter to see whether that applies in this case.

HOUSING TRUST SITE NEAR GAWLER.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Treasurer a further reply to my question of last week concerning the building of Housing Trust homes adjacent to the Adelaide Road about a mile south of the Gawler racecourse?

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

It is expected that building on the land at Gawler referred to in the question of Mr. John Clark will commence within a few weeks. The initial contract for this site will be for 20 houses. If, as is most likely, the demand for houses at Gawler persists, the trust will follow its usual practice and will place contracts for further houses before the present contract has been completed.

GRADING OF EGGS.

Mr. LAUCKE—I have previously referred to the fact that the grading down of eggs from first to second quality may well determine profit or loss to the producer. During the week ended January 19, 37.6 per cent of all eggs received by the Egg Board were second quality and worth 2s. 8d. a dozen—1s. 3d. a dozen below the then current value of first quality eggs. I have no doubt that a large percentage of second quality eggs, apart from undersized eggs, is due to the unfavourable conditions of rail transport during the summer when eggs are consigned in hot, oven-like trucks, with resultant extreme evaporation and enlarged air cells. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways ascertain whether well insulated vans can be used to transport eggs and other dairy produce on lines that carry a heavy traffic in these commodities?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up the question, but I point out that, generally speaking, the number of insulated trucks is limited and that probably many eggs become second grade because of overheating long before they are put into trucks.

GRANGE ROAD REPAIRS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Recently the Engineering and Water Supply Department put down a drain on Grange Road and the Tramways Trust has removed the tram line. The Highways Department has made some temporary repairs to the road, and I understand it is waiting for consolidation to take place before carrying out any further work, but some people are complaining bitterly about the state of the road. Does the Minister representing the Minister of Roads know whether the department plans to reconstruct the road?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up the question with my colleague, but after long experience I say that often permanent repairs cannot be carried out until consolidation has taken place. Secondly, the repair work is often done by arrangement between the Highways Department and the local council. Sometimes people living near me have thought the council has been dilatory in carrying out repair work, but it finally did a good job. Instead of the Highways Department the blame, if any, may lie with the local authority, but it may be waiting for the road to consolidate before effecting permanent repairs.

EUDUNDA AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Has the Minister of Education anything further to report on works being carried out at the Eudunda area school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—An inspector of the Architect-in-Chief's Department will inspect the area to be paved next Wednesday, after which the council's price for the job will be considered. A more important matter is the provision of two new classrooms. I assured the honourable member last year that I would treat that as urgent and give it a high priority. I have been advised that the Architect-in-Chief's Department has completed working drawings and that specifications have been commenced. Tenders will be called as soon as possible. The construction of a wood-work centre has been included in a group of tenders which closed last week. They are now being considered by the Architect-in-Chief prior to submission to Cabinet.

RENTS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED HOUSES.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question concerns the rents paid by Government employees for Government-owned houses. I assure the Premier that I am not interested at this stage in any dispute between the Government and the Public Service Board, but is he able to say when those Government employees who are to get a refund will get it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This morning I received a memorandum from the Public Service Board signed by the three members. They said the board did not desire to go behind Cabinet's decision about Sir Kingsley Paine's recommendations and that the decision of the Government will be carried out by the board and adjustments made accordingly. The communication then went on that since Sir Kingsley Paine had made his recommendations rents had been altered by legislation on two occasions and that, as a consequence, and because about half the Government employees concerned had not had their rents reviewed, the board from now on proposed making other determinations on rents. What they will be I do not know, except that I was informed by the memorandum that the board would give slightly lower increases in the future to those who did not apply because of the fact that they had not had any reductions.

MACCLESFIELD SCHOOL.

Mr. JENKINS—Can the Minister of Education say what progress has been made with the new school at Macclesfield and when it will be opened?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I was informed about a week ago that the school had been completed but not the septic tank system. Therefore I gave instructions that the school was not to be opened at the beginning of the school year, but as soon as the septic system is working it will be opened, probably early this term.

Mr. JENKINS—Will the Minister of Lands advise the Returned Soldiers' League at Macclesfield when the new school building is available because it desires to take over the old school building for its club rooms?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

HIGH SCHOOL AT HENLEY BEACH.

Mr. FRED WALSH—It was reported in the *News* last month that the Education Department did not intend constructing a high school in the Henley Beach area and that an offer by

councils to obtain a suitable site of about 20 acres had been rejected by the department. Can the Minister say whether the department has ever determined that it will not construct a school in that area and whether the statement about the council's offer was correct?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Education Department has never determined that it will not construct a high school at Henley Beach. It would be beyond its functions to so determine. That is the Minister's function and he must submit his recommendations to Cabinet. On June 25 last my secretary wrote to the Town Clerk as follows:—

The Minister has asked me to say that he has given this matter careful consideration. It is thought that the Findon High School will have ample accommodation for secondary students from Henley and Grange for some years to come. However, it is recognized that it may be necessary to establish a secondary school in this area at some future time, which will depend on the growth of the population. It is considered that an area of 20 acres would be needed for such a school, and the Superintendent of High Schools and the Property Officer have been authorized to make preliminary inquiries on the possibility of acquiring a suitable site. Any assistance that you can render in finding a site which could be acquired for this purpose will be appreciated.

In January, in reply to a further communication from the Town Clerk, my secretary wrote in similar terms and concluded by stating:—

In the meantime, as I have informed you previously, investigations concerning possible suitable sites will be made by the property officer of the Education Department.

It is quite contrary to fact that it has been determined that no high school will be constructed at Henley Beach. I believe there will be, but not at present because of the pressing demand of so many other areas which are more fully developed. The matter is still before me and I will be pleased to consider any suitable sites which the corporation or anyone else submits to me. One site submitted was considered, after investigation, to be not suitable. I shall be only too pleased to consider any sites and to discuss the matter with the corporation or, preferably, with the honourable member who represents the district.

MOUNT GAMBIER SEWERAGE.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the two questions raised by the Mount Gambier Corporation concerning subsidies for sewerage and when the latest assessments will be available for cities in country districts?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I think the question of a subsidy arose from an article in the press to the effect that a subsidy had been granted to the town of Elizabeth because the cost of that system did not meet the actual expenditure involved. I point out that sewerage schemes in South Australia—including extensions in the metropolitan area—all require a subsidy. That is the difference between the cost of the connection on the one hand and the amount of expenditure paid by the ratepayers on the other. I had a similar request from Bordertown in my own district. They complained about non-procedure with the work there. I had to point out that the adjoining township of Kaniva, which cannot hold a candle to Bordertown or Mount Gambier in prestige, has in hand a sewerage scheme which will cost about £75,000; the State Government is making about £35,000 available towards the cost and the district council is finding the balance. The residents must pay about 3s. 7d. in the pound for their rating on the scheme. I suggested to Bordertown council that if they were anxious for sewerage work to proceed they might perhaps follow that procedure, but they immediately lost interest.

Mr. Fletcher—Do you suggest that?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—No, I merely point out the alternative. I am not suggesting anything. Even at 2s. 9d. in the pound a heavy subsidy would be required to provide any town with sewerage. The Government is on the point of appointing an expert committee—comprising mainly medical men—to determine which towns should have priority. All sewerage projects cannot be proceeded with at the same time, therefore Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Victor Harbour, Port Pirie and other towns will all have to be considered. It seems to me that the first consideration should be the welfare and health of a community rather than pounds, shillings and pence. Mount Gambier will be considered on its merits, particularly from a health point of view.

CARE OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Minister of Works received a report from the Aborigines Department respecting questions I asked last week concerning the maintenance of aboriginal children and other matters?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The main question related to when the increased maintenance would become effective. It will commence as from February 1. I have received a lengthy report from the department,

but rather than read it I shall communicate with the honourable member by personal letter as soon as possible.

TAPEROO AND OSBORNE SEWERAGE.

Mr. TAPPING—Last year I referred to the need for sewerage the Osborne-Taperoo area and the Minister said that investigations were being made and plans prepared. Has he anything further to report?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes. The Engineering and Water Supply Department is going into the question of the cost involved in giving effect to a sewerage scheme for Taperoo, Draper North, Draper South, Largs North and Swansea, and Osborne. Each have similar problems and probably equal merit, but the total cost of these schemes will run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds. Investigations have not yet reached a stage where I am able to say whether a feasible proposition could be undertaken to sewer this, on the whole sparsely populated area. On the figures before me uptodate, I would not be fair if I deluded the honourable member into the belief that a scheme that would be acceptable to this Parliament could be evolved in the near future. In short, a great deal of extra development will have to take place before these proposals could become a practicability, as obviously the work could only be carried out at the expense of some other approved work, or the deferment thereof. In any case, the proposal would be subject firstly to investigation by the Public Works Standing Committee. The proposal is being considered in a large way to see whether a worthwhile scheme can be placed before the Public Works Committee.

NARACOORTE TO KINGSTON RAILWAY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Can the Minister representing the Minister of Railways say what progress has been made with the broadening of the railway line between Naracoorte and Kingston?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The honourable member would prefer a detailed reply to one given off-hand, so I will see that he gets one immediately after the House prorogues.

NEW CHELTENHAM RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. STEPHENS—Can the Minister representing the Minister of Railways say when the new Cheltenham railway station at a site near Stroud Street will be available for use?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have no knowledge of the matter but I will see that the honourable member gets a written reply.

ANZAC DAY TRAVEL CONCESSIONS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question relates to the rail concession granted to country public servants who are ex-servicemen. The matter has been raised by country affiliated bodies where ex-servicemen desire to reach Adelaide on the day before Anzac Day in order to attend reunions. It is suggested that in such cases an extra day's leave be granted. Where the facilities are available the practice has been to provide free rail warrants, but there are one or two places, particularly Whyalla, where it is impossible to travel all the way by rail: first there must be some bus travel. In such cases it is suggested that free bus travel could be provided. The amount provided on the Estimates last year for this purpose was under-spent by about 50 per cent. Could an additional day's leave be granted in special cases and could free travel be provided where it is not possible to travel all the way by rail?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The matter of special leave would have to be examined. In some remote places provision has been made to assist in this way, if not in connection with Anzac Day then in connection with other special days. I will advise the honourable member the position in due course. Because of the position of State finances I do not think we can accept the additional commitments suggested. There has been a general concession in connection with the railways but to some extent that is an internal arrangement and does not involve the payment of cash to an outside authority. I believe some steamship companies and private bus owners have also granted travel concessions. I would not favour increasing the concession, which has existed for many years and is not ungenerous.

RAILWAY SIGNALLING SYSTEM.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In view of the information given regarding the revised timetable on the Adelaide-Woodville and Adelaide-Commercial Road lines, and the proposal to introduce an interlocking signalling system, and because of the hardship imposed on certain men in the locomotive branch through being punished following on certain accidents, will the Minister of Works take up with the Minister of Railways the matter of these men being reinstated in their former status, especially as

no accidents have occurred on the lines since the revision of the timetable?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up the matter with the Minister of Railways and let the honourable member have a written reply.

NEW UNLEY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Can the Minister of Education indicate the progress being made on the new Unley Girls High School?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I told the honourable member last week that I had inspected the school about a fortnight ago and found that it would not be ready for occupation at the commencement of the new school year. Yesterday I was informed that great progress had been made on the work but the school is still not ready for occupation. I have not come to a final decision on when it will be opened. The only decision I have made is that I will not open this and other schools until they are actually ready for occupation.

POLICE OFFICERS' ALLOWANCES.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Premier a further reply to my recent question concerning allowances payable to police officers for use of their motor vehicles, particularly in the Kingoonya and Tareoola districts?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That matter involves a department other than the Treasury and I have not yet received a report. I will advise the honourable member by letter immediately it comes to hand.

POLICE OFFICERS FOR ELIZABETH.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Premier a reply to my question of Thursday last concerning the stationing of a resident police officer at Elizabeth?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Commissioner of Police reports:—

The Housing Trust has allotted a site in the civic centre of Elizabeth for a police station and courthouse. I understand that the Architect-in-Chief is now preparing the sketch plans which should be available at the latest next week. Two police members reside in Elizabeth, one at 46 Bubner Street, Elizabeth South, and the other at 5 Hogarth Road, Elizabeth South, and approval has been given for a telephone to be installed at the latter address.

"GOOD CITIZEN" COURSE.

Mr. TAPPING—This week's press reports that the Woodville Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Education that a *Good Citizen* course be added to the existing

school curriculum. In view of the high standard of tuition in primary schools does the Minister consider it necessary to adopt such a proposal?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I read with interest the press report, but I do not believe it necessary to act on the suggestion. Many groups of well-meaning people seem to consider that the panacea for all social ills is for the Education Department to include further subjects in an already over-crowded curriculum. The courses of instruction at primary schools, from grade III onwards, contain the compulsory subject of Social Studies, which includes such subject matters as pride in self, courtesy, neatness, reliability, punctuality, good conduct in public, care of public property, health and safety. In the high grades the tuition in this subject is more elaborate. That is a compulsory subject in all grades in primary schools from grade III onwards. There is also a more advanced subject taught in the secondary schools, although there it is optional. The course in Social Studies at secondary schools is designed to give an insight into the society in which the child lives and to equip him to take his proper place in it. Emphasis is therefore placed not only upon the privileges which a member of society enjoys, but also on the duties he owes to that society. The key to social studies is social relationships. Of 28,795 entries for subjects taken at the 1956 Intermediate Examination by secondary school students only 456 were for Social Studies. There were 4,602 candidates for English literature; 2,884 for mathematics; 2,016 for geography; 1,512 for bookkeeping; and 1,171 for typewriting. Of course, many students sat for other subjects. Social studies is a comprehensive subject which may be taken by any boy or girl in our high schools, but it is not taken by many. I think that is because the school curriculum is already overcrowded and because far too many people want to include still further subjects, but there is a limit to the variety of subjects that teachers can teach in a day and to what immature minds can absorb. In this competitive era parents are concerned that their children should qualify for some walk in life. It seems that we are endeavouring to place too much responsibility on the schools and teachers and not enough on parents, who really have the main responsibility for the upbringing of their children.

Mr. LOVEDAY—People with experience of this subject believe that Social Studies is not encouraged in some secondary schools by the

teaching staff. Parents are unaware of the opportunities arising from social studies. Employers in their estimate of a student's capabilities do not regard it as a serious subject and it is not regarded as a serious or important subject either in the Intermediate or the Leaving examinations. Will the Minister examine the whole question with a view to ascertaining what steps can be taken to ensure that Social Studies are regarded as of greater importance?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The honourable member has given an excellent summary of the position. Even if the resolution passed by the Woodville Council and the publicity given to it served no other purpose than to focus public attention on the matter it was well worth while. I repeat that an absurdly low number of school children are taking the subject. I have not been informed, except by the honourable member, that they are not encouraged by some teachers. As the matter has been raised by members, the Woodville Council and the press I shall be pleased to investigate it thoroughly. This morning I have had a long discussion with the Director of Education and his deputy, but I intend to pursue the matter not so much because the Woodville Council brought it up as because it needs further investigation.

AREA SCHOOL FOR GLENCOE WEST.

Mr. CORCORAN—I know the Minister of Education has been approached about the construction of an area school at Glencoe West. Can he indicate the prospects of its establishment?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I made inquiries into this matter before I visited Mount Gambier last year to open the primary school there. The Deputy Director of Education investigated the question on the spot and made a comprehensive report to me. I have also been investigating the extension of technical education in the Mount Gambier district and have weighed the pros and cons of two proposals. However, I have received protests from some people against the proposal to establish an area school. I am still considering the matter and shall be pleased to discuss it with the honourable member.

ACOUSTICS OF ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.

Mr. FLETCHER—Whether the acoustics of this Chamber have gone back or I have gone back I do not know, but it is very hard to hear many members, especially those sitting on the front benches. When I have been sitting in

the Speaker's Gallery I found it hard to hear there too. Can you, Mr. Speaker, give the reason for the bad acoustics in this Chamber?

The SPEAKER—Complaints were made about the acoustics of this Chamber some years ago, and I understand they were investigated by experts three or four years ago, but their opinion was that the maximum that could be done to improve the acoustics had been done. I understand, too, that they considered it would be impossible to achieve perfection because of the architecture of the Chamber. However, I shall be pleased to ask the experts to make a further examination, but it will be impossible for them to say whether the honourable member, or any other member, has gone back.

PORT AUGUSTA HOSPITAL.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked yesterday about additions to the maternity section of the Port Augusta Hospital?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—No, and I point out to members that when I have to take up a question with another Minister it has to go through the usual channels and then the Minister has to contact his officers. Therefore, it may take a few days to get a reply, but if the reply to the honourable member's question does not reach me before the House prorogues, I will see that he gets it soon after by letter.

SHIPPING FREIGHT RATES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has it been brought to the Premier's notice that in addition to the proposed onerous increases in overseas shipping freight rates there have also been substantial increases in freight rates between Australian ports? In one instance I understand the necessity for an increase in the rates between two Australian ports was attributed to the Suez Canal dispute. I believe the Commonwealth Government has the power to protect Australian shippers from any unfair or undue increase in shipping rates. Can the Premier say whether this matter was discussed with the Minister for Shipping and Transport (Senator Paltridge) when he was in South Australia recently, and whether he has made any representations to the Commonwealth Government that this matter be investigated?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There are two types of shipping in which we are interested—those plying purely intrastate and those that ply beyond South Australian waters and frequently overseas. The Government is

deeply concerned that there has been progressively a lessening in the number of ships serving our coastal ports—particularly on Eyre Peninsula—together with a lessening in the number of ports served. One ship after another has been removed from a run because they have not been profitable. There is keen competition from road transport and the Government has not taken any action on shipping freight rates because it believes it may further depress the profits or increase the losses of the companies and only aggravate the present position.

With regard to overseas shipping the Government has not made any representations to the Commonwealth. The matter has been discussed on the highest level between the Commonwealth Government and the Opposition, exporters, primary producers and shipping companies. We are naturally concerned with what appear to be unjustifiable increases, but we have not sufficient information to enable us to make representations to the Commonwealth Government. I believe the Commonwealth has the power to undertake necessary investigations. This is largely a Federal matter.

DEWATERING SWAMP AT WOODS POINT.

Mr. JENKINS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked last week concerning the dewatering of a private swamp at Woods Point? I pointed out that three lengths of 24in. concrete delivery pipe had collapsed and were beyond repair by the settlers?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The effect of a rather lengthy report I have received is that the break in the pipeline is on the high ground near the pumping station, where where the pipeline crosses the back channel. Four pipes have slipped out of their joints and reinstatement is not a complicated or costly job, and is within the capacity of the settlers. The resident engineer (Mr. Kinnear) would be available to advise the settlers and the department could supply at cost materials for effecting repairs, namely, secondhand timber and concrete collars for the pipes. It is not the Government's responsibility to undertake the repairs, but we will do our best to ensure that they are carried out cheaply and expeditiously.

FORBES INFANT SCHOOL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Minister of Education indicate what progress has been made in connection with calling for tenders for the infant school at Forbes?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have been advised that tenders will be called within the next three months. I am sorry that they will not be called for sooner because this is the largest primary school in the State, with enrolments totalling about 1,650.

Mr. John Clark—That is too many.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Far too many, and the time is overdue when part of that school should be consolidated into a solid construction permanent school. I assure the honourable member and others that it is absolutely impossible to cope with all the demands of schools within a desirable time.

WANDILLO-GLENCOE RAILWAY LINE.

Mr. CORCORAN—Can the Premier indicate the possible fate of the Wandillo-Glencoe narrow gauge railway line? Is it likely to be closed or broadened like the Millicent-Beachport line?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Glencoe and Beachport lines were included in the original agreement for standardization but since then the Commonwealth has indicated that it will not make money available for the purpose. The last information I had on the matter was that an investigation was being made into the question of closing the line.

CROCKER WELL URANIUM FIELD.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say whether further favourable developments have taken place at the Crocker Well uranium field? Have further reserves of ore been proved and what progress has been made in the negotiations for the opening of the field as a mining proposition?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government investigated whether Crocker Well was an economic prospect on today's prices of uranium. Inquiries were made into a number of propositions, one of which was that the whole of the area where the ore was known to exist should be taken into account as a big open-cut proposition. That included high-grade and low-grade ores and envisaged the establishment of a plant to concentrate the ores at Crocker Well, carting concentrates to the railway, and their treatment at the Port Pirie chemical works. The second proposition was to take out the high-grade ore, transport it to Radium Hill, concentrate it there, and treat it at the Port Pirie works. That would be an economic proposition, and the costs of producing uranium under those circumstances would be well within today's international selling price, but it would be

limited in its extent because it would mean picking the eyes out of the field. The Government considers that, although it is a marginal case, the large project should be proceeded with and negotiations are proceeding to sell this material overseas, although whether those negotiations are favourable may take a few weeks to ascertain. The large project would have a beneficial effect on the chemical treatment plant at Port Pirie. In the meantime, the Government has authorized the expenditure of £8,500 on the construction of a deep shaft in the Crocker Well area to enable more information to be ascertained on the nature of the ore at a greater depth.

MURRAY RIVER LEVELS.

Mr. BYWATERS—Last week I asked the Minister of Lands a question concerning the possibility of dropping the pool level in the lower Murray, and I now ask him whether it would be practicable to drop the river further to assist in draining the water naturally instead of its being pumped off the swamps?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member informed me he would require further information on this subject, and I have now received it. Representations have been made by a number of irrigators around the shores of the lakes and lake inlets for the lake level to be kept up to the normal controlled level of R.L. 109.50 to facilitate their pumping operations. These irrigators have been informed that to lower the cost of rehabilitating the reclaimed areas an attempt will be made to keep the level a foot below normal, *i.e.*, at R.L. 108.50 and that they should arrange their pumping facilities to cope with this. Huge tides may cause a rise above this level on occasions. It would be impossible to keep the level two feet below normal, *i.e.* at R.L. 107.50 as requested by private swamp owners. During March and April last year the tide rose above R.L. 107.50 on 105 occasions and during the latter half of April the sea level did not fall below this height. Each week the maximum was above R.L. 108.50 and on two occasions it rose above R.L. 110.00. This means that even if the River level above the barrages is kept at R.L. 108.50, salt water will enter the river on occasions although it is hoped that this will pass out through the barrages on the falling tide before it penetrates sufficiently to cause any damage or serious inconvenience.

IRON ORE DEPOSITS.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Premier any further information on the results of investigations by the Mines Department into the

iron ore deposits near Iron Knob and the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla, and does he intend to visit the site of drilling operations near Iron Knob soon with a view to seeing what progress is being made by the Mines Department there?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Recently the Government authorized the extension of the investigations by the Mines Department to an area adjacent to the Iron Knight deposit. At present the Government has authorized two boring plants to operate in that area and geologists report that good prospects exist of a substantial ore deposit being discovered there in country not at present covered by leases. Investigations north of Iron Knob are continuing satisfactorily and the reserves are about 20,000,000 tons of good grade ore. Work is also continuing in that area. Some negotiations have been continuing with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company on the work undertaken by the company for the purpose of seeing whether the taconite type of ore can be used, and those negotiations are almost concluded. Of its own volition the company decided to establish a substantial laboratory either at Iron Knob or Whyalla to undertake this work, and at least two officers of the Government will be engaged on it. They will be attached to the establishment and work on behalf of the Government in co-operation with officers of the B.H.P. Company. About two weeks ago I asked Mr. Barnes (Director of Mines) to draw up my itinerary for an investigation of the work in the Middleback Ranges, and I propose to spend several days in that area at a convenient period after the House prorogues.

SANDY CREEK RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. LAUCKE—At present passengers alighting from trains using the middle line at the Sandy Creek railway station must clamber on to the platform as best they can, as no provision has been made for steps. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways have the position investigated with a view to having a ramp or steps installed?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes.

GAS FROM BROWN COAL.

Mr. BYWATERS—I have a copy of the *Planning Bulletin* issued by the Central Planning Authority, Melbourne, relating to the gasification of brown coal. I understand from the bulletin that the Lurgi high pressure process now operates and that gas produced from

brown coal is being piped from Morwell to Melbourne, and later will be pumped to various country centres.

I have also looked through *Hansard* and found that some years ago when German scientists were in the State questions were asked in the House by the member for Stuart and the then member for Murray (Mr. McKenzie) about the Moorlands and Leigh Creek coalfields. They asked whether this process would be possible there. The Premier referred to the scheme at Morwell, and I ask him whether he has further considered the possibility of Moorlands coal being used for providing gas to the metropolitan area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government spent tens of thousands of pounds in investigating the possibility of opening up the Moorlands coalfield. It obtained expert evidence and advice from overseas, but they were unfavourable and showed that the coalfield could not be developed economically. The overhead would be substantial, the tonnages of coal are limited, and the moisture content is high. Practically 60 per cent of it is non-combustible and the field has a high overburden. The reports were completely adverse to further work on the field.

HAMPSTEAD ROAD REPAIRS.

Mr. JENNINGS—Will the Minister of Works take up with the Minister of Roads the question of reconstructing Hampstead Road from Rakes Road to Grand Junction Road? I made some comments during the Address in Reply debate about this road and I have always understood that members' remarks in that debate are referred to departmental officers, but I have not had a reply. This question is becoming more serious because population and traffic are increasing and the road has deteriorated as a result. When will the Highways Department reconstruct the road to which I have referred?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up the question with my colleague.

PORT AT MURRAY MOUTH.

Mr. BYWATERS—On May 10 last I asked the Premier whether he had seen an article in the *Advertiser* on the possibility of the establishment of a port at the Murray mouth, and he promised he would investigate the matter. Has he anything further to report?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I looked up all the information that could be obtained on this question and find that it

received much attention in the early days of the State before the Murray had been tapped at various places by railway systems. The establishment of a port at the Murray mouth would be extremely costly and shipping authorities informed me that it would not be used to any extent and would not be justified. The engineering problems would be great and a satisfactory port would probably cost about £15,000,000; therefore, I cannot give the honourable member any hope that the project will proceed.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE AND VISITING MAGISTRATES.

Mr. TAPPING—On behalf of and at the request of Mr. Lawn I ask the Premier whether he has a further reply to the question asked by Mr. Lawn last week about the appointment of Justices of the Peace and visitors to the Adelaide Gaol and Yatala Labour Prison.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the Sheriff and Comptroller of Prisons:—

The *Government Gazette* of January 17, 1957, refers to the appointment of Mr. Stanley Holm Watson as a Justice of the Peace also a visiting Justice to the Yatala Labour Prison pursuant to the Prisons Act, 1936-1956. Mr. Watson submitted an application on November 5, 1956, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. J. E. Noblet, J.P., on 9th October, 1956. There was one other applicant. I understand that Mr. Noblet up until his death on 9th October, 1956, was a member of the Justices Association. This association did not make any representations.

It has not at any time been the practice of this department to consult the Justices Association or any other organization or advertise when a vacancy for a visiting justice has occurred. Mr. Watson was formerly General Traffic Manager in the South Australian Railways. He retired in 1952. He had a distinguished military record during World War I. He was twice mentioned in despatches, received the Serbian Order of the White Eagle, the Military Cross and Distinguished Service Order. Mr. Watson is a Commissioner of the South Australian Harbors Board and a member of the M.T.T. He has had considerable administrative experience and is admirably suited to carry out the duties of visiting justices.

My recommendation to Cabinet for the appointment of Mr. Watson was not made until such time as a full investigation was made. The report submitted by me is contained in S.G.P. Docket 559/56. Mr. Watson was advised of his appointment and I forwarded to him a complete set of the Prisons Act and Prison Regulations with amendments. I have not coached Mr. Watson and I will not attempt to do so. He is quite competent to interpret the Prisons Act and Regulations.

RAILWAY CARTAGE OF WATER.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. Is water being carted at present from Burra to Terowie for railway purposes?

2. If so, during what period has this been necessary in the past two years?

3. What has been the cost during this period?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have to ask tolerance of the honourable member because I cannot give a reply now. Questions 1 and 2 can be easily answered, but I do not know whether question No. 3 refers to the physical carting of the water or whether it includes overhead. The question has been referred back to the Railways Commissioner and as soon as I get the reply I shall let the honourable member know. I take it that he wants to know the actual net cost?

Mr. O'Halloran—Yes.

LANDLORD AND TENANT BILL:

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I regret that yesterday afternoon I inadvertently deprived the member for Stuart (Mr. Riches) of a pair in a division on the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act Amendment Bill. The honourable member was temporarily out of the House and I was not aware of that until the bells were actually ringing. I realize now that I should have granted him a pair, which I would gladly have done and which would have shown that he supported the clause as printed.

MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from February 5. Page 1586.)

Clause 4—"Age of Marriage."

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I move—

After subsection (1) to insert the following subsections:—

(2) Where two persons are incapable of contracting a valid marriage by reason only that one or both of them is or are under the age or ages mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, the Minister may, on the application of those persons, and if he is satisfied that it is desirable that they should marry, order that subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to a marriage contracted between them. Every such order shall be effective as soon as it is made, and a copy shall be forwarded to the Principal Registrar. The Principal

Registrar shall cause a memorandum of the order to be entered on the marriage certificates in the general and in the appropriate district register of marriages and in any copy of or extract from any such certificate issued under this Act.

(3) Subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to a marriage contracted between persons in whose favour an order has been made under subsection (2) of this section.

(4) Nothing in this section shall affect any requirement as to the consent of parents or guardians under section 26 of this Act.

Members will appreciate that I have slightly altered the amendment I had on the files. The effect has been simply to dispense with the necessity for publishing the order in the *Government Gazette*, but in order that some evidence of it may be available in case it is called into question at any subsequent time, a record will be preserved in the appropriate district register. Generally, the amendment allows of a discretion resting with the Minister who administers the Act to permit a marriage where either party is under the prescribed ages if satisfied that it is desirable. I had originally proposed that a special magistrate should exercise the discretion, but I believe it would be more acceptable to a greater number of members if it rested with the Chief Secretary.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Mr. Millhouse has not improved his amendment by substituting the Chief Secretary for a special magistrate. A special magistrate would be used in dealing with matters of this nature. He is in close contact with this type of work and he would be far better to judge whether a couple should marry. A decision would not be easy to make and he would need to go into detail. A Minister, with all his other duties, could not possibly secure a grasp of all the details involved in such an intricate question. I cannot vote for the amendment. I would have supported it as originally framed.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I point out that at the present time the Chief Secretary has the discretion in the case of minors—persons under 21 years of age. I agree that a special magistrate—particularly if he has adjudicated in a juvenile court—would be well experienced in this matter; but the Chief Secretary has exercised a discretion in respect of minors for a number of years and is not unfamiliar with the questions that would arise.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government is loth to accept any amendment. During the debate a number of members indicated that they would prefer to have individual cases decided upon their merits. The

Government has considered the views expressed. The amendment is a distinct improvement on that which had previously been canvassed. The Parliamentary Draftsman advised me that under the original amendment the cases members wanted considered could not have been considered because of the wording. It was to apply only to "special cases." There was no definition of "special cases," and consequently the amendment would not have been effective. Under the consent provisions which were in the original amendment it was necessary to secure the consent of all legally constituted parties—the parents if they existed, or, if not, other legally constituted persons—before any marriage could take place. Usually the person who makes the investigation is the Minister. Under other legislation he alone can approve the marriage of a minor if the parents are not available to give their consent. I also think that the private affairs of these people should not be made public in a court before a magistrate. For 20 years in Tasmania permissions to marry have been granted without any publicity and I have not heard any complaints about the decisions made. The earlier print of the amendment stated that details of the special permissions should be published in the *Government Gazette*. I am pleased that that has been deleted. If the information were placed in the *Gazette* it would immediately be assumed that the marriages had to take place. A proper examination of the position should be made by a competent authority and when permission is granted it should be registered so that there can be no charge of invalidity. The Tasmanian Government went back to the established authority in connection with the granting of special permissions.

Mr. O'Halloran—When?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Reports on my file are to that effect.

Mr. O'Halloran—It is not on my file.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will be surprised if my information is not correct. The South Australian Government considered this matter fully before it introduced the legislation and it was loth to break down the general principles of the Act, but as members on this side and opposite have said that they desire the right of appeal I accept the amendment.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I said earlier that this was a difficult measure to discuss and now, after the confusion created by Mr. Millhouse's first, second and third amendments, and his proposed amendment to his third

amendment, I go back to my first feeling that we should not intrude in this matter; but for the reasons I gave in the second reading debate I decided to support the Bill. When Mr. Millhouse's first amendment placed the responsibility on the Chief Secretary I intended to move to amend it to coincide with my views. I favoured the Tasmanian position. My secretary looked up the Tasmanian position and the following are his notes in regard to section 18 of that State's legislation:—

1. No marriage shall be celebrated if either of the intending parties thereto is under the age of 18 in the case of males or 16 in the case of females.

2. If, after such inquiry as he thinks necessary, the Registrar-General or a police magistrate is satisfied that for some special reason it is desirable, he may make an order dispensing with the requirements of subsection (1) hereof.

3. An order made under subsection (2) hereof shall be in the prescribed form and shall be registered at the office of the Registrar-General.

This may not be an exact copy of the provisions of the Act. I understand the legislation there has been in operation since 1942, and unless there have been recent happenings no complaints have been made about the exercise of the discretion. The information secured by my secretary came from the Parliamentary Library and it could be that an amendment of the Tasmanian legislation has not yet reached the library. In any event, if the Tasmanian law has been changed recently I should like to know the reasons for it. If there has been no change I see no reason why we should depart from a practice that has met the test for about 14 years. I do not intend that, if these cases are to be determined by a magistrate, they should be determined in open court and evidence presented for I believe that some discretionary power should be provided at a private hearing. Indeed, I was prepared to support a discretionary clause on the lines of the Tasmanian provision that would give the right to the magistrate or the registrar to waive the conditions in certain cases. Surely no-one would suggest that discretion should be exercised after an inquiry in open court. I have some doubt about permitting an unrestricted right to be granted.

The principal factor that impelled my support of this measure was that the present law enabled a seducer to escape the consequences of his action by marrying the girl and, in all too many cases, promptly deserting her. Of course, that applies more to the seducer of

mature years and not to young persons who make mistakes in the ordinary course of their associations. Under the clause, however, the seducer may still escape, and he should not be permitted to do so. I do not think the second highest executive officer of the Government should be called on to decide these issues, for I foresee that members of Parliament may be importuned by their constituents to see the Chief Secretary and get the matter fixed up. Surely that is not desirable. The discretion should be taken away from the Chief Secretary and given to a magistrate who, in chambers as the result of a private hearing, could allow the dispensation sought under this clause. More time should be given to consider the provision than has been given this afternoon, but if the member for Mitcham persists with this amendment I will vote against it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no direct knowledge of the Tasmanian legislation, but when amendments by the member for Mitcham were placed on the files the Government obtained a report on them. The Principal Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, states:—

Because I have not dealt with cases of marriage of minors where the parents have consented, it is possible that such cases as I have outlined in the previous paragraph may exist to a considerable extent. Despite all the uncertainty which is involved I think that cases could exist where permission to contract a valid marriage may be given. I suggest that a simple provision be incorporated giving a right of appeal, and that the resulting experience be carefully watched over a period of 10 or 15 years and that the position be then reviewed. I agree with Mr. Millhouse, however, that the right of appeal should be given only where the parents of both the boy and the girl, or in general of those persons who are required and available to consent, will consent to the marriage if an appeal is successful. If the parents indicate that they would not consent, there should be no right of appeal on the grounds that their attitude is unreasonable. Where there is no person to give consent, the procedure of Mr. Millhouse would seem to imply that the Chief Secretary should indicate whether he would be prepared to consent before an appeal is made. That seems cumbersome, and I suggest that a simple provision similar to that in Tasmania should be adopted, giving the right of decision to the Chief Secretary in similar manner to the present procedure with regard to the marriage of minors. In spite of the administrative difficulties, I think such an appeal should be given.

That report is the basis on which I am prepared to accept this amendment, although it is a duty the Minister would not look for. One disadvantage associated with the decisions

of magistrates is that one magistrate may decide a certain way this week and a second magistrate another way next week.

Mr. John Clark—That may apply equally to judges.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, but the amendment provides for a recommendation from the Principal Registrar in every case, and that would tend toward cohesion and consistency.

Mr. Shannon—It need not be consistent if there is a change of Minister.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Principal Registrar must report on all cases. He is a public servant who has been in office for 20 years, so there would be some consistency in his decisions.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The provision I quoted is the exact provision of the Tasmanian Act, so I am confirmed in my opposition to the Chief Secretary having this onerous duty thrust upon him. There is much merit in the Tasmanian provision, particularly because in South Australia many people reside a long way from the Chief Secretary's office, but police magistrates visit country areas and could consider cases there.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I move the following amendment to Mr. Millhouse's amendment—

After proposed subsection (2) to insert the following subsection:—

(2a) If, on an application under subsection (2) of this section, the Minister is satisfied that the girl is pregnant by her proposed husband, or has given birth to a child of which her proposed husband is the father, the Minister shall make the order applied for.

This amendment should meet most members' objections. I have carefully considered this Bill since it was debated about three months ago, and I am just as perturbed as I was then. I would prefer to see it thrown out and then the Government could bring down something more acceptable. Yesterday Mr. Shannon said that under the Landlord and Tenant Bill we were legislating to satisfy the great majority to the detriment of the few, but if there is any Bill that does that it is this one. I do not think one-tenth of one per cent of marriages will be affected by it. We already have reasonable safeguards, and most members believe that the interests of the child are paramount. I want a guarantee that the child will be legitimated or accepted by the community.

Mr. Jenkins—In many cases he would be better off if he were adopted.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Yes, but I am thinking of the child that remains with the unmarried

mother. I ask the Committee to deal specifically with the welfare of the child. If the parents sin let them pay. When two young people want to get married they must give their ages to the Registrar, but if they were not born in this State he cannot check them, so that will have to be considered if we pass this Bill. Again, South Australia will be the only mainland State with this prohibition on the marriage of very young people, so we may be setting up a potential Gretna Green at Kaniva. Those who could afford it would have no difficulty in marrying. Members opposite profess to legislate for the poor, but if this legislation becomes law those who can afford to go to another State and reside for a period will be able to marry, whereas those who cannot afford to leave their employment will be prevented from doing so. Members frequently refer to statistics, but no statistics have been brought forward to prove the necessity for this legislation. We were told that 40,000 women asked for it, but there are 800,000 people in this State. Are we going to be influenced by a mere 40,000? We have been told what happens in other countries, but surely members would not desire marriages in Australia to take place as in other countries. In some countries people are married much younger than our minimum age. It is futile to make comparisons.

I do not agree that Tasmania leads Australia in social legislation. I am not convinced that the conditions in this State are inferior to those in Tasmania and that our social problems are greater. Tasmania has certain restrictions, but I do not want to oppress our people by introducing further restrictions. Apparently the Government is not happy with the Bill. The Premier said he does not know whether the Chief Secretary will accept it.

The CHAIRMAN—Will the honourable member confine his remarks to this subsection?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Yes. I have the greatest admiration for the Chief Secretary, but he is 60 years of age and cannot last for ever. There will be changes in that office and we do not know how this discretionary power would be exercised. The Leader of the Opposition said we must protect girls. It has been said that only good girls have babies and that bad girls can look after themselves. There is much truth in that. If the Bill is passed what will happen to the unmarried mothers? They may have to seek another alliance if the man who intended to marry them no longer wishes to do so. Are they to be left to the tender

mercies of the world? My amendment will give parents the right to decide whether their daughter who has had a baby or is pregnant should marry, and that is as it should be.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I indicated that I would support the amendment foreshadowed by Mr. Millhouse. He proposed that a special magistrate should determine whether a marriage should be permitted. I regret that he did not adhere to that proposal. The Chief Secretary, whom he now proposes should exercise the discretion, is the occupant of a public office, and Ministers come and go. I believe that a special magistrate is best equipped to conduct a thorough inquiry before making a decision. Mr. Millhouse's amendment places too much responsibility on the Minister.

Mr. CUMBE—I oppose Mr. Hambour's amendment and support the one moved by Mr. Millhouse. Mr. Hambour's would wreck the Bill. I accept the views of the organizations that have sponsored the measure. Generally speaking, members support a discretionary power but are divided on who shall have it. Originally the Bill interfered with certain fundamental liberty rights, but Mr. Millhouse's amendment reduces that proposal because it gives a discretionary power and that is why I support it. A court atmosphere is likely to cause the dissolution of a marriage. Such an atmosphere would nullify the purposes of the Bill. The magistrate would be able to give a decision only on evidence submitted to him. Marriages started in a court are likely to finish in a court—the divorce court.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In the second reading debate I said I would favour a discretionary clause, but I thought it would be different from what is now proposed. The Premier has indicated that the discretionary power must be given to the Chief Secretary or to no-one. It is not fair to place such a burden on the Chief Secretary. A discretionary clause is necessary and sooner than have none I will support Mr. Millhouse's proposal. I oppose Mr. Hambour's amendment. In his second reading speech the Premier said:—

It was submitted that the provisions of the Marriage Act prohibiting minors from marrying without parental consent do not protect children adequately. It was argued that where an unmarried girl becomes pregnant the parties are often forced into marriage by their parents, and that such marriages are not usually satisfactory. . . . It also appeared that marriages of young girls were very often entered into to save the reputation of the parties, and in many cases only to save the man from prosecution.

Mr. Hambour's amendment would make the Bill useless. If he were asked he would no doubt say that is the purpose of his proposal.

Mr. DAVIS—I support Mr. Millhouse's amendment but oppose Mr. Hambour's. It is apparent that Mr. Hambour does not understand the legislation because it covers what he seeks. Why should a couple under 18 and 16 years of age want to marry unless the girl is pregnant? Mr. Millhouse wants to give a discretionary power to the Chief Secretary. If it is made mandatory corruption will be possible because some girls are prepared to look to someone to answer for their condition even though they do not know who is responsible for it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Hambour said no cases had been adduced to show the reason for this Bill, but it is not always possible to lay on the table what constitutes people's private affairs. I assure him, however, that I have copies of reports from the women police concerning certain marriages, and if the honourable member reads them he will find that the type of marriage he would make compulsory invariably leads to dire consequences. It has been said this afternoon that this Bill has been introduced without sufficient consideration by the Government, but I point out that the Government not only considered it for a year before introducing it, but held it over since it was introduced in November so that it could be further considered. Indeed, it has received greater consideration than any other Bill I can remember. The organizations supporting the Bill are the Adelaide University Women Graduates' Association, Business and Professional Women's Club, Church of Christ, Civilian Widows' Association, Housewives' Association, League of Women Voters of South Australia, Methodist Church Women's Welfare Department, Salvation Army, Country Women's Association, Medical Women's Association, W.C.T.U. and the Women Justices' Association. Whatever the number of members in those organizations, one must be impressed by the fact that they have over a long period worked to uplift society, and I do not believe they would support legislation such as this, which particularly affects the rights of women, unless they were sincere in that support.

Mr. Shannon—It also affects the rights of men.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It particularly affects the rights of women. The pregnancy of the young wife is given as the reason for the marriage. One case referred to in the report concerns a girl who was married

at 16 years of age. After she had been married 10 weeks her husband brought home a girl friend; he later left the home and is living with that girl friend. Could a woman's position be more hopeless than that? If members oppose the Bill they should vote against it and not try to destroy it by supporting an amendment that completely nullifies it.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I oppose both amendments and am sorry that the Premier has accepted Mr. Millhouse's. The Bill is either right or wrong in principle and the House carried the second reading without a division. True, the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) opposed it, and I believe he moved his amendment merely to defeat its object. I was considerably influenced in my stand by the circular sent to members by the organizations referred to by the Premier. Those people, who have given serious thought to the question, not only recently but over the years, are surely guided by the best motives, and we should be guided by their judgment, also having regard to our own experiences in life generally.

It has been suggested that the boy should be protected, but it is the woman who must carry the baby and surely it is far better for her to carry it for a short period with the assistance of those who can best assist her than be forced to carry a bad husband as well. It is almost impossible to determine in every instance the character of the prospective husband, as would be necessary under the amendment moved by Mr. Millhouse. He might seem an acceptable youth with a good character, but turn out differently later. That is why we should not give this power to the Chief Secretary or anyone else. It was never suggested by the organizations that have sent circulars to members that there should be some escape clause. Unfortunately, most legislation, whether passed by this Parliament or any other, contains an escape clause. That is the only term I can apply to Mr. Millhouse's amendment. According to rumours, the Chief Secretary is prepared to accept the responsibility proposed, but I think adequate safeguards were provided in the Bill as originally drafted.

Mr. SHANNON—Mr. Fred Walsh evidently thinks we should accept the wishes of certain responsible organizations outside this Chamber. The Bill fixes the minimum marrying age of females at 16 and of males at 18, and the Premier quoted the opinions of outside authorities in justification of the measure, but we ourselves must decide what the law will be. This

afternoon the Premier quoted the case of a girl married at 16 who later had an unhappy experience because her husband brought home a girl friend, but that could happen under the Bill. He also said that the decisions of magistrates on whether young people should marry could vary, but I point out that the opinions of Ministers could vary. I believe that their opinions would vary even more than those of special magistrates trained in our juvenile courts who regularly deal with just such people as will be concerned under the amendment. I feel that there is something underlying this suggested amendment to Mr. Millhouse's amendment. It was facetiously suggested by the Opposition that the Chief Secretary might not desire the obligation of determining whether a person should be permitted to marry. Who suggested to Mr. Millhouse that he place the discretionary power with the Minister instead of with a special magistrate? Who suggested that if he wanted his amendment carried he should do that? If the Chief Secretary wants the right to say whether or not a person should marry there must be some reason for it. I am not particularly happy about what has happened. This Bill has come to the top and slipped to the bottom of the Notice Paper with such regularity that I am suspicious.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to Tasmania, which has had 14 years' experience of this type of provision. If 14 years does not prove whether or not it will work it is a poor show. I have some confidence in legislation that works. I know that when we enter new fields we must feel our way and we cannot always be right, but in this case we have Tasmania's experience to guide us. I point out that there are such things as absences of Ministers. The Chief Secretary will be going overseas soon and an Acting Chief Secretary will be appointed. Will they have similar views on this subject? It is most unlikely. Such differences of opinion have been expressed during this debate that I doubt whether any two members have identical opinions. I think Mr. Millhouse would realize from his legal training that a man with some experience of these particular problems would be the best person to determine the issues. A Minister of the Crown would have no opportunity of gaining experience of the seamy side of life, which is what this provision deals with.

Mr. Hambour—Not always.

Mr. SHANNON—It does mainly. It will only be after a searching inquiry into the background of the proposed contractors to a mar-

riage that the correct decision can be made. Much has been said about protecting the female in this matter, but the female is not always the aggrieved party. There are female seducers: they appear before the courts from time to time. That is one reason why I feel so strongly that if we are going to provide this let-out we should ensure that an unskilled person does not decide the issue. I realize that different appointees occupy the position of magistrate of the Juvenile Court, but they are carefully selected, and fully equipped to handle this problem. Such magistrate should be the person appointed. I strongly recommend Mr. Millhouse to revert to his second idea on the matter and and insert "special magistrate" instead of "Minister."

Mr. JENNINGS—Earlier I supported the Bill in its entirety and and agreed that there should be a discretionary clause, for there is always a case that is different. Hard luck cases make bad laws and if we can legislate for the general position by providing a discretionary clause to deal with unique cases so much the better. I thought Mr. Millhouse had provided for that but the position is different now. I do not know whether he will again change his amendment but if he does I hope he will go back to his earlier thought on the matter. Generally a Minister should be answerable to Parliament when he has the final say, but here the position is different for he has to decide whether or not young people should be married. The Minister should not have that power. I oppose both amendments.

Mr. Hambour's amendment to Mr. Millhouse's amendment negatived.

Mr. RICHES—I would like to know exactly what Mr. Millhouse proposes.

Mr. Millhouse—The proposal is for the Chief Secretary to have the discretionary power.

Mr. RICHES—The proper person to have it is a magistrate in the Children's Court. If necessary I will move to amend Mr. Millhouse's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN—Standing Order No. 421 says:—

No amendment shall be proposed in any part of the question after a later part has been amended, or has been proposed to be amended, unless the proposed amendment has been, by leave of the Committee, withdrawn by the mover.

The proposed amendment has not been withdrawn, so the honourable member cannot move as suggested.

New subsections (2), (3) and (4) inserted; clause as amended passed.

Title passed. Bill read a third time and passed.

[Sitting suspended from 5.32 to 7.45 p.m.]

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following amendments:—

No. 1. Page 2, Line 11 (clause 3)—After “months” insert “after the time the lessee delivers up possession.”

No. 2. Page 2, Lines 15 and 16 (Clause 3)—Leave out “after the time the lessee delivers up possession.”

Consideration in Committee.

Amendment No. 1.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—In some instances under the amendment the period allowed for selling may be shorter than the six months for which notice has to be given to vacate a house, and in other instances it may be slightly longer, but probably the amendment is an improvement because it fixes a definite time from which the three months shall operate. It was not clear previously whether the period was three months from the time the notice expired or from the time the lessee relinquished occupation. I move that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment No. 2.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This is a consequential amendment and I move that it be accepted.

Amendment agreed to.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

CENTENARY OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—As Parliament will prorogue tonight I desire to inform members that to commemorate the centenary of responsible government in this State it is proposed to hold a special one-day session in April. I have not yet been able to fix the precise date with our principal guest, but it will probably be April 23 or 24. It is proposed to have a number of functions in connection with the occasion and we shall invite guests from other States. It is hoped that the mace will be presented to this House by a distinguished guest who will be asked to come to this State for that purpose. I understand that responsible government commenced in South Australia on the fourth Wednesday of April, so if the special sitting happens to be on April 24 it will take place exactly 100 years after the inauguration of responsible government.

Sitting suspended from 7.56 p.m. to 8.14 p.m.

PROROGATION.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) moved—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until March 5, 1957.

At 8.15 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 5, at 2 p.m.