

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Tuesday, June 25, 1957.

The House met at 12 noon pursuant to proclamation, the Speaker (Hon. B. H. Teusner) presiding.

The Clerk (Mr. G. D. Combe) read the proclamation summoning Parliament.

After prayers read by the Speaker, honourable members, in compliance with summons, proceeded at 12.08 p.m. to the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Governor's Speech. They returned to the Assembly Chamber at 12.46 p.m. and the Speaker resumed the Chair.

**NEXT DAY OF SITTING.**

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, June 26, at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

**GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.**

The SPEAKER—I have to report that, in compliance with a summons from His Excellency the Governor, the House attended in the Legislative Chamber where His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which Speech I have obtained a copy which I now lay upon the table.

Ordered to be printed.

[Sitting suspended from 12.52 to 2.15 p.m.]

**SUPPLY BILL (No. 1).**

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House to make provision by Bill for defraying the salaries and other expenses of the several departments and public services of the Government of South Australia during the year ending June 30, 1958.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) having obtained a suspension of Standing Orders 43 and 44, moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The moving of this motion gives members an opportunity to raise questions of immediate importance. I have a matter that deserves special mention. If it had been possible to place information before the Government in the form of a question I would have done that, but some explanation

is needed to adequately cover the matter, which deals with some people in river areas who are in a difficult position following the disastrous floods of last year. During the worst of the flood period I, with other members of this place, visited river districts to learn of the difficulties facing settlers and local councils. I said then I would assist them in any way possible to overcome their difficulties. Recently, in order to see what had been done, I visited the areas and was impressed by the considerable rehabilitation that had taken place in some of the worst affected areas. I was favourably impressed by the spirit of the people. I found that the relief measures, so far as they went, were being administered with reasonable expedition. I heard complaints here and there but none was of sufficient magnitude to merit mention today.

However, the position around Renmark particularly should be placed before the Government. Up to the present it has not been covered by any relief measure adopted by this Parliament. We agreed previously that our first duty was to deal with personal hardship but there was a general understanding that the further problem of rehabilitation would arise. That is what I propose to mention now. I was approached by a number of responsible persons in the Renmark district particularly about some fruitgrowers there who had lost heavily during the floods. Members know that practically all trees in the inundated parts have been destroyed, which necessitates replanting, but that will mean a considerable wait before any revenue is derived. It is pleasing to note that the vines have recovered almost 100 per cent but the return from them will not be sufficient to cover the maintenance costs of the holdings for perhaps the next two years. Some of the producers had losses in other years through frost and other things and consequently have insufficient financial reserves to meet the latest calamity. I was told that about 40 primary producers will have a negligible return from this year's crop and that next year's crop will not be a full one, even under the most favourable circumstances. In order that these producers and their families may maintain themselves they must receive financial assistance, but at present there is no place from which to get it. They have no equity to mortgage in order to get money to carry them over the difficult period.

In New South Wales, where a somewhat similar difficulty arose but not so great as ours, the Rural Bank made available £36,000

to meet cases such as those I have mentioned. Advances were made to settlers, who had no equity that could be mortgaged, for seven years at an interest rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. This is a matter that should be considered urgently by our Government. The producers do not want a straight-out grant but an advance to enable them to carry on during the difficult period. Would it be possible for our State Bank to make advances similar to those made by the New South Wales Rural Bank in order to assist deserving cases? If, as a result of lack of financial assistance at this critical time, these people were forced off their holdings, which could easily happen in a number of cases brought to my notice, they would become an obligation on the community in two ways. Firstly, the family would have to be rehoused, and secondly, members of the family formerly employed on the blocks would have to be employed somewhere else. If that were to happen, the ultimate economic loss to the State would be much greater than any past financial loss, but I believe these people can be rehabilitated to carry them over their temporary difficulties by advancing them money to be repaid within the period fixed in the loan agreement. I am not adamant on the term of seven years or the rate of interest proposed, but if money is to be advanced it must be advanced either free of interest or at a low rate over the period during which the holdings yield no income. The Government should consider this suggestion and do something practical on these lines.

Mr. KING (Chaffey)—The Leader need have no fear concerning inadequate finance being made available to those persons who qualify for rehabilitation following on the flood. It has been suggested that loans be made without security for an indefinite term at a low rate of interest; but although from the humanitarian point of view that has much to commend it, practical problems arise. Not only is the settler who has been flooded out in great trouble, but if any philanthropic body were to make money available under the terms suggested, what would be the position of the settler regarding his creditors? Some of these settlers are temporarily embarrassed, some need rehabilitating, and some were bankrupt before the flood. I know of persons in each of these categories. If action were taken to rehabilitate some of these people an avaricious creditor, in protecting his interests, might wait until he could realize on his security and the money found for the unfortunate settler would then be lost. In other words, the persons needing the help would be denied it.

Consequently, this is not an easy matter that can be solved by merely saying, "We will make so much money available to put these people on their feet." The machinery for assisting the settlers has been set up: a person needing assistance must apply and state a case to the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund, which is an advisory body; a case is then stated to the State Bank, which in turn refers the matter to the local branch manager, who I presume, interviews the settler and calls a meeting of all the people involved, including the settler and his creditors. I further presume that a scheme of arrangement is drawn up and a decision made on whether the settler can be helped.

Mr. O'Halloran—Would the advance be made at the current rate of interest?

Mr. KING—The State Bank would have to decide that, but I am sure that if cheap money were available the Government would make it available to these settlers. Regarding the other points raised by Mr. O'Halloran, the Government has been quick to help councils. Apart from minor cases, a council that has submitted accounts has been reimbursed up to 100 per cent. by this Government, which is more than can be said for Governments in some other States. Further, this Government, through the agency of the Housing Trust has erected emergency dwellings for displaced settlers.

Mr. O'Halloran referred to the advances made by the Rural Bank of New South Wales, but I remind him that, if that statement is correct, £36,000 is only a small amount considering the number of settlers affected and the magnitude of the average loss suffered by by agriculturalists in that State. Indeed, in this State at Renmark alone I imagine £50,000 would be required to rehabilitate the settlers who have suffered. I suggest that the sum of £36,000 advanced in New South Wales would be available to only a few of the settlers whose financial position would warrant such assistance. Each case for rehabilitation in this State should be considered on its merits, and it is unkind to raise the hopes of any settler by having him believe that he will get a gift of money to rehabilitate himself when the people who propose such a scheme know full well—

Mr. O'Halloran—I did not propose that!

Mr. KING—I referred not to the Leader, but to other people. I for one will use every endeavour to put every affected settler back on his feet, but everybody involved, including creditors, must make a collective effort. If anybody tries to take advantage of the

settlers' plight the scheme will fall to the ground unless a moratorium is provided. The Leader of the Opposition need not worry about employment for the people affected by the flood. Plenty of work is available and I know of no case in my district where anybody has suffered loss of employment because of the flood. This Government has been prompt in anticipating and meeting the needs of settlers and before any complaint is made on this score the Government's provision for the settlers should be thoroughly examined.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—I support my Leader in this matter and believe that either interest-free loans or loans at a low rate should be made to settlers affected by the Murray River floods. Indeed, many times last year I made suggestions to this effect in this House, but unfortunately the Government did not act on them and today many people are either faced with the prospect of leaving their properties or having difficulty in raising loans. As the member for Chaffey (Mr. King) said, the Government has made loans available at current overdraft rates to settlers provided they prove to the chairman of the fund (Sir Kingsley Paine) that they have adequate security and are capable of repaying the loan over a period of eight years. I maintain, however, that many people in the initial stages will find it difficult to meet the instalments at the current rate of interest and I believe it will be better for the Government to make loans only to those people who are in real need, for after all they are the people we are trying to help. Last year I advocated the lending of money to private swamp owners who were finding it difficult to re-establish themselves both by dewatering and by repairing the banks.

This work has been costly, but repeated requests to the Government for financial assistance to these people have proved abortive. They were told that they should approach the committee administering the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund for assistance. They did that, but only a limited amount of assistance can be granted from that fund and only those who qualify through the means test can get assistance from it. Those who have settled in the river areas in the last few years are finding it difficult to re-establish themselves, especially as we have been passing through such a dry period recently and hay has increased in price. I commend the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and trust that the Government will try and assist those people who are, after all, trying to re-establish themselves.

The member for Chaffey said there was plenty of employment available for settlers, but why should they be thrown on the labour market when they have endeavoured to make themselves self-supporting in their own industries? In the interests of the State these people should be encouraged to re-establish themselves because they produce for the home market and for export as well. The member for Chaffey also said that temporary homes had been provided where necessary, but I was the first to suggest this in the House at the time of the flood. These houses were built after a long delay. At Mypolonga three houses have been under construction since last December, and I think the first family will move in this week, provided the electricity is connected, yet the request for temporary houses was made as long ago as September. Many people have suffered privations through being overcrowded. I remind the member for Chaffey that the Leader of the Opposition did not ask for a gift for these people, but for something to help them, and the loans will be repaid when the settlers have re-established themselves.

Mr. JENNINGS (Enfield)—I am greatly concerned at the serious deterioration of some Housing Trust homes in my electorate at Enfield Heights that were built by the trust and sold. They were built only six or seven years ago and shortly after my first election to Parliament I received numerous complaints about them. The purchasers approached the trust for redress, but most of them have achieved nothing. Some have been given temporary relief by what can only be termed the patching up of homes. For the last three years I have been in constant touch with the trust asking that the deterioration be remedied and the purchasers recompensed, but I have received nothing from the trust except procrastination and evasion. We have been told that the deterioration was something quite normal and what could be expected in a house built six years ago. I have here a letter that I received from the Housing Trust regarding one home, but it is representative of so many others I have received. It states:—

The house has been inspected by officers of the trust who agree that the cracks are due to soil movement and not to any structural fault. Before the houses were built in the Enfield area the trust carried out extensive tests to determine the nature and dimensions of footings which would withstand any normal movement of the soil between the wet and dry seasons. The suggested specification of the footings was submitted to the lending authorities likely to be interested when the houses being planned were completed and all of them

accepted the proposed footings without demur. It must be accepted that over a large part of the Adelaide area the soil presents an element of risk, and, except at prohibitive cost, it is in practice impossible to build a brick dwelling house which can be guaranteed as free from danger of cracking.

That letter is really not an answer to the complaints we made. It does not even admit that any undue deterioration has occurred, and does not say what the trust will do to remedy the position. I felt that we could get no further through approaching the Housing Trust, so I raised the matter in Parliament during the February session. I asked:—

My question concerns recent reports of alarming deterioration of Housing Trust homes in northern suburbs, particularly Clearview and Enfield Heights. Would the Premier inquire from the trust whether it is true that many of those homes are deteriorating rapidly; whether it is a fact, as has been alleged, that a large number of homes in those areas were built without reinforcing rods in the foundations; whether the consequent deterioration can be attributed to that or to some other constructional fault; and whether, if the reports are true, the trust proposes to reimburse the purchasers of those homes?

The Premier replied:—

If the member will bring along a specific instance of these matters I will have it investigated.

Subsequently I wrote to the Premier and gave him not only one specific instance, but several specific instances. I received a reply 10 weeks after I wrote to him. I am not blaming him for the long delay because obviously he referred the matter to the trust. Members can get some idea of the frustrations that purchasers and a private member have to suffer in dealing with the Housing Trust when it takes the Premier himself 10 weeks to get a reply. The relevant part of his letter states:—

The houses were completed and sold by the trust to the abovementioned some six to seven years ago. Each of the houses has been inspected by competent officers subsequent to the receipt of the complaint, and in each case the trust is satisfied that the quality of the materials used and the workmanship were up to the standards generally accepted at the time of construction in houses of their type and situation. The footings of the houses were designed to withstand, with a wide margin, the stresses and strains to be expected, having regard to the soil movement which tests and investigations have indicated must be expected as likely to result in the Adelaide soils as the moisture content varies with the wet and dry seasons.

The design and specification of the footings were in accordance with common practice throughout the building industry as regards structures of this nature. The soil in the Adelaide metropolitan area is not homogeneous; the extent of possible movement may

vary considerably within a small area to a degree which cannot be predicted, thus presenting a risk which is common to a high proportion of house-owners on the Adelaide plains. It is a generally accepted fact that the cost of providing a footing which could be guaranteed to withstand completely all conceivable soil movement would be prohibitive for the ordinary cottage building over a wide extent of the Adelaide area.

It is obvious that this takes us right back to the letter I first quoted. In response to a question I asked, the Premier referred specific cases to the Housing Trust which supplied a report worded precisely the same as the letter I received months ago, with the exception that apparently someone had read a dictionary and discovered the word "homogeneous."

Mr. Hutchens—And the report only took 10 weeks to prepare.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes. The Housing Trust was not fair to the Premier. It did not give a proper answer when he asked for an investigation into this matter. It is perfectly obvious that there has not been an investigation. The questions I asked have not been answered. The trust has not said whether the homes are deteriorating rapidly; whether a large number were built without reinforcing rods; whether the deterioration can be attributed to that or some other constructional fault or whether, if the reports are true, the trust proposes to reimburse the purchasers.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Why didn't the Premier insist on a proper reply?

Mr. JENNINGS—I am hoping he will. Following receipt of the Premier's letter, and realizing the House would meet this month, I arranged with as many members of this House as I saw to inspect the homes concerned. I hope other members will have a chance to do so—and not only members of the Opposition. Already some Government supporters have inspected them and all members who have seen them have been impressed by the seriousness of the position. It is not over-exaggerating to say that they were really shaken at the tragic deterioration that has occurred. It is necessary to try to find out what the original fault was and I have a letter addressed to one of the home owners in the district which is signed by the officer-in-charge of the house sales section of the Housing Trust. The relevant portion reads:—

It is a fact that the trust decided, after consultation with all lending authorities, civil engineers and architects, to erect certain houses in the Enfield area without rods.

That admission was not made in any letter to me nor in the letter to the Premier. It was

not made clear to the purchasers that homes had been built without reinforcing rods in the foundations. In its report to the Premier the trust said that the design and specifications of the footings were in accordance with common practice throughout the building industry as regards structures of this nature. However, so far as I can ascertain from members of the Master Builders' Association it is not normal procedure, but is something unheard of. They would not regard it as normal under any circumstances.

Mr. Stott—Who designed the specifications?

Mr. JENNINGS—I do not know: the Housing Trust presumably. With this admission the contractors obviously cannot be blamed. I am seeking for a proper Government or independent investigation to be made of the homes in this area. We need not worry about the lending authorities, architects or engineers or whoever gave advice to the Housing Trust. Experts have often been wrong and if the trust took a calculated risk on expert advice and the houses are breaking up after six or seven years the purchasers who put their life savings into homes should not be expected to suffer as a consequence. All members who saw these houses will agree that they are breaking up. They are not ordinary cracks that appear in any house after a few years. In one house there is a crack almost three inches wide extending the full length of one wall. In another the fascia board can be seen extending beyond the wall about two and a half inches and on the other side the wall has gone out so far that the fascia board is inside the wall by half an inch. In one corner the foundations have broken up and sunk so far that the wall is standing on fresh air. The mortar in the walls is apparently stronger than the foundations. That cannot be expected to last very long. I am not referring to one or two places, but numerous homes in this locality have cracks an inch to one and a half inches wide in every wall. They are disintegrating after only six or seven years. It is a tragic situation.

If, after a proper investigation is made and Government pressure is applied, the Housing Trust refuses to reimburse the people concerned or to remedy the defects in the houses, the Government, in order to maintain public confidence in the Housing Trust—and that is important to the State—should agree to accept the financial responsibility by way of an *ex gratia* payment or some other means. After an investigation is made we should then decide the best means of ensuring that none of the

purchasers in this area suffer as a result of the neglect or mistakes of the Housing Trust.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—At present renovations are taking place in what was previously known as Foy and Gibson's building in Rundle Street, Adelaide, but for many years I have urged the Government to centralize the public service departments, preferably in Victoria Square. In this morning's press there is a report of an agitation by Federal members representing South Australia for the Federal Government to act on similar lines. In this State the Government has its offices scattered all over the city. The Highways Department is in Currie Street west; the Public Trustee in Hindmarsh Square; the Engineering and Water Supply Department and some other offices in Victoria Square; the Hospitals Department, Prices Branch and Children's Welfare Department in Rundle Street and the Housing Trust in Hindley Street and Pulteney Street. It is proposed that the Woods and Forests Department will also be accommodated in Rundle Street. Some people now go to Victoria Square looking for the Children's Welfare Department only to find that it has been shifted to Foy and Gibson's building, which is an unnecessary inconvenience. I have requested that the Government erect a decent sized building in Victoria Square to house all Government departments so that the public would be able to locate the offices they want without having to search around for them. When I made this request, the Premier said that the Government did not have the money to erect such a building. I have had the unpleasant experience of seeing how much Government money is involved in making Foy and Gibson's building suitable for Government offices.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Unsuitable!

Mr. LAWN—I invite members to inspect it to see whether it is suitable or not. A large sum was spent in purchasing this building. Although *Hansard* for last session is available, I have not had time to check it yet, but if members look at it they will be able to follow the discussions that took place on this matter last year and the Treasurer's reply to questions giving the reasons why the Government was not constructing its own building.

After this building was purchased, a terrific amount of work was necessary to put it into shape, which involved spending a great amount of money and using much labour and materials. Firstly, there were no conveniences. Although the Children's Welfare Department

has shifted there, when I made my inspection three or four weeks ago conveniences were still in course of construction, and the officers of that department had to walk on a 6in. plank with a drop underneath to get to a convenience while the others were being installed. Members of the public had to go to Hindmarsh Square for a convenience.

What the Government actually bought was a building with four walls and a roof, and it was necessary to partition off all the space into offices. The Children's Welfare Department offices were partitioned off when I made my inspection. A large area of glass in these partitions had cracked because the wood had warped, and had been replaced with another material that was being tested to see whether it was suitable. The partitions were not very high and it was possible to hear discussions in the board room from the corridor outside. The medical officers' rooms had partitions only just over head height, and conversations taking place between medical officers and the public could be heard from the corridors. These doctors have made strong complaints about this, and they are justified in doing so because surely their conversations should be private. Furthermore, all noises made in the big hall can be heard in the medical officers' rooms and the board room.

Proper care was not taken when erecting these partitions. In one place they were so arranged that they reached the wall in the centre of a window. An officer was stationed on each side of this partition but only one could use the blind, although subsequently this was altered. That is one indication of the waste of money and unnecessary expenditure of labour and material involved in putting this building into shape. When I walked through there I noticed that a great deal of dust was coming down from the second and third floors, where masonry work was being done.

Before I left this section I noticed a colossal amount of steel shelving installed to file dockets. These dockets are folded so that they resemble court briefs, but they cannot be put into the shelving unless they are folded flat because the ledges have been constructed four inches apart instead of five or 5½ inches. Doubts have been expressed on whether the shelving will have to be wasted. Possibly shelving would have been necessary if the Government had constructed its own building. On the other hand, in the design of the building greater care would probably have been taken in these things. The Woods and Forests

Department should have moved into this building several weeks ago. They started to move in, but went out and said that they would have nothing to do with the building until it was put into proper shape. I do not blame them for their attitude.

This matter is serious. Representations have been made to the Government over the years for a new building, and back in 1937 the Government referred the question to the Public Works Committee; but, as with many other projects, that is where it ended. I suggest earnestly that we should wait no longer but start on a new building, even if we cannot see that we have sufficient money to complete it. The Government should erect at least a couple of floors and add to that each year out of the money available. We would eventually have a building to meet the convenience of the public and house all the Government departments, instead of having them spread all over the city.

I support the representations made by the member for Enfield with regard to the deterioration of homes built by the Housing Trust and sold. This is a matter which concerns not only the member for Enfield, but every member. We have heard of private enterprise supplying the public with adulterated food, shoddy clothing and footwear, but here is an instance of jerry building by a public body known as the Housing Trust, which is set up by the Government and by Parliament and for which the public is expected to provide the finance. I think the Government has the power of direction over the Housing Trust because it has to find the money, and if it told the Housing Trust that there was no more money forthcoming the trust would have to close down.

I am not suggesting that at this stage we should go beyond the question raised by the member for Enfield, but surely the people of this State can expect that the homes they purchase from a Government or semi-Government authority will be up to recognized standards. I know that purchasers of homes built under the supervision of the State Bank have every confidence in those homes because they are built as strong, lasting homes and that is how the public view a home purchased from the Housing Trust. They have confidence in the Government and Parliament; because they feel that Parliament would not treat them in the same way as private enterprise. They know they can get jerry built homes from private home builders. I do not say they do in all cases, but it has been known to happen; and the public know it can happen

again. However, some of the purchasers of Housing Trust homes have found their life savings wasted away. I have inspected some of the homes described by the member for Enfield, and have seen cracks at least 2½ in. wide. Some of the walls seem to be standing on air, the foundations having gone into the ground, and in some cases the walls have moved out from the roof.

This Government would not last with such things going on but for the gerrymandered electorates. The Housing Trust has made available to the public jerry built houses similar to what they would obtain from private enterprise. It is in keeping with this Government's attitude in general that it is not concerned whether foundations or walls or roofs of these homes are up to standard or not, or whether people have lost their life savings, so long as the electorates are so gerrymandered that they can come back here election after election. This would not be possible if the will of the people could be given effect to. The Government is responsible for these faulty homes being built and sold. I am not saying that the Government deliberately set out to do this, but the matter was brought to its attention some months ago and it is time it did something in the interests of the public.

I plead with the Government to compensate the purchasers concerned and to bring down a Bill forcing the Housing Trust, like every other building contractor, to comply with State building legislation.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—The proposal to lend money to settlers for rehabilitation purposes is not new, for it was raised previously by me and other members. I learned from the Premier then that from the loan by the Commonwealth Government to the State for the rehabilitation purposes no money would be available for the rehabilitation of assets of private individuals. He said it was not the function of the Commonwealth Government to make grants for the rehabilitation of such assets, but that was a contradictory statement for in previous years the Commonwealth Government made money available for it. Drought relief was nothing more than a grant to rehabilitate private assets. I suggested to the Premier that if the Commonwealth Government would not make money available for this purpose the State Government might do so, but he said that was impossible. Later it was suggested that money should be obtained from somewhere to rehabilitate the settlers as I suggested and in connection with the advance of money from the Murray River Flood Relief

Fund the Premier laid down certain conditions. On February 6 this year, in answer to my question about the fund, the Premier said, as recorded on page 1588 of *Hansard*:—

I promised him yesterday that I would set out the conditions under which the State Bank would make loans available to settlers affected by the flood. I have obtained the following report:—

(1) All references for finance to come to the State Bank from the chairman of the Lord Mayor's River Murray Flood Relief Fund (Sir Kingsley Paine). This will be done after the committee has considered the application for relief and decided upon the provision to be made from the relief fund.

(2) The bank's decision to be conveyed to the chairman of the fund, Sir Kingsley Paine.

(3) The loans to be repayable over periods not exceeding eight years.

(4) Current overdraft interest rates to be charged by the bank.

(5) Suitable security to be forthcoming in each case.

(6) The Government to guarantee the bank against loss in the case of these special loans either by legislation or by looking after any losses by the application of cancelled securities against bank debt to the Treasurer.

I then interjected, "Would that be a 100 per cent guarantee?" and the Premier said:—

Yes, for any losses that arose out of particular loans. The only matter that gives me any concern is the last paragraph, and at present I am looking at the legal position of the Treasurer with respect to giving the bank that guarantee. I am not sure whether I have the authority to give it or whether some approval by Parliament would be required before it could be given.

Again I interjected, "If you need special legislation will you bring it down during the present session?" and he replied:—

If it needs legislation I will undoubtedly take action along those lines, although I do not think it is necessary. I will take the precaution to see that it is in accordance with the Public Finance Act before taking a step in this direction. I have no doubt that if I came to Parliament asking for approval to guarantee these advances, Parliament would approve. It is not from that point of view that I am holding the matter up, but to see whether I have the authority to give the bank the necessary guarantee.

Later, objection was raised to the period of eight years. The members for Chaffey and Murray Bridge held the same view as I did; that the period was too short. Some settlers have suffered great losses with their citrus, apricot and peach trees, which take many years to return to full production. What will be the position of a settler who applies for an advance under the conditions set out by the Premier? The chairman of the fund has said that from it the settlers will get only up to

20 per cent of their losses. That will assist them for the time being, but it is only a drop in the bucket for rehabilitation purposes. We should get the settlers back to full production as quickly as possible. They know that within eight years they cannot return their citrus and apricot trees to full production, so they cannot get relief from the fund. I am surprised that the Commonwealth Government has not looked at this matter more generously. It could give a special grant to the State to assist the settlers. If they were returned to full production in this way within six years the money would be repaid to the Commonwealth by way of taxation and excise and other duties. The Commonwealth Government has adopted a short-sighted policy. The conditions set out by the Premier for loans are not good enough to help the settlers rehabilitate themselves. The State Bank or some other body should be able to provide the money needed to return their properties to full production.

The member for Chaffey (Mr. King) said that it is not any easy problem to solve. Nothing is easy, but it is surprising what can be done if there is a will to do it, and I am sure that it is the will of every member to find ways and means of getting these properties back into production. The money available through the State Bank is totally inadequate, and the Government should give a guarantee for loans of this character in order that the settlers can be properly rehabilitated. The Premier promised last session to examine the question, and I submit that the time is now ripe for an announcement by him. Parliament should be informed how many people have applied to the State Bank for loans and whether the amount available has been adequate to meet all requirements. If not, Parliament should give the Government authority to go to the extent of providing finance adequate for the purposes I have mentioned. The only money available from Government sources is for the resiting of banks and the restoration of roads and public utilities, such as pumping stations. This, of course, is absolutely essential and no one denies it, but what I am concerned about is those people who have suffered such terrific losses in stone and citrus fruit trees. It is true that the outcome of the flooding of vines was not nearly so serious as was expected. I saw some vineyards completely inundated, with only a few canes sticking out of the water, yet after the waters subsided I was amazed to see the growth those vines made. Nevertheless, because of the

impossibility of pruning them during the flooding those vines will be practically out of production for 12 months.

It takes eight years to get a citrus orchard back into production and therefore a loan through the State Bank will not assist a settler affected in this way. I saw a property of 25 acres of citrus trees completely wiped out. Fortunately, that is not the general experience, as some settlers lost relatively small areas, and some of these have refused to apply for assistance through the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund because so many questions had to be answered. I know that the Government views this matter seriously and I am sure that it will examine the question further. Like the member for Chaffey, I hoped it would have been done many months ago. Some of these people have been waiting for many weeks to ascertain whether there was any possibility of getting financial assistance and they are losing heart. Therefore, it is affecting morale as well as production, all of which is detrimental to the State. The sooner they are back into production the better for the State and all concerned.

I wish now to refer to a matter raised by the member for Enfield (Mr. Jennings), namely, the deterioration of Housing Trust homes at Enfield Heights. I saw the press reports and was not prepared to accept what I read: I never am; nor was I prepared to accept what I anticipated would be the reply of the Housing Trust. I went to see for myself and I was amazed at the deterioration in some of the houses. I am not an architect or builder, but I have some experience in these matters and it is amazing to me to find that, on the class of ground that is in Enfield Heights, an attempt should have been made by any responsible authority or contractor to build homes without reinforcing steel rods in the foundations.

Mr. Fletcher—Who did that?

Mr. STOTT—The Housing Trust admits it. My immediate thought was that someone had gone astray. Who drew up the specifications? I do not know, and that is what I wish to find out. Apparently, the trust has been a long time in giving the Government the answer. I know the Government is concerned about it and I am here to support the Government to see that the matter is cleared up, for it is most unsatisfactory. Here we have a public authority created by Act of Parliament to build houses for the people—and they are a good type of people, because the person who puts up his own cash as a deposit with the



objective of ultimately owning his own home is a good type of citizen. Let us place ourselves in their position. They have put considerable amounts of cash into homes, with the pride and joy of ultimate ownership, but within five or six years they find the places crumbling about them. What terrific disappointment! What serious apprehension! What decline in equity! Their equity has gone. Would any member in this House buy a place that had cracks two inches and three inches wide through the walls down to the foundations? These people are committed to go on paying under a long term purchase scheme, and all the time they are paying their homes are further deteriorating. Some of the houses are in a deplorable state and something must be done about it. Fortunately, they are not all as bad as the worst I saw.

My opinion, for what it is worth, is that some of the houses which have suffered least can be underpinned and pulled together and thereby saved, but it will have to be done quickly for that stage will soon be passed when it is possible to redeem them by underpinning. The worst have gone beyond that stage. In one house I saw there was a very bad crack in every room and no amount of underpinning could save it. Parliament should do something to help these people who have been so unfortunate in selecting homes in which they had every confidence, only to have it shattered. The Government should make a statement about the terms and conditions of the purchase of homes from the Housing Trust. Further, an independent committee should be appointed to report to Parliament on the faults in these homes and the possible remedy. Parliament must do something in view of the deplorable state of these homes.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I take this opportunity to bring before the House the vital and urgent matter of the adverse effects of the emission of soot from the Osborne power station. This has been brought to my notice in the past six or eight weeks and as a result of personal investigations I believe the complaints are justified. Complaints were made to the Port Adelaide Council concerning the deleterious effect on health caused by the soot emission, but I believe the council was unwise in sending samples of the droppings from the stacks to the Electricity Trust for analysis. The only reply received from the trust was an acknowledgment, whereas I believe better results would have been obtained by sending the samples to the Department of Health so

that it could make an impartial recommendation in the matter.

I have waited some weeks to ascertain the council's attitude because the soot affects health and damages nearby properties. Because of my investigations I feel duty bound to tell the House and the Government that the people of Osborne and Taperoo are incensed as a result of this nuisance. Although some people not living in the area may say that reports of the harmful effects of the soot are exaggerated, I have letters from people in the area which prove that the reports are factual. In support of this statement may I say that the "B" station at the Electricity Trust's installation at Osborne has at present 10 boilers operating, whereas the use of a further two boilers soon will mean that soot from two more stacks will aggravate the nuisance.

I ask the Premier to have the Electricity Trust rectify this matter soon, as the people at Osborne believe that if this nuisance continues, the paint work on their residences will be ruined. This is a vital matter affecting 3,000 people in the area between Largs North and the Outer Harbour. A letter written by a resident of Seafeld Street, Largs North, about two miles from Osborne, states:—

I live approximately two miles from the E.T.S.A. building and one has to see our house, which by the way cost £5,500, to believe it. If you have the time to spare would you come and inspect the paint work that was done about last November; the car has run a track through greasy soot in our driveway. At times when the wind blows north-east it is difficult even to breathe properly.

Later I received a second letter from the same person, which states:—

I realize it is a problem and an expensive one, but when hundreds of people's health is endangered then it cannot be ignored especially the children, but most especially those who are already sick . . . my husband and I have £9,000 invested in the E.T.S.A. and would be willing to invest more in a loan to fight this menace.

Another letter, received from a resident of Humber Road, Osborne, states:—

I would also point out that there is not one smoke arrester in the whole of the power house. That, Sir, is scandalous. Even as I write to you now I have that nasty soot taste in my mouth and if I put my hand over the table it comes off black with soot. The soot is definitely not being emitted from I.C.I. or the gasworks at Osborne.

I have also received the following letter from the honorary secretary of the Taperoo and District Progressive Association Incorporated:—

Many complaints have been received recently from local residents in respect of the smoke and

dust nuisance from the Osborne powerhouse which has worsened considerably in recent months. Apart from the harmful effects to house property and the inconvenience to laundering and the keeping of a home clean, it is alleged by many residents that the continuous film of dust particles is having a definite harmful effect to their health. The worst of these dust nuisance periods frequently occur at night time and after a careful observation my association is of the opinion that residents have sufficient grounds to state that their health is affected. The smoke appears to be heavy with a sulphurous content, it is bitter to inhale and we believe it could be dangerous through constant inhalation.

A letter from the honorary secretary of the Largs North Progressive Association Incorporated states:—

The Largs North Progressive Association Committee and residents of Largs North are deeply concerned at the growing smog nuisance, which has become progressively worse. The soot or smog can possibly be injurious to the health of the public. The paintwork on properties in the district is definitely being affected as the fine dust or ash is deposited in all crevices of the homes. The committee would appreciate your action in this matter.

Shortly after I entered Parliament in 1946 I was confronted with a similar problem at Birkenhead where the Adelaide Cement Company conducts an excellent cement-producing plant. The dust and ashes from the stack were adversely affecting not only the health of nearby residents, but also their properties. The nuisance was so bad that even furnishing and clothing were affected. Meetings were held in Port Adelaide and deputations waited on the Adelaide Cement Company, pointing out the harmful effect, and although at first the company said that the area was an industrial area, it finally yielded and is now installing a precipitator to arrest the ashes coming from the stack. I read in this morning's *Advertiser* that this would cost £80,000 and eliminate the nuisance that has been suffered over the past 20 years. Private enterprise can afford a precipitator in the case of the cement works, therefore public enterprise should do something to eliminate this menace to health and home.

I was pleased to hear His Excellency state that the trust has had a satisfactory year. Last year the trust's operations showed a handsome profit and I predict the same result will be shown on this year's trading when the trust's report is tabled in Parliament. One of my constituents whose home is affected by soot from the powerhouse owns £9,000 worth of debentures in the Electricity Trust of South Australia and is prepared to make a sacrifice in order that the soot menace will be minimized, and I appeal to the Government to take all

possible steps to rectify this matter. I have a duty to my constituents to raise it in this House, and I shall do so until it is rectified.

I join with other members in supporting the member for Enfield (Mr. Jennings) in his stand on the cracked Housing Trust Homes at Clearview and other places. From my observation of trust homes in various suburbs I believe that the homes mentioned by the honourable member are the worst cases of depreciation I have seen. Mr. Jennings' contention was not exaggerated, and it is pleasing to have the opportunity to substantiate his statement. I went through the homes with him, and in one bedroom I found a huge crack in the wall. These people should be compensated by the Government. It may be that the trust or the Government has no obligation to do so, but there is a moral obligation, and something should be done. It is true that when they bought the homes the occupiers paid less than they would pay today, but on relevant money values they paid the ruling rate. The trust through its administration and through the builders has failed in some way, and it is up to the Government to see that compensation is paid.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—I would be remiss in my duty if I did not rise to support the contention of my friend and colleague, Mr. Jennings, concerning the damage suffered by householders in the Clearview and Enfield Heights areas. I have some knowledge of Housing Trust homes, as there are many in my district, and in the main I believe they are excellent. I have been told that trust homes erected at Gawler are probably among the best built anywhere by the trust. Incidentally, they were built by a Gawler contractor. They have been up many years and are in good condition. In the instances under review, I contend that a grave injustice has been done. I am not supporting Mr. Jennings simply because he happens to be on the same side of the House; had a Government member come to me and suggested that I should inspect the condition of certain trust homes in his area and I had seen the same conditions as exist in the Enfield area I would have raised my voice in this Chamber, as I am now doing.

I congratulate Mr. Jennings on the way he put his case. He did not seek to make political capital out of it, but simply to state the conditions existing and ask for some redress. I shall not speak about gerrymandered electorates, but simply try to add point to the argument of Mr. Jennings concerning "gerrymandered" houses. To date there has

been no redress in this area, despite constant protests. In fact, the matter has been brought to the notice of all those who should be able to help. Although there has been no redress, I must admit there have been some makeshift repairs, but these could hardly be considered a redress. I have seen these houses and have been hoping that one of the Government members might get up and show his integrity of purpose in this place by also raising his voice after having seen the condition of these houses and the unhappy plight of the occupiers. Their condition is very bad. At one home I saw one could put his fist into a crack without any trouble, and I should think that when lying in bed it would need extra blankets to keep the winter winds from whistling around. These homes have been built only six or seven years, and their condition is not due to the ordinary deterioration one could expect. If that were so, one could expect that homes on the Adelaide plains would be in the same condition after having been erected six or seven years, but they are not.

Mr. Jennings—There would hardly be a house still standing if that were so.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I agree. I live in what might be considered a similar geological area in a house which was built more than 100 years ago and there is only one small crack, which was caused by the earthquake. We have been told that people should know that there is an element of risk in building in the areas concerned, and I am prepared to grant that, but it has been found that some of the houses were erected without reinforcing rods in the foundations. Therefore, it was not only an element of risk, but an element of calculated risk, or let us say, an element of gambling. This gamble was made not by the purchasers, but by the builders, or perhaps I might more properly say by those who commissioned the building of the houses. It was not a successful gamble, and this has been proved by the numerous immense cracks that have appeared. All of us know that the law takes a very dim view of those who gamble with other people's money. Virtually, that is what has been done in this case. The money has been invested by the purchasers. When I visited the area I found that most of the purchasers are not wealthy, but have had to scrape up the money, and are still paying for their homes. Why should they suffer for this gamble, made by someone else? We are still not certain who made the gamble, although we are pract-

tically certain. If an investigation were made I think it would be almost a veritable certainty that a gamble was made, and if that is so, the purchasers should not pay the penalty. In fact, they did not know that a gamble was being undertaken.

We are told there is a general risk in building homes on the Adelaide plains area, but I can say without fear of contradiction that the percentage of homes built in this area which showed serious cracks after six or seven years would be very low. I am hoping that Mr. Frank Walsh will have something to say about this matter, because he has much knowledge of the risks associated with the building industry. Builders usually do everything possible to obviate the risks and not increase them, as apparently has been done in this particular area. Considerable expense must be incurred in renovating the buildings in the Enfield area, and in some instances it will run into several hundred pounds. At one of the homes which I had the displeasure to visit I was informed by the owner that he had built a garage on the right hand side of the structure, and it had supported his house, with the result that the right hand side of the home is not cracked, but the opposite side without a garage to support it is badly cracked. The solid foundations in his garage supported the house, and if he had known that the house foundations were faulty I suppose he would have put a garage on each side of the house, but that would be a ridiculous situation. I give my heartiest support to the member for Enfield in his request for an independent investigation so that we may know the truth about these houses at Enfield Heights. I think I know the truth already, but we want to be certain. We want to be certain, too, that the purchasers will not suffer. With my colleague, I plead for an *ex gratia* payment, or at least adequate recompense, for the purchasers of these homes so that they will not suffer financial embarrassment through no fault of their own.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—The member for Enfield (Mr. Jennings) read a letter from the Premier stating that in most parts of the metropolitan area the cost of building homes with foundations that would prevent cracking would be prohibitive. I was not satisfied with that letter because the soil at Enfield Heights could not be classed with the worst Bay of Biscay soil. These houses were constructed with the approval of the

Government through the medium of the Housing Trust, which has recognized standards so far as foundations are concerned. The trust has architects, supervisors and other experts, so it is a complete home building organization. I do not agree that the best methods of construction were used by the trust for these homes. Reinforcing rods were not used in the foundations, though many houses in the metropolitan area were not built on concrete foundations and are much stronger than those at Enfield Heights. They were built on bluestone flats capable of carrying stone or brick structures.

Mr. John Clark—They did not need reinforced foundations.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—No, they are not needed when houses are built on bluestone flat or granite rock, and even if there were some shrinkage in the soil it would be a simple matter to underpin, but it is recognized throughout the world that it is the reinforcing rods that provide the greatest strength in concrete foundations. The foundations of the houses at Enfield Heights are cracked so badly that they cannot be underpinned because they would crack still further when additional weight was put on them in the process of underpinning.

Councils have to pass plans and specifications in accordance with the Building Act, and if the local council had investigated the plans for the houses at Enfield Heights it would have found there was no provision for reinforcing rods, so that the council was at fault too. I do not think the Housing Trust has had its plans and specifications challenged by certain councils. We have been told that the deterioration of the houses at Enfield Heights was caused by characteristics of metropolitan soils, but supposing similar deterioration had occurred to trust homes at Port Augusta. In that case there could have been no question of blaming soils in the metropolitan area. Parliament has given authority to all councils to zone areas and prevent the use of solid construction on soils not suitable for it. In such cases the council may permit the erection of timber-frame dwellings, but what happened? The councils were not greatly concerned with soil types, but seemed more interested in consigning timber-frame homes to areas remote from transportation. It may be that in some areas it is expensive to provide suitable foundations, but I suggest that Enfield Heights does not compare with Burnside in soil shrinkage. Had these trust homes been constructed in

conformity with normal building practice there would have been no need for this discussion. In many instances these home purchasers have spent all the money they could raise on these homes. They purchased them in good faith, and the Government should accept the financial responsibility for ensuring that they have decent homes.

Foy and Gibson's building, which was originally erected as a residential hotel, has been purchased by the Government for conversion into modern office accommodation. From the outset the Opposition suggested that was not practicable. I have inspected some of the alterations being made and I strongly criticize what has been and is being done. Money has been expended on alterations, but it has been necessary to dismantle what has been done. Glass partitions have been erected but have had to be pulled down and board partitions, which are more soundproof, installed. It should have been obvious that the glass partitions would not be suitable and I criticize the administrators of the Architect-in-Chief's Department for proceeding with the work. Presumably they acted under instruction from the Minister, so the Government is to be blamed for this double expenditure. The floor on which these alterations are being made was originally designed as a dining room. The department did not even bear in mind that it would be necessary to provide windows in some of the partitions. Floors were covered with brown linoleum and partitions erected, but when it became necessary to alter and, in some instances, shift the partitions, small strips of linoleum had to be laid. That was not sound planning, and such conditions should not be permitted to continue.

As Mr. Lawn said, some departments have refused to accept the accommodation offered them in this building. The chairman, secretary and board of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department are, at times, obliged to conduct private interviews, but with the partitions provided there would be no privacy and people outside the room could hear everything that was said. Surely to God when a board is appointed to carry out a job in the interests of the public it should have proper accommodation! These partitions are not more than 8ft. high, and as there is a space of between six and eight feet between them and the ceiling, discussions in the rooms can be overheard. Surely it is not right in these days for the hardships of the people who go to this department to be heard from the passages. It should not have been difficult for the architects to provide facilities to ensure that the board's

discussions would be private. — Also, the medical officers' rooms have a partition only about seven feet high, and conversations from them can be heard by people in the passage and by the typistes. The furniture used there is the old furniture that was in use at Molton Street.

Why should we approve a further expenditure without knowing where it is going? Surely the Minister does not think we will approve of that without raising a voice in protest, yet not one voice has been heard from the other side of the House in reply. I have raised these matters in the hope that something will be done to ensure that conversations conducted by officers of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board will not be heard by the public. Although the department has been asking for safe deposit facilities since the building was commenced, none have yet been provided, and the board has had to hire storage from outside bodies for its papers. If the Minister does not answer my queries, I trust that the Leader of the Government will do so.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I shall speak on several matters relating to my district, and I trust that my remarks will not fall on deaf ears. About three years ago the Government promised me that £1,500,000 would be spent on the wharves and harbour at Port Pirie, but since that decision was made other places have been given priority. Wallaroo, Port Lincoln, and Thevenard have been given priority in the construction of silos, and I, like many others in my district, am concerned about this. Port Pirie needs a silo; if it does not get one, it will mean greater expense to the people.

Recently, I was approached by the chairman and manager of the Bulk Handling Co-operative, who were also very concerned about the establishment of a silo. They had in mind building a silo at Port Pirie at the same time as one is built at Thevenard, as they realized that the construction of a silo at Port Pirie is wrapped up with harbour improvements. As I have mentioned many times, the harbour and wharves at Port Pirie are in a deplorable condition. Some of the wharves are not fit to use and ore ships cannot obtain berths, which is costing the shipping companies £500 a day. If the Government desires to retain the ore trade it will have to do something. The harbour must be deepened to allow fair sized ships to come in and take away full loads. If something is not done I think we will lose this trade, because we cannot expect shipping firms to bring into

the harbour ships that will have to lay idle for several days.

The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited is the money spinner of this State, and so also is the ore trade. Some members opposite, and particularly one Minister, are very much concerned about losing that trade. I know this because the Minister told me that if the trade is lost there will be no need to carry out harbour improvements at Port Pirie. It is a disgrace that any Government should take that view. If we want trade it is the duty of this Government to look for it and hold what we have, but if we allow the ore to go elsewhere it is this Government's responsibility.

We also hear that the first line to be standardized in the Commonwealth will be the Broken Hill-Port Pirie line. If that is done and we lose the ore trade through the ore going to Sydney instead of Port Pirie, it means that money will be spent unnecessarily on the standardization of that line, and instead of it being a paying proposition it will be a losing one. It is time this Government realized its responsibility to Port Pirie and recognized its importance. Some of the wharves there have caved in and others are deteriorating daily. I appeal to the Government to give some thought to its responsibilities, because Port Pirie is the greatest outport in the State and essential to this State's prosperity.

I draw the attention of the House to the deplorable conditions on the wharves at Port Pirie in wet weather, and I refer particularly to the area where the ore is stacked. I had occasion to visit that area last week during the wet weather, and saw the men working in conditions such as I had never seen in my life before. I wondered how the shipping companies got the men to work under such conditions. When they walked off the jetty on to the wharves they were wading through mud and slush up to their ankles. If these men had refused to work under those conditions, the supporters of this Government would have been the first to condemn them. I intend to ask a question on this matter, and I sincerely hope that the responsible authority will take immediate action.

Another matter which concerns Port Pirie as well as other local governing bodies is the question of differential rating. Members know that recently there has been great controversy about certain sections of the Local Government Act, and I am sorry to say that in this

respect the responsible Minister has misled the people. He told me that certain things should be done with regard to differential rating, and I was informed that the Crown Solicitor agreed with that decision. I was criticized by the Minister when he sent a reply to other people in Port Pirie; in his reply to a deputation he had the audacity to say that I was stretching the Act to give people certain concessions. The Minister had condemned me for not doing certain things, which he told me I had the right and power to do. I am pleased to say that the Municipal Association came to my aid and took the matter up with the Minister, with the result that he reversed his decision on the whole matter and an amendment was moved in this House. I realized then how wrong the Minister had been. The Municipal Association also asked the Minister to bring down certain amendments to the Act. This matter has been going on for about two years, and only a few days ago we had a reply from the Minister stating that he did not intend to amend the Act, and in fact suggesting that certain sections should be deleted instead of new ones being inserted. He also stated that the Act required overhauling. I agree, but I sincerely hope that when he decides to do so he confers with someone who has some knowledge of it. I feel sure that the Minister has no knowledge of the Act, because he has given the most ridiculous replies to questions that have been asked.

We in local government look to the Minister for information when we are not clear on certain matters, and I think it is only right that we should go to the head of the appropriate department for that information. However, not once has the Minister of Local Government given us the correct reply, and not once has he given any relief in regard to the Act. I repeat what I said recently to my councillors, and that is that I would have been much better off had I gone to a boy in the street for information because he would have had a greater knowledge of the Act than the Minister.

I hope that what I have said this afternoon has not fallen on deaf ears, and that the Government will realize the importance of the matters that I have placed before it. I sincerely hope that the Harbors Board will be approached immediately and will see that the conditions under which these men are working at Port Pirie are rectified. I also hope the Minister of Local Government will bring down amendments to the Local Government Act

which will enable councils to rate in a manner that will be satisfactory to all.

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla)—In view of the recent disturbances at the Andamooka opal field I feel there will be Ministerial consideration of one or two phases of the matter; consequently I shall bring before members some information about happenings there. A day or two before Easter I visited the field and was present at a well-attended meeting of residents, both aborigines and white diggers. About 80 people were present and they discussed problems associated with the field. The outstanding matter was the shortage of water. It was pointed out that when the population was between 100 and 120 the water supply was sufficient, but the population had increased to over 200 and there was now a grave shortage. At the time there were three gallons available a day to each adult. That does not suggest that there was a proper rationing of the water. It was obvious that in the absence of a proper authority in connection with the rationing some people got less than the three gallons a day whilst others got more. Since then the population has increased considerably and the grave shortage of water has been a contributing factor in the tension that has arisen on the field. Undoubtedly the disturbances were due to a drunken fracas but in addition there has been a building up of tension because of the insufficient water supply and because owing to the issue of rations without proper investigation there has been an influx of aborigines to the field.

About June 12, I received a further communication from the secretary of the Andamooka Progress Association to the effect that the water position was absolutely desperate and that on the days when there was no wind the mills gave no water at all, so the field was virtually without a water supply on those days. Upon my return I communicated with the Engineering and Water Supply Department and pointed out the facts concerning the water shortage and drew attention to the critical position. Over the weeks I made a number of approaches and finally, after seeing the secretary to the Minister of Works, I got a promise that on the 18th of this month an officer would be sent to determine the site of a new well and to assist in the general planning to secure further water. When I was at the field prior to Easter the residents expressed willingness to sink a new well and said all they required was financial assistance, not exceeding £150, to cover the cost of timbering the well and incidentals. I understand the officer has been to Andamooka or

at least is on his way back, and I have not the slightest doubt that the position will be considered within the next few days. I stress the urgency of this matter and trust the Andamooka residents will get the utmost attention so that they will have a better water supply at the shortest possible notice.

On my return I drew the attention of the secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board to the manner in which the population on the field had increased. It appeared to me that the board was not fully aware of the facts. It had to make a hurried search in order to ascertain the total amount of rations being issued at the time I called. It was discovered that the relief issued to the aborigines on the field had risen from about £80 a month to £250 a month in a period of two months. I do not know what it is today but I understand the aborigines now number 300 or more, which suggests that the total population is now over 400.

The issue of certificates for relief is in the hands of the local school teacher and I would say he finds it impossible to properly investigate whether rations should be issued. It is just a sideline with him after he has finished his school teaching. Some of the people need rations and should have them, but there is not the slightest doubt that some are receiving rations they do not need. Because rations have been issued in this way there has been an influx of aborigines from over a wide area. This has not only produced undesirable results in another direction but has exerted great pressure on an already inadequate water supply, and has assisted in building up tremendous tension between the white and coloured people on the field. The sorry part of it all is that this tension will take a long time to live down and will make more difficult the task of anyone sent there to straighten it out.

I suggested to the Aborigines Board that an officer should be appointed permanently to supervise what was going on at Andamooka and Coober Pedy. At Coober Pedy there is not the same urgency, but there are similar conditions that need supervision. The reply I received was that money would not be forthcoming for the appointment of such an officer but that two appointees would shortly be trained in this sort of work and that when trained one would be sent periodically to Andamooka. That is inadequate for it does not touch the problem. We have to face the fact that these dark people must be assisted to assimilate with white people and to carry out the practices of other people on the field. I refer particularly to the matter

of sanitation. The position in regard to that is important because no-one is there to supervise it and no-one with authority to enforce any rules. There is a progress association, which is a vigorous body, but it has no authority to deal with this matter. In his reply the secretary to the Aborigines Board said:—

I recently interviewed Dr. Deland regarding the situation of the aborigines' camps at Andamooka, and he was of the opinion that the area in which they camp no longer constitutes a danger to the local population.

That does not square up with what Dr. Deland has told me. He has said that he has been very concerned for a long time about sanitation, both at Andamooka and Coober Pedy, and that he would be very happy to join me in making strong representations on this question. The area in which these people are living constitutes the water shed into the valley from which the water supply comes, and it is only because of the favourable weather conditions which usually exist at Andamooka that there has not been a serious outbreak of disease. From a medical point of view the field is served by the flying doctor at Broken Hill, and Dr. Huxtable is very perturbed about the question of cleanliness on this field. He says that scabies are prevalent and that the absence of an adequate water supply combined with the lack of cleanliness, has given him the utmost concern.

The letter from the secretary to the Board goes on:—

As regards sanitary arrangements, I am of opinion that if the natives are to reside in the town they should conform to health regulations, and if they do not do so they should either be prosecuted or removed from the town.

I suggest that that is not the solution to the problem. These people need assistance; they need a competent, understanding officer vested with authority to do what is necessary on the field. It has been suggested that they should be put into a reservation—shifted holus-bolus from the field. That, again, is merely putting the problem into the background. Many of these people are doing serious opal digging, whereas some are merely fossicking, but the fact remains that they are there in contact with the white man, and every step should be taken to improve their position and assist them to live as the white men do on the field, and to get harmony between the two bodies. At that meeting the spokesman for the aborigines said that they were prepared to assist the white people in digging a well in order to get more water,

and as far as I can see there was a reasonably good feeling of co-operation between the two groups. However, I think the situation has become very different since then, and has deteriorated very badly.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—The Protector of Aborigines says otherwise.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I should be very interested to hear what he said, but there have been disturbances and I cannot imagine that they would have improved the situation. The Government has now sent two or three police officers to the field, and I understand from press reports that two officers will probably stay there for some considerable time. In other words, what was suggested should be done must now be done from another angle. Furthermore, I think it is quite clear from the figures I was given in relation to the issue of rations that considerable economies could be effected in this expenditure, and from that angle alone it would be worth while having an officer of the Aborigines Department on the field, let alone all the other benefits that would flow from his presence there.

I hope that when this matter is considered by the Government—and I should think that it would be done promptly under the circumstances—favourable consideration will be given to the appointment of an officer to handle these questions on the spot, because I can see no other practical way of dealing with the problem.

Another question which will arise shortly is that of education at Andamooka. In 1947-8 the inhabitants themselves built a school, which still exists, of pine logs, with a pine log roof covered with malthoid, on top of which was put two inches to three inches of soil. This building had no glass windows, but apertures in the walls covered with fly wire and metal flaps which could be let down. At the time of my visit there were 31 children attending the school, and a new school has been promised for June or July this year. At that time there were a number of aboriginal children who should have been attending school who were not doing so for various reasons, and I found it impossible to ascertain the exact number. The schoolmaster admitted that there were in grade one a number of children between the ages of five and 13, indicating that some had never been to school before the age of, say, 11-12. With the influx of aborigines since then I understand that there is an even greater number of aboriginal children on the field who are getting no education, and therefore the ques-

tion of whether the school which is to be provided is big enough for the children who are likely to attend it for some time should be carefully considered. If we mean anything by "assimilation," the point to start is with the children, and it is most important that every step should be taken now to see that aboriginal children at Andamooka have every opportunity of getting the education they should receive.

I found that there was no school at Coober Pedy, and I had complaints from aborigines that they had no chance of sending their children to school. It may be said that some aboriginal parents are not concerned about their children going to school. Under the circumstances I think that is only natural, but I am quite sure that most of them want to have their children educated, and it is only a question of the right officers being in these areas to convince all of them that their children should attend school. As I said, if we mean anything by assimilation we should make the most strenuous efforts to get officers on the fields to see that all aboriginal children go to school, because the main problem in assimilation is to get the children to think along the lines of the white men as early as possible. Once that is done there is some chance of assimilation.

Recent disturbances apparently had their source in liquor, and the question arises where the aborigines got it. I believe that a competent officer would be able to put his finger on where some of that liquor comes from. I hear stories of methylated spirits being mixed with lemonade and sold to the natives for various reasons, some of which I will not repeat, but they were associated with some of the aboriginal women. The only way to meet the difficulty is to face up to the problem and see that there is someone on the field with authority to deal with the matter. I found that departmental officers have visited the field on various occasions, but the officers of the Progress Association informed me that instead of these officers making a point of going to the only authority in the place to ascertain what was happening, they paid a very hurried visit and had conversations with one or two people and then departed. Surely if anything concrete is to be done in a place of this character the only local organization that does express the will of the people should be the first to be consulted to ascertain the needs of the settlement. I raise these matters because I believe they will receive Ministerial consideration in the next few days and I hope that consideration will be both careful and favourable.



The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—A number of matters have been discussed this afternoon and honourable members will realize that it would not be possible for me to have here sufficient detail to reply on all of them. Two or three topics, however, are extremely important and I intend to deal with them now. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) raised the matter of loans for the rehabilitation of settlers in the River Murray areas, and he was supported by other members. Last session the Government considered this matter and made a statement on it; as far as I know, that decision has not been departed from and has gone at least some way towards meeting a difficult position.

Firstly, the settlers who have been adversely affected are in various stages of financial solvency: some who only recently bought their properties at high prices have little equity and many preferential creditors; others who are long-established settlers are in a reasonably good position to meet some of the losses.

Secondly, the Commonwealth Government made it clear from the outset that it would make available no money except for the re-instatement of public assets and some assistance in the form of hardship grants. The conditions laid down to qualify for such grants were fairly stringent. The Government saw the problem stated today by Mr. O'Halloran and a series of conferences was held between the chairman of the State Bank and me to try and solve it.

Thirdly, we were immediately confronted by the fact that many settlers normally banked not with the State Bank, but with other banks, and it became necessary to consider that phase of the matter. The decision arrived at, which was announced at the time and has not been departed from, was that the State Bank would be prepared to make advances recommended by the chairman of the Relief Committee (Sir Kingsley Paine) on a Government guarantee of protection against loss. Unless the Government was prepared to meet the State Bank in that connection the administration of the scheme would be so tight as to defeat its purpose.

Mr. O'Halloran—Would the rate of interest be the current overdraft rates?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It would be the current rate of interest. The Leader made it clear that no gift was required of the taxpayer, but I point out that this money is borrowed and interest must be paid on it,

so any concession in the rate would have to be met as a grant from the State Government to the State Bank and appear in the Budget. If members compare the relief granted to settlers in neighbouring States with that given in this State they will soon see that, although this State has not the rich resources of Victoria and New South Wales, an infinitely greater amount has been given in this State through the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund, by direct vote, and through departments, than has been given in other States. Indeed, departments have given much assistance in the normal course of their work, and necessities have been met as they have arisen.

Only last week the Minister of Irrigation raised a problem confronting settlers in the lower Murray areas who had been flooded out, and asked whether it would be fair in those circumstances to charge them water rates for the period they were not occupying their land. The Government immediately made a decision which will appear before Parliament in due course. It will be seen, therefore, that the Government has done its utmost to meet the emergencies that have arisen. Indeed, it has strained every resource and been extremely partial in its administration of the funds at its disposal. The disastrous fires in the Adelaide hills early this year wiped out more orchards than were wiped out in the River Murray floods, but the assistance made available to hills orchardists amounts only to a paltry £5,000, on a hardship basis. Members will see from this statement that the Government has been by no means remiss in assisting River Murray settlers, and I thank the member for Chaffey (Mr. King) for his remarks, which showed a general appreciation by people in his district that the Government had set out to assist settlers. Indeed that rehabilitation in those areas has advanced considerably is shown by the fact that the last two deputations I have received from River Murray districts have been concerned not with rehabilitation of the prime necessities, but with the re-establishment of amenities. This is further proof that the pressure in respect of the necessities of life has been eased.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members that where Sir Kingsley Paine has gone into the position of a settler and recommended that a loan be made available to rehabilitate him, and where his own lending institution is not prepared to make the money available, the State Bank will consider a loan on the terms I have outlined, and

that loan will be under-written by the Government. I, as Treasurer, within the discretion I have under the Public Finance Act, will make an adjustment in the indebtedness of the State Bank to the Treasurer, in accordance with the sinking fund provisions. I can assure members that there is no reason for harsh administration by the State Bank, because the loan will be covered in the advances: and that this money will not be splashed about for the benefit of other creditors, but will be subject to a very proper examination, and by no less a person than Sir Kingsley Paine, who has had a lifelong experience of such problems and has built up a very enviable reputation.

Several members have referred to the question raised by Mr. Jennings concerning trust houses at Clearview and Enfield Heights. He was quite correct when he quoted a letter sent to him enclosing a report from the Housing Trust and that letter was purposely left open. It was given to him in its entirety, and I was rather surprised that if he was not satisfied he did not refer it back to me for further consideration by the trust or the Government, as other members have done in similar circumstances.

Mr. O'Halloran—Didn't he ask you certain specific questions?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—He did raise some questions in the House and they were referred to the trust for report, and if they were not answered to his satisfaction he had the right to come along and say, "The information you supplied is all very well, but it does not deal with this or that problem." But he did not come back at all, and I had no submission from him from the day the report was made available to him until he raised the matter again today. I rather anticipated from press reports that the honourable member would raise it today, so I have brought some additional information for honourable members. All the houses in the Enfield area were built strictly in accordance with the building regulations, which do not make it mandatory for reinforcement rods to be used. Many homes are constructed without such reinforcing rods. My own home has no reinforcing rods, and there are two other homes on the property without them, and one has stood for 100 years. Mr. Frank Walsh stated categorically that the Building Act should be enforceable against the Housing Trust, as it is against other building authorities. The answer is that it is and always has been. The houses to which Mr. Jennings raised objection were built strictly in

accordance with the Building Act, and no appreciable difference could be seen between the houses which were built with reinforcing rods and those which were not. Those with reinforcing rods were cracked to the same degree as those without rods, as far as the trust could ascertain.

There were two distinct groups of houses built—250 in one group and 300 in the other. They were built by separate builders in 1949 and 1950. The trust sells £400,000 worth of houses monthly, and with the exception of the normal things that happen in connection with such houses no serious complaints were made as to the Enfield or the Clearview buildings. They were built under extremely favourable conditions to the purchaser and were sold in 1949 and 1950 for approximately £1,850. My first experience with the area was, incidentally, to take up with the trust the fact that a person who had purchased one of these homes for £1,850 proceeded to sell it for £3,000 before he had actually occupied it. Apart from the minor adjustments which are made continually by the trust in all its housing programmes no serious complaints were made against them. The last of the houses in the Enfield group were completed and sold in 1951, and on March 1, 1954—about three years after—there was a severe earthquake in the metropolitan area which cost insurance companies not less than £3,000,000.

The great majority of complaints about these houses at Enfield Heights were made after March, 1954. Some of the complaints came from people who had purchased the houses not from the trust but from the original purchasers. These houses were considered good purchases for £3,000 long after the original occupiers had occupied them, and it was in 1955 that the great agitation came with regard to the Enfield houses. I have had these houses examined by competent officers of the trust and asked them for a report that could be verified by the strictest examination. They still tell me that only a relatively small number of the houses are cracked. The Housing Trust has no right to be asked to accept damages where the complaint has come in five years after occupation, especially in view of the earthquake.

Mr. O'Halloran—How much did insurance companies pay out in that area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not know. The trust has given service to these houses and assistance in renovation. One house received much publicity, and the trust offered financial assistance of £60 to the

purchaser. I do not know whether the amount was regarded as insignificant or the member for Enfield thought he could get more than that sum, but the offer was not even acknowledged. I deprecate any action to try to destroy the high reputation that the trust has built up. I believe there has been a considerable amount of politics in this matter with the object of destroying the trust's reputation. I left the letter to the honourable member open purposely so that he could come back to me if he wanted to.

Mr. O'Halloran—Now you are complaining about his ventilating the matter.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No. I am merely saying that I believe the trust is doing a good job and that its work is comparable with the work of the best builders. Indeed, the trust employs the best builders and architects it can get and tries to give good service to the community. It is interesting that when lending institutions have applications for loans before them they usually take the trust's sale price as a fair valuation without examining the building.

Mr. Jennings—They used to.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—For years the War Service Homes Commission has accepted the trust's price, and still does, as a valuation without further examining the matter. I deprecate any move to destroy the trust's reputation, for it has done more towards housing the people than any other institution in the State, and it has a reputation that stands high throughout Australia.

Mr. John Clark—We agree with that, but the trust can make a mistake.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member sometimes makes a mistake and then we are very kind to him because we know his good intentions, and the same applies to the trust. The Housing Trust will consider this matter and if its officers have reason to believe that through negligence there is some necessity to give assistance either in repairing the building or in underpinning that will be done, but it will not deal with the question as a political issue, and I agree with the trust entirely there.

Mr. O'Halloran—Why didn't you say that at the beginning in reply to Mr. Jennings' questions?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I gave him the trust's report in an open letter so as to enable him to discuss it with everyone concerned. If he was not satisfied with that report or wanted anything reconsidered

he had the opportunity to come back, but he did not. He decided to take other action and show what a good member for the district he was. That is in accordance with the best tradition, but I assure members that the Government will support the trust in saying that any person who has been adversely affected by any negligence will get a fair deal.

Mr. O'Halloran—Who will be the judge of negligence?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If there has been any negligence the purchaser has redress under common law.

Mr. Dunstan—He has nothing of the kind.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, he has. It is not reasonable to expect an unconditional guarantee for all time against cracking of a house, especially as there was an earthquake in the area and insurance companies accepted liability.

Mr. John Clark—In that area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Throughout the whole of the metropolitan area. I want to refer now to one or two other matters raised by honourable members. Mr. Tapping raised the question of the soot that emerges from the power stations on Le Fevre Peninsula. This is a difficult problem and there is substance in his complaint that at times considerable quantities emerge; but this problem is not common to Le Fevre Peninsula nor to the State: it has been experienced in every country in the world and all manner of devices have been used in efforts to overcome it. Electricity Trust officers have made special investigations overseas in their efforts to overcome the problem. A similar problem is experienced, to a lesser extent, at Port Augusta and no doubt it exists in Port Pirie through the smelters. It has been proved in other countries that the greatest measure of relief can be obtained by running smoke stacks to a great height and not through mechanical or electrical precipitators. Unfortunately, there are no firm foundations at Le Fevre Peninsula to enable smoke stacks to be taken sufficiently high to secure some relief. This may mean that when we build the next power station we shall have to abandon Le Fevre Peninsula as a site.

Mr. O'Halloran—You might build away from populous areas.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The stations we built recently were erected away from populous areas, but immediately a number of operatives were attracted there and the area ceased to be unpopulated.

Mr. Lawn referred to the accommodation of public servants and suggested the Government

should erect a building to house all departments. He seemed to think that if he wanted to visit the Highways Department and then the Electricity Trust he should be able to do so in the same building. That is entirely impracticable, and, I believe, undesirable. It would create an almost insurmountable traffic problem in that particular area. Whether Mr. Lawn likes it or not, if he wants to visit the Electricity Trust he will have to go to its present location and if he desires then to go to the Highways Department he will have to go elsewhere; they will not be in the same building. I realize that is not the only question he raised in connection with Foy's building. It may be that the Government made a mistake in putting the Children's Welfare Department into that building before it was completed. That department has occupied poor accommodation for a number of years and the Government was anxious to improve its position, and as soon as the committee which investigated this matter intimated that the building was ready for occupation the department was transferred there.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Did the committee really examine the building?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will not shelter behind any committee. The Government itself was anxious to secure occupation of that building as early as possible.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Why did the Government shift a department from premises it had occupied for about a hundred years to a building that was not ready?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is quite common practice for premises to be used before the entire building is completed. It may be—I do not say it is—a fact that the department moved in a few weeks before its time. Foy's building presented to the Government an opportunity of securing accommodation for at least half the cost and at least four times as quickly as it could in any other way. The property had a tremendous residual value. The Land Board valued the land alone at £275,000, and the Government knew—and this has been borne out by tenders that were called—that the ground floor had a high rental value. When finance is available the Government will erect a building in Victoria Square on the old Motor Vehicles Registration block. When that proposal was considered some years ago the cost was prohibitive and since then costs have increased threefold. The fact still remains that Foy's building gave the Government an opportunity to obtain a very

large amount of accommodation, in an area that is central to the public, at half the cost and in quarter of the time that other accommodation could have been made available. That is why the building was purchased, and I believe it will greatly improve the efficiency of the Public Service. It is virtually impossible to get full efficiency from the Public Service when it is accommodated in a large number of small rooms.

The only other matter to which I wish to refer is the thoughtful remarks of the member for Whyalla (Mr. Loveday) on Andamooka. I do not agree with all his arguments, but I agree that some special action was necessary there. Probably rations were made available far too easily, and as a result the number of aboriginal people who went there increased astronomically over night.

Mr. Riches—That was in the dry season.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, when the water supply was already severely taxed and efforts had been made to augment it. Also, the aboriginals went to an area where there was no suitable subdivision. There is not the slightest doubt that large quantities of liquor were taken to the field by aboriginals, that some of them had considerable sums of money, and that large amounts of liquor were consumed by them. However, I assure members that the Aborigines Department is supervising the issue of rations in the area, that the Police Department is supervising to see that there will be law and order, and that the other matters he mentioned will receive consideration. I believe that a report concerning the water supply is now being prepared.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishment, and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1958, a sum of £7,000,000 be granted; provided that no payment for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ending June 30, 1957, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service, or any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Motion carried. Resolution adopted in Committee of Ways and Means, and agreed to by the House.

Bill introduced by the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

The Bill provides for the appropriation of £7,000,000 required to carry on the public service of the State during the financial year ending June 30, 1958. Further Supply will be required towards the end of August pending passing of the Appropriation Bill for 1957-58. Clause 3 provides that payments shall not be made in excess of amounts provided for 1956-57, except for the payment of increases in salaries or wages prescribed by wage fixing tribunals. The Bill is in accordance with the ordinary formula of a Supply Bill and does not contain any extraneous matters.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages without amendment.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House to make appropriation of the sum set forth in the accompanying Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure by the Government during the year ending June 30, 1957, for the purposes stated therein.

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

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I thank members for their courtesy in enabling me to place the Supplementary Estimates before them tonight. It is not proposed to go beyond the explanations and the reasons for them tonight. Honourable members will thus have the opportunity to consider them before the House meets again.

The Supplementary Estimates now before the House make provision for additional expenditure amounting to £436,000. The amounts included are for urgent and necessary purposes, as follow:—

CHIEF SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HEALTH—MISCELLANEOUS, £10,000.—A further amount of £10,000 is required to meet expenses of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science for the year. The Budget provided for a grant of £120,000. The chairman of the

institute has informed the Government that the demands of the public on the institute have increased greatly, and that it will be necessary for additional accommodation to be provided for the staff. Honourable members can therefore expect this additional £10,000 to be supplemented in the Estimates which will be prepared for next year by a further amount of at least £15,000, in addition to the normal grant the institute receives.

TREASURER—MISCELLANEOUS, £40,000.—The Commonwealth Grants Commission has in recent years adopted the practice of recommending the Special Grants in two parts, viz., one part which is an estimate of the State's probable requirements in the year in which the grant is to be paid and which is to be subject to subsequent addition or subtraction as the estimate is proved subsequently to have been short or in excess of the Commission's measure of actual requirements; and one part which is an addition or subtraction to a grant made for a prior year or years. For 1956-57 the Commission recommended a total grant of £5,800,000, of which £5,760,000 was the estimate of current 1956-57 needs and £40,000 on account of past deficits. It is accordingly proposed, as was done in a similar situation in 1950-51, to appropriate this £40,000 against deficits of prior years.

MINISTER OF WORKS—ENGINEERING AND WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT, £196,000.—This amount is required to meet the following:—

Adelaide Water District, £138,000.—The sum of £78,000 is required for pumping on the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline. It is anticipated that the total cost of power up to June 25, 1957, will be £162,000, of which only £84,000 was provided in the Estimates. When they were prepared all our metropolitan reservoirs were full and it was thought unlikely that we would have to draw on the Mannum supply, but because of the unprecedented heavy demand for water, and the unusually dry summer, we have had to draw on it more than was expected. An amount of £12,000 is provided for maintenance of cast iron mains. Three contractors' gangs for cement lining mains *in situ* operated in the Adelaide water district for the first time this financial year. The increased expenditure is due to the necessity for providing alternative feeds by means of bye passes. The sum of £36,000 is set aside for the maintenance of services and cleaning mains. The record summer consumption of water was very much

higher than in any previous year. This resulted in lowered pressures in many areas, necessitating extensive replacements of defective services and the cleaning of cast iron mains. An amount of £6,000 is required for maintenance of steel mains. Three serious bursts occurred during the year on the Millbrook trunk main, necessitating the laying of five chains of new pipes across the River Torrens and in the Gorge Road near Athelstone. The sum of £6,000 is provided for the operation of metropolitan pumping stations. The extended period of dry weather has necessitated a continuation of pumping operations in excess of the period originally anticipated.

**Adelaide Sewers, £43,000**—An amount of £119,000 was included in the Budget for materials and services, etc for Adelaide sewers, but this was insufficient to meet extraordinary pumping and maintenance which were necessary owing to the very wet period after July, 1956.

**Morgan-Whyalla Water Main, £15,000**—This amount is required to meet the cost of additional pumping rendered necessary by the recent long dry period.

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION—MISCELLANEOUS, £60,000**—This is an additional grant for the University for 1957. The Budget provided a grant of £660,000 and the Government grant during 1956-57 is now £720,000. The University works on the calendar year: its fiscal year, therefore, overlaps the Budget year. The estimates for the year ending June must make provision for carry-on funds for the University pending provision of the annual grant by Parliament in the succeeding Budget.

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, £105,000**—This additional amount is required for labour for stripping fruit trees, etc., as a result of the further fruit fly outbreak in the eastern suburbs last summer.

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—MISCELLANEOUS, £25,000**—This amount is required for part payment of compensation to growers who suffered loss from the last fruit fly outbreak and who rely on fruit growing as a means of livelihood. The amount provides for a payment to these people on account of compensation. The remainder of the compensation payable will be provided for by a special Bill to be brought before the House shortly. I move the adoption of the first line.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

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

## PORT LINCOLN SEWERAGE SYSTEM.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on the Port Lincoln sewerage system, together with minutes of evidence.

Ordered that report be printed.

## CELLULOSE AUSTRALIA LIMITED (GOVERNMENT SHARES) BILL.

His Excellency the Governor, by message recommended the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to enable the Treasurer to take up shares in Cellulose Australia Limited and appropriate money from the Loan Fund to pay for such shares, and to enact other incidental provisions.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

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

*That This Bill be now read a second time.*

The Surplus Revenue Act of 1938 authorized the Treasurer to underwrite the issue of 100,000 £1 shares in Cellulose Australia Limited, which company was at that time being formed for the purpose of setting up a factory to manufacture cellulose paper and board. This action was taken by the Government in order to assist in the establishment of an important industry in the South-East of the State, and in accordance with the underwriting agreement the Treasurer was called upon to take up shares to the amount of £23,273. It will be recalled that during the early years of its existence the company experienced considerable difficulty and the Government gave further assistance to the company in two ways. In the first place, through the Industries Assistance Corporation, a further £4,655 was subscribed as share capital. When this corporation ceased activity and went into voluntary liquidation in 1946 these shares were transferred to the Treasurer, as the debenture holder for the corporation. Secondly, after an exhaustive inquiry by the Industries Development Committee, the Government agreed to guarantee £100,000 of the company's overdraft with the State Bank.

By 1951 the company was in a position to seek fresh capital and release the Government

guarantee, and to assist with this capital reconstruction the Government sought authority from Parliament by the Surplus Revenue Act Amendment Act, 1951, to subscribe for the further shares offered to it—amounting to 18,300 shares at £1. Thus the total investment by the Government in this company at face value is £46,228, consisting of 23,273 shares subscribed for in accordance with the 1938 underwriting agreement; 18,300 shares subscribed for in the capital reconstruction of 1951; and 4,655 shares handed over by the Industries Assistance Corporation upon its liquidation.

For some time now the Cellulose Company has been a successful undertaking and the guarantee given by the Government was cancelled in 1951. Since then the company has expanded its mill, and in February this year proceeded to the issue of additional capital on the basis of one ordinary £1 share for each two shares held. The Treasurer thus became entitled to 23,114 shares at par, making the total Government holding in the company 69,342 shares. I notice that Cellulose £1 ordinary shares are now quoted on the market at 40s. Members will therefore see that the Government's investment in this company has been remarkably successful. It is the largest individual shareholder.

Mr. O'Halloran—Are any of the directors still appointed by the Government?

The Hon Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—When the company re-organized and paid back £100,000 to the State Bank and the Government's guarantee was no longer required, the chairman of directors asked whether the Government objected to some directors continuing in office. The Government said the directors were satisfactory and it did not object to their continuing. Indeed, the Under-Treasurer (Mr. F. C. Drew) is a director today, so the Government knows the company's workings intimately. The present directors are appointed in accordance with the articles of association, and not by any individual shareholder.

The company uses some 7,000,000 super feet of pulpwood from our South-Eastern forests annually, and it is anticipated that the association of this company with Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited in the construction of a new mill in the South-East will expand the usage of pulpwood by a further 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 super feet annually.

Quite apart from the capital investment the Government has made in the Cellulose Company, it is promoting a subsidiary company which is a large user of the thinnings

from Government forests and therefore an important adjunct to those forests. Indeed, it is an essential project from the point of view of maintaining our profitable forest undertaking. This associated company will have a capital of £1,000,000, of which Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited will provide £500,000 and the Cellulose Company £500,000, the Government underwriting £500,000 capital.

Mr. O'Halloran—Has that been reported on by the Industries Development Committee?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Not yet, but agreement has been reached in principle and I believe the State Bank will underwrite it as a normal financial transaction.

Mr. O'Halloran—Is that still the company's bank?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. The company came to the State Bank when it was in difficulty and has continued with the State Bank as an extremely satisfactory account.

Mr. Corcoran—What will be the site of the new company's operations?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I understand it will be adjacent to the present cellulose works at Snuggery, near Millicent.

The success of the company is an example of Government association with private enterprise in the establishment and operation of a profitable industry. It is providing employment for 300 employees. Clause 1 of the Bill is the "short title." Clause 2 (1) authorizes the Treasurer to apply for and take up the shares to which he is entitled. Subclause (2) directs that the money required shall be paid out of the Loan Fund. Subclause (3) appropriates the funds required. Subclause (4) states that the shares taken up pursuant to this Bill are in addition to any other shares held by the Treasurer. Clause 3 gives the Treasurer power to sell shares whenever he deems it appropriate. I assure members that the Government does not intend to exercise that power: it is merely an enabling power that could be used in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. O'Halloran—We will not use it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Special circumstances may arise that will make it necessary to use it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

**QUESTIONS.****EMPLOYMENT IN RAILWAYS  
DEPARTMENT.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways inquire from his colleague whether it is the practice of the Railways Commissioner to insist that youths produce references when applying for employment in his department?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will do that and bring down a reply some time this week.

**MURRAY RIVER FLOOD RELIEF.**

Mr. KING—Can the Minister of Lands say what is the present position regarding the distribution of the Lord Mayor's Flood Relief Fund, the resiting of flood banks, and the reimbursement of cost for flood protection work, and in this connection can he throw any light on an obviously misinformed question asked by a Labor Senator regarding tree losses in connection with a resolution of the Murray Valley Defence League at Waikerie?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member telephoned my office yesterday and indicated that he would ask these questions. As to the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund, that has been going along very satisfactorily, and on checking up this morning with the secretary of the fund I was informed that they now have about 1,100 applications for assistance. The committee had asked officers of the Lands Department to investigate each individual case. Ninety per cent of the cases have been investigated and we hope the remainder will be completed in the next two or three weeks. It is confidently expected that by the end of August or early in September some finality will be reached in regard to the fund.

It was found necessary to investigate each individual case because some applicants were over-estimating what they were entitled to, whereas the investigators found that others were entitled to more than they had applied for. There is really great harmony between the department and the applicants. The committee set up to consider the embankments and their re-siting was formed in March and sent out circulars to all councils involved in flood problems, and asked them to reply by April 30, and to set out clearly the information required by the committee. Unfortunately, a number of the councils did not reply. One replied by May 30 instead of April 30. As to the statement of a Federal Senator regarding the slowness of the work, that has been

brought about, or helped to be brought about, by the inactivity of some of the councils. Generally, the work is well in hand, and the councils which have applied are very resentful of the attitude of the gentleman who complained of the inactivity of the committee. As to the resolution referred to by the honourable member, the local committees are very incensed because it was one that possibly should never have been accepted. I heard the word "political" used today, and if ever there was anything political, it was in that resolution. The Senator also referred to the areas that were lost, and it was stated that one settler lost 100,000 trees. There is a great error there, because it would take many complete orchards to aggregate that number of trees.

It was estimated that £700,000 would be required to deal with the flood problem. Up to the present, of the £700,000 estimated, no less than £691,710 has been paid as a reimbursement to the councils and individuals concerned. No doubt honourable members will feel that these three committees have done a very good job. As Minister, I know that generally speaking the people in the areas concerned are happy and satisfied with the Government's activities.

**DAWS ROAD REPATRIATION HOSPITAL.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have been informed that one ward at the Daws Road Repatriation Hospital has been closed. As I understand that there is still a waiting list for admission to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, will the Treasurer ask the Federal Minister for Health to open that ward at the Repatriation Hospital to enable ex-servicemen or their dependants to be admitted and charged not more than the charges that apply at the Royal Adelaide Hospital?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not been informed that some of the accommodation at the Daws Road Hospital, which is a Commonwealth Hospital, has been closed, so obviously I have not been able to consider the question. However, I will go into the matter forthwith and discuss it with the health authorities to see whether it is possible to get the Commonwealth to make that accommodation available to ex-servicemen or their dependants who may be needing hospital treatment.

**PARAPLEGIC CENTRE.**

Mr. MILLHOUSE—On May 3 I received a letter from the Under Secretary informing me that the Royal Adelaide Hospital Board was investigating a proposal for the establishment



of a paraplegic centre as suggested by Dr. Goodman; the well-known authority on paraplegia. I have not heard anything further, and as this is a matter of importance I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Health whether he has yet received a report and, if he has, will he make its contents known to members?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—A report was received by the Government and considered by Cabinet, but before making a final decision it was necessary for Cabinet to get some additional information. That has not yet come to hand, but as soon as it does the matter will be again considered by Cabinet and I will then be able to give the honourable member a definite reply. The report we have had, in the main, supports the opening of a centre by the Government. It was not by any means hostile to the opening of a centre, but we need additional information to see how many patients may be cured by the establishment of such a centre and the expenditure involved. I understand that the treatment proposed has been remarkably successful in Great Britain and many people with spinal injuries who would otherwise be totally incapacitated have been able to lead useful lives as a result of the treatment. Under those circumstances I assure the honourable member that the Government is sympathetic towards action being taken here. It is only a question of what accommodation can be made available, taking into consideration other hospital demands. I will let the honourable member have a definite reply and I may be able to make a statement to the House on this question.

#### LOADING OF ORE AT PORT PIRIE.

Mr. DAVIS—When speaking this afternoon I mentioned the conditions under which waterside workers were working when loading ore at Port Pirie. The whole of the area where the ore is stacked is nothing but slush, and the men tried to get over the difficulty by using a circular broom to make the area passable, but that was unsuccessful. Will the Minister of Marine investigate this matter and treat it as urgent?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I listened to the honourable member's remarks about this question. The position was unknown to me before, but now that the matter has been raised I will follow it up and hope to be able to give him a reply on Thursday. The Harbors Board will be away tomorrow, so I will have no opportunity of discussing it then, but I will get a reply as soon as possible thereafter.

#### EUDUNDA AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Will the Minister of Education obtain a report on the progress of the work proposed at the Eudunda Area School, in particular on the two additional rooms and the woodwork rooms, and will he ascertain whether the accumulation of earth from leveling is impeding the progress of some of the proposed work?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

#### JERVOIS BRIDGE.

Mr. TAPPING—There has been a persistent rumour in the Semaphore district recently that the Jervois Bridge is about to be demolished and that no other bridge will take its place. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Roads confirm or deny that report?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I cannot either confirm or deny it. The Government is not aware of any intention on the part of the department to take any action immediately in regard to the bridge, but I will take up the question with my colleague and bring down a reply.

#### EDUCATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Has the Government come to any decision about the post-primary education of mentally retarded children following on the submissions made by interested parties to the Chief Secretary some time ago?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No decision has yet been reached.

#### TEROWIE WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Minister of Works say how far investigations have proceeded into the possibility of providing a reticulated water supply for Terowie and have any firm estimates of costs been prepared by his department?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The honourable member was good enough to tell me that he intended asking this question and I have obtained some information for him. The Engineer-in-Chief has prepared an up-to-date estimate of the cost of extending a main to Terowie from the Spalding-Peterborough pipeline. The estimated cost now stands at £117,500 and the estimated annual cost, including the cost of pumping water through the Morgan-Whyalla main, would be over £19,000. I expect a comprehensive report from the Engineer-in-Chief shortly and I will then submit the matter for the consideration of Cabinet.

**PETERBOROUGH WATER SUPPLY.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The laying of the asbestos-cement pipes from Belalie North to Peterborough which will enable Murray water to be provided at Peterborough, has been completed and the work of building a tank at Belalie North has been commenced, but the completion of this work is contingent on the provision of steel pipes for the pumping main from Jamestown to Belalie North. Some time ago the Minister of Works informed me that there was a delay in the provision of steel for making these pipes. Will he inform me whether steel is available and when we can expect this work to be completed.

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The asbestos-cement pipes have been laid, and I am pleased to be able to report that steel plate for the 10in. steel pipes for the remainder of the main has been obtained by the contractors, who will shortly commence manufacturing the pipes. Delivery of these steel pipes should commence in a few weeks. Excavations for the storage tank for which water will be pumped from Jamestown have been completed, and trimming is in progress. A 30,000 gallon squatter's tank has been erected at the site of this concrete tank for constructional purposes and, if necessary, to allow the scheme to operate if the 10in. steel main is completed before the storage tank.

**AUSTRALIAN STEEL EXPORTS.**

Mr. HEASLIP—It has been reported in the press recently that the production of Australian steel has increased to such an extent that it is now being exported, and will make a contribution to exports from this country. I was told recently by merchants in this State who supply iron droppers for fencing that it would take between 3,000 and 4,000 tons of steel to fill existing orders. It seems wrong to export steel when our primary industries cannot get enough for fencing. The alternative is star droppers, which are about double price, and concrete or wooden posts, but their cost almost prohibits their use. Will the Premier take up this matter to see if a greater quota of this type of steel can be brought to South Australia for fence droppers?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I shall be pleased to do that, and will advise the member in due course.

**TRUST HOMES.**

Mr. HAMBOUR—Can the Premier inform me what amount of money would be produced if all the rental trust homes in South Australia

were sold for £100 deposit, and whether this money would be available for the building of more homes?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Quite frankly, I cannot state the precise number of rental houses held by the trust at present. The trust has erected over 30,000 houses, of which between 50 and 60 per cent have been sold, so by simple arithmetic the honourable member can see what the return at £100 deposit would be. If that money were to be collected as a deposit it would increase the amount available for building further homes. However, there are very many tenants in rental houses at present who have not £100, and if we adopt the suggestion of selling the homes for £100 deposit, there is not the slightest doubt that it would involve a considerable number of people in dire hardship. I do not think the suggestion could be entertained. The trust only goes into the question of rental houses after it has not obtained suitable purchasers, and to meet the demands of people who are not in a position to pay a deposit on a house. Pensioners would be gravely concerned if all the houses were purely sale houses on which they had to make a substantial deposit to secure entry.

**HENLEY SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL.**

Mr. FRED WALSH—Last session I asked several questions about the building of a high school at Henley South, and from the answers I understand that it is the intention of the department to proceed within a reasonable time with the construction. Will the Minister of Education state whether a suitable site has been acquired?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—A site of 15 acres has been acquired from the Railways Commissioner on which it is proposed to erect a high school at Henley South in the future. It is not quite as large an area as is usual these days for a high school, but it is hoped to enter into satisfactory arrangements with the Henley and Grange Council for the use of the oval for recreation purposes.

**SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**

Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—The Speaker and Messrs. Geoffrey Clarke, O'Halloran and Quirke.

Library.—The Speaker and Messrs. John Clark, Millhouse and Stephens.

Printing.—Messrs. Bywaters, Coombe, Hambour, Heath and Jennings.

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of Sessional Committees.

#### JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That it be an order of this House that, in view of the creation of the Joint House Committee under the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, a Sessional House Committee be not appointed under Standing Order 404.

Motion carried.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That a committee consisting of Messrs. Bockelberg, Hambour, Heath, Laucke, and the mover be appointed to prepare a draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor in reply to his speech on opening the Parliament, and to report on June 26.

Motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 8.22 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, June 26, at 2 p.m.