

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, June 27, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

TAXICAB CONTROL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Metropolitan Taxicab Control Board, which was appointed under legislation passed last year, fixed a proclaimed day on which the legislation will become operative?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I shall have to check the position for the honourable member, but as far as I know the Act has been proclaimed and the board has been appointed, so the machinery for taking over the control has already been formally approved by Parliamentary and legal sanction. I do not know what the actual administrative arrangements have been, though I know the board has been meeting. I believe it has had some fairly difficult initial problems to solve, but whether it is already assuming control over licences or still allowing the councils to police them I cannot say. I will find out for the honourable member and advise him as soon as possible.

MOTOR CAR THEFTS.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—My question concerns the punishment of those who can be loosely called motor car thieves. Recently suggestions have been put to me that the penalty for this offence should be increased, and I have noticed references in the press in the last few days, the gist of which were that the penalties should be increased. I point out the disparity between the penalty under section 53 of the Road Traffic Act and the penalty for simple larceny under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, and I ask the Premier whether the Government will consider whether harsher penalties should not be imposed upon those who use other people's motor cars and smash them up.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government has had reports from the police on a number of occasions, but as far as I know none of them has advocated any alteration in the present penalties. It has often been pointed out that the position is not that the penalties fixed under the Act have been unduly lenient but that the penalty depends on the view taken by the court. I believe that in the past the court has taken a fairly lenient view of any minor borrowing of a motor car and taking a ride in it. The courts have never regarded

this offence as being in the category of permanent larceny of a car. I have been told that the Deputy Commissioner of Police, who only yesterday returned from abroad, has a statement on this matter in today's *Advertiser*, but I have not yet seen it. I will examine what he now has to say.

SOUTH ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—At present certain alterations are being made to the South Road at the turnoff to Victor Harbour, but I think the corner could be made safer for modern traffic if the owners of the adjoining property would sell some land to the Highways Department and a tree was removed. Will the Minister of Works take up this question with his colleague, the Minister of Roads?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes, and I will see that the honourable member gets a reply as early as possible.

USE OF FIREARMS.

Mr. JENKINS—In recent years there have been many instances of the careless handling of firearms in built-up areas, but the police can only take action when it has been proved that firearms have been used dangerously. Will the Premier have the Act amended so that people wishing to use firearms in built-up areas must get permission from the police before doing so?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined, but I point out that the Act was under complete review by this Parliament only last session and it was amended considerably.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I received a complaint from a constituent that three migrants were shooting on his property, but that when he went to reprimand them and explain that they could not do so without permission, he discovered they could not speak English. Does the Premier think it would be in the best interests of the public if the firearms legislation were amended to make it essential that whoever received a gun licence should know what it implied and what responsibilities were attached to it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

APPROACHES TO MURRAY BRIDGE.

Mr. BYWATERS—On October 2 last I drew the House's attention to the dangerous nature of the road approaches to the bridge at Murray Bridge. Subsequently I received a reply that the road gang working on the Karoonda Road would rectify the dangerous

“S” bend on the eastern side of the river. That has not yet been done, and I understand the gang is still working on the Karoonda Road, but since I raised this matter there have been two fatal accidents, and many minor accidents, some of the victims of which needed hospital attention. In addition, two semi-trailers collided at this point, and this inconvenienced other road users because of the debris that was scattered over the road. I point out that this is the main road to Victoria and is heavily used. The approaches are dangerous. There is an S-bend on the eastern side of the river and a steep hill with poor visibility on the township side. I am afraid lest there be a big accident with a serious build-up of traffic and consequent loss of life. Will the Minister ascertain whether it will be possible to expedite this work and whether, until it can be done, more prominent warning signs can be erected and double lines painted on both approaches?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—During the course of many years I have crossed that bridge on hundreds of occasions, so I know the position. The honourable member has made some constructive suggestions which I will refer to my colleague for a report. I am sure the last thing the Minister would desire would be to leave unattended anything that could be done to make the road safer.

BARLEY STORAGE.

Mr. GOLDNEY—About two years ago the Australian Barley Board, as an experiment, erected three silos in different localities in South Australia for the storage of barley in bulk. The silos were small and were completed in time for the 1955-56 harvest. Can the Minister of Agriculture indicate the results of that experiment?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will ask the General Manager of the Barley Board if he is prepared to make a report available.

LOADING OF ORE AT PORT PIRIE.

Mr. DAVIS—Has the Minister of Marine a reply to the question I asked on Tuesday concerning the conditions under which water-side workers were loading ore at Port Pirie?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—In the limited time at my disposal I obtained the following report from the assistant general manager of the Harbors Board:—

Under the present methods employed by the shipping companies for handling ore for shipment at Port Pirie the slushy working condi-

tions in wet weather complained of by Mr. Davis, M.P., cannot be completely overcome. There is a drainage system throughout the stacking areas and improvements have been made to it from time to time by the provision of additional sumps, but this drainage system is not fully effective because of the very fine nature of the ore which absorbs the surface water instead of allowing it to run away. The roadways within the stacking areas and the surfaces between the wharf decking and the ore stacks on which the mobile cranes work are given almost continuous attention by the board, resurfacing being undertaken before serious deterioration takes place. Steel plates are laid on the wharf decking during loading operations but this does not prevent slushy conditions at the loading point from ore spilt from trucks in wet weather. There is an alternative and that is the handling of ore by means of a conveyor belt direct from stack to ship and this is a scheme that the board's officers are investigating in connection with the proposals for improvements at Port Pirie.

During the summer months it is necessary to keep the dust wet. The member will realize that something has been attempted to improve conditions.

Mr. DAVIS—According to that report such conditions are unavoidable at Port Pirie. It suggests that the spilling of ore was responsible for the slushy conditions, but that plates were placed on the decking of the wharves to obviate it. Can the Minister say how long it is since any investigation has been made of the conditions at Port Pirie; how long since improvements have been made to the wharves where ore is stacked; when any effective draining was done in that area and whether it is not a fact that the plates were placed on the wharf to provide a smooth surface for cranes picking up with a grab and not for the benefit of water-side workers?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Obviously I am not able to answer those questions off-hand. I will get the information and forward it to the honourable member.

HANSBOROUGH POWER HOUSE.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Will the Minister of Works consider electrifying the power house at Hansborough, as it would be of great assistance to the residents between Eudunda and Hansborough in enabling them to have power?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—So far as the department is concerned it would be a question of economics, but if a scheme could be worked out with the residents I am sure the Engineer-in-Chief would be prepared to recommend it. I will obtain a reply as early as possible.

ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL CHARGES.

Mr. LAWN—Yesterday, in reply to a question by Mr. Hutchens concerning hospital charges to pensioners, the Premier said:—

What the honourable member suggests, if accepted, would mean that a person going to hospital could make a profit.

I have made inquiries this morning and have ascertained from hospital benefit schemes that a pensioner couple would have to pay £2 12s. a quarter for hospital benefits only. They would have to pay that out of a pension of £4 a week and in two years would contribute £20 16s. If one were confined to the Royal Adelaide Hospital for one week he would receive £16 16s. from the scheme, or £4 4s. less than the amount paid to it. It would depend on the period a pensioner had been a member of a hospital benefits scheme and the length of time he spent in hospital whether he made a profit. I realize the question was thrust upon the Premier yesterday, but will he re-examine the position?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am quite happy to investigate what the honourable member has said, but I feel that the Government would not be justified in providing hospital accommodation free of charge in such circumstances that a person could profit therefrom. I will let the honourable member have a written reply in due course.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. COUMBE—Will the Premier indicate whether the Government has considered submissions made by the Local Government Association with a view to amending the Local Government Act, and intends introducing amending legislation later this session to give effect to those submissions?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Amending legislation will be introduced which will throw the whole Act open for consideration. The Government does not agree with all the submissions made, but it will be for Parliament to determine what amendments it would like. The Government does not, however, accept all the submissions made to it. With some it does not agree.

Mr. DUNSTAN—During the February session a Local Government Bill was introduced and certain amendments were moved on my behalf by the Leader of the Opposition. Those amendments were considered after some adjournment of the debate, and in the meantime a drive-in picture theatre, with which they were designed to cope, was erected. When the amendments were considered an undertaking was given by the Minister representing the

Minister of Local Government that if the amendments were withdrawn there would be ample opportunity to debate these matters when a comprehensive Local Government Bill was introduced in the near future. In view of the fact that several drive-in theatres are being built within built-up areas—something that has not happened in other States as they have been built outside built-up areas there—can the Minister say when we might expect the introduction of a Local Government Bill so that the House may take some prompt action?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Such a Bill has been discussed in Cabinet and I think it extremely likely that one will be brought down this session.

DRIVE-IN THEATRE, WEST BEACH.

Mr. FRED WALSH—My question concerns the proposed establishment of a drive-in theatre on the National Reserve, West Beach. This proposal has caused quite a stir, particularly in the areas adjacent to the reserve—West Beach and Glenelg North. Two or three people have communicated with me, as has the Glenelg North Progress Association, advising me of their objection. Mr. L. C. Waterman stated that the company he represents—a picture importing company—needs at least 12 acres of the reserve to establish a drive-in theatre. From his statement it would appear that the matter has already been determined and the trust did not consult the West Torrens and Glenelg Councils, or anyone else concerned. Yesterday morning's *Advertiser* reported that the West Torrens Council had decided to refer the matter to the incoming committee after the new council had been appointed, and Mr. Baker said it was within the province of the Reserve Trust to make this agreement if it thought fit, but he did not say that an agreement had been made. In the face of Mr. Waterman's statement, he followed it up today and said in effect that one had been made. I am much concerned about the attitude of the Reserve Trust in granting a lease of that kind. When the Bill was before the House no member envisaged such a thing as a drive-in theatre being built at the reserve, which was considered to be more for recreation and rest, and to provide other amenities in the interests of the community.

The SPEAKER—I appreciate that the honourable member said he proposed not to make a speech and that he would only make a statement, but I ask him to now ask his question.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I crave your permission, Sir, to say that the site is considered to be definitely unsuitable, even if agreed upon, because of the traffic hazards that will result. Will the Premier request the Reserve Trust to consult recognized local bodies, such as the Glenelg North Progressive Association and the Town Planner, before finalizing the lease?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government, with the approval of Parliament, made available a large area to be developed as a recreation reserve, and it established a trust with wide powers to deal with its particular needs, including power to lease land. It was anticipated when the trust was formed that it would undoubtedly lease some of the land because it was completely beyond its means to develop the area for many years to come. It was recognized by Parliament that it would be necessary to have some steady income to enable the trust to develop the area in the way proposed. There were a number of applicants for the land at the time, each of which was told he would have to wait until the trust was established and that the trust would determine whether or not a lease was desirable. I do not know the circumstances of this lease, or whether one has been granted or not. The trust comprises representatives of local government bodies in the area appointed by the bodies themselves, with one person appointed by the Government as chairman. The whole matter rests in the hands of the councils in the area and I know of no better authorities to determine the matter or to express local opinion, because they are appointed by the ratepayers in the areas concerned. There will always be objections to drive-in theatres, wherever they are. No doubt they cause disadvantages to local residents and there is always a trade objection, and I do not say that the objections are not *bona fide*.

Mr. FRED WALSH—The Premier apparently misunderstood my question, for he certainly did not answer it. Will he request the trust to consult with the recognized local bodies and the Town Planner before finalizing the lease for the theatre?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I point out that the lease is being approved by a trust comprising representatives of the local government authorities in whose hands, by legislation, this reserve has been placed.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Surely a request from you would be considered?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Possibly, but it is not usually the function of the Government to interfere with administration by local government authorities. I will get a report from the chairman of the trust on the action taken and the reasons for it. The honourable member will then have firsthand information.

SUCCESSION DUTIES ACT.

Mr. KING—To what extent is discretion allowed under the Succession Duties Act to provide relief to widows and dependants by the waiving or remission of the duties where the net value of the estate at the date of death has been subsequently seriously diminished by misfortune, so that to find the amount of succession duties after the misfortune would constitute considerable hardship to the dependants of the deceased? If no discretion is allowed will the Government consider amending the Act to provide for it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Succession duty is paid on the valuation at the time of death. The honourable member says that if, through some means, the valuation of the property decreases after death it is a ground for some concession being made, but what would be the position if, through some extraneous happening after valuation, the value greatly increased? Would there be another assessment? We must take a given time for a valuation and it is not possible then to make subsequent revaluations.

OIL REFINERY IN S.A.

Mr. TAPPING—On February 5 last, in reply to a question by me, the Premier said he was hopeful of an oil refinery being established in South Australia. Has he any further information on the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government is still optimistic. The position has been altered to some extent by the Suez crisis, which led to a world-wide recognition that tankers of the future must be very much larger. Today two tankers of about 80,000 tons are being constructed, much larger than the "Queen" ships, which held pride of place for many years. That means that any oil refinery of the future will need a greater depth of water for ships than was previously regarded as necessary. The matter has been examined by the Harbors Board and representations have been submitted to the company concerned. The experts who came to the State spent much time examining the proposals. Although it was not a considered view, the view expressed at

the time, which was subject to more analysis, was favourable to the enterprise, so the Government is still very confident that something will mature from this proposal. The market in South Australia has now reached the stage where it can adequately support an oil refinery and I believe we can provide facilities to enable one to be established. Such a project would probably involve a capital expenditure of not less than £30,000,000, and under these circumstances, before reaching a decision, the company would naturally take some time to go into all the angles of the enterprise. I believe the proposal is sound.

GRAVEL FOR ROADS.

Mr. LAUCKE—The diminution of natural supplies of gravel available to some district councils in my electorate for road construction and maintenance is a matter of growing concern, and I believe this condition could well apply in many other parts of the State. The alternative material to gravel is crushed rock, but the cost of installing crushing plants by individual councils is prohibitive. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads ask his colleague to consider the provision by the Highways Department of a mobile crushing plant that could move from district to district furnishing stock piles of crushed rock for purchase by councils?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up this matter with my colleague and let the honourable member have a reply as soon as it is available. Intensive investigations will be necessary to ascertain whether such a plant is warranted.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS IN SCHOOLS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Many timber frame rooms are at present used in our schools and some concern has been expressed to me about the use of chemical fire extinguishers. I understand that the present policy of the Education Department is to supply these fire extinguishers for use only in science laboratories and domestic arts and film rooms, sand buckets being provided for other timber frame rooms. In view of the large number of timber frame rooms, can the Minister of Education say whether a change in policy has been considered to enable chemical fire extinguishers to be supplied for use in all timber frame rooms, or for subsidizing their purchase, and if not, will he consider this matter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—A change in policy has been considered and discussed by me with officers of my department and the

Architect-in-Chief's department. Regarding the second question, I will reconsider the matter and let the honourable member have a considered reply.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say whether the long service leave proposals he announced through the press will be the policy of the Government; has the Government reconsidered its plan in view of representations made by employers' organizations; and if so, will the provisions suggested by those organizations be included in the Government plan? Alternatively, in view of the fact that independent tribunals have been set up to deal with this subject, does the Government intend to abandon its proposals?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The matter of long service leave in South Australia was first raised by the Trades and Labor Council in a deputation to me which asked that, as the Privy Council had held that the States had the power to make laws on this matter provided they did not conflict with Arbitration Court awards, South Australian workers receive the same benefit by legislation as that provided in other States. The deputation pointed out that the Parliaments of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria had provided for 13 weeks' leave after 20 years' service and that in Tasmania the same period of leave, but less retrospectivity, was provided for. The Government in this State was asked to provide long service leave in accordance with the provisions obtaining in other States, and I told the deputation I would consider the matter and make a statement on it after Cabinet had examined it.

The examination disclosed one or two difficulties. Firstly, the other State Parliaments had provided for retrospectivity of 20 years, and an examination of that provision showed that certain industries would be very hard hit indeed if it applied here, that no justification existed for it, and that violent opposition would have been raised if the retrospectivity had been made to go the other way and taken away previously existing privileges. It also showed that the retrospectivity in itself raised many difficulties in framing a Bill because the 20 years' retrospectivity, together with the 13 weeks leave, would necessitate the provision of many extraneous measures to ensure that the worker would not be dismissed by an employer merely to avoid the payment for the long service leave, and I was certain that this provision would not be accepted by Parliament.

Under those circumstances the Government tried to work out a proposal that would give the South Australian worker something at least as good as that provided in other States, but which would not have attached to it the undesirable features I have mentioned. Having examined the matter carefully and consulted the best authorities, the Government decided that, instead of providing for the long period of retrospectivity, the qualifying period should be seven years—much less than that provided in any other State—and that at the end of that period the employee would be entitled each year to one additional week's leave, which would mean that he would receive 13 weeks' leave by the end of 20 years, the same as in other States. Beyond that period he would receive a greater benefit than that provided in other States because, whereas in other States he would get 6½ weeks for each subsequent 10 years' service, under the legislation I proposed he would get 10 weeks. Members will therefore see that the proposals the Government had in mind were extremely fair to both employer and employee. On the side of the employer we provided legislation that was not so retrospective in its incidence and gave him the advantage that he could immediately claim taxation deductions for the amount that he provided, which he cannot do in the other States. He also has the advantage that an employee would be prompted to stay in permanent employment with him. On the other side, the total amount of leave provided for the employee would be greater than in the other States and it would be available to him much more quickly, so the Government's proposals were advantageous to both employer and employee.

Mr. Quirke—Would the leave be cumulative and optional?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government believed there would be no objection to accumulation of the leave provided that both the employer and the employee agreed to it, or to the employee taking payment for leave if he desired and the employer was in favour of that. The Government's proposal was that in the event of there not being agreement on those points the leave would be taken.

There was no difficulty on those points, but since that time I have noticed in the press that the Labor Party's policy is for 13 weeks' leave at the end of 10 years' service and that the Labor Party will oppose the Government's Bill at all stages, including

the second reading. The 13 weeks' leave at the end of 10 years seems to be a local rule because the other States with Labor Governments have already provided for 13 weeks' leave after 20 years' service. Previously I had no indication of the Labor Party's policy here on that matter; and in those circumstances the Government is re-examining the whole problem.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL.

Mr. HUTCHENS—From time to time the press has given various dates on which the general section of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is likely to be opened. I appreciate the difficulties associated with works of this magnitude, but can the Minister of Works say when this work will be completed or can he give some report on the progress being made at the hospital?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will ascertain from the Architect-in-Chief when the various stages are expected to be completed. Part of the work has been undertaken by the Architect-in-Chief and some entrusted to an outside architect. He will have to confer with him before giving the honourable member a reply, but when the information is available I will forward it to him.

WOOMERA AND MARALINGA RANGES.

Mr. LOVEDAY—In view of the statement that the Prime Minister, when in America next month, will offer the United States the use of the atomic weapon testing facilities at Woomera and Maralinga, and in view of the fact that there is considerable danger associated with these experiments (notwithstanding reassuring statements that have been made), will the Premier call for a report from the Commonwealth Government on the nature of the proposals so that they may be considered in this House before any firm commitments are made?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This is clearly a defence matter, so my Government has no authority to call for a report.

KILBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question concerns the grading of the ground at the Kilburn primary school. For about two years I have been approaching the department to have the area graded, and I assure the Minister that it badly needs grading. Recently the school committee approached the department and received the following letter:—

You are advised that this work has not been started, firstly because there are new

woodwork shops to be erected and graded levels will have to be altered to suit the new structures.

I do not know whether that is a legitimate reason for not grading the ground but the letter continues:—

Secondly, it is not deemed advisable to waste public funds on paving.

Paving has never been mentioned in any approach to the department by the committee or myself, but grading has been asked for, and the only reason given for not carrying this out has been that some new building work is being undertaken. The committee took a dim view of the phraseology of that letter, especially the words "it is not deemed advisable to waste public funds." I think the Minister will appreciate that the committee has been responsible for raising hundreds and hundreds of pounds for school funds.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat. There has been a tendency for members to make long speeches when asking questions. When a member obtains leave to explain his question he must make a brief explanation which must be pertinent to the question. He must not express an opinion or debate the question. I ask the honourable member to put his question now to the Minister of Education.

Mr. JENNINGS—Does the Minister think it would be a good idea for him to ask the officer who drafts his letters not to use phraseology of that nature, as it does not win friends or influence people? Will he also re-examine the question of grading the ground at the Kilburn school and let me have a reply by letter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—If I understood the honourable member correctly he asked two questions. In my opinion the first is not worthy of reply. My answer to the second is, "Yes."

PORT AUGUSTA HOSPITAL.

Mr. RICHES—The Port Augusta Hospital Board is pleased with the work which is being done on the new maternity wing and with the provision of additional facilities, but is perturbed because, despite overcrowding, no provision has been made for even one extra bed. Will the Premier, representing the Minister of Health, call for a report from the Director of Medical Services or from the department on the matter of providing additional accommodation at the maternity wing?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

MYPOLONGA OPEN CHANNELS.

Mr. BYWATERS—Yesterday I asked a question concerning the erection of fencing around the open channels at Mypolonga. In this morning's press I read with regret that a personal friend lost his small child in one of these open drains yesterday. Ironically the death occurred at approximately the time I was asking my question. Will the Minister of Lands endeavour to expedite the building of fences along this particular channel at Mypolonga so as to prevent any further loss of life, particularly as this is not the first tragedy in open channels in irrigation areas? Will he consider the provision of fencing generally?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I regret the loss of a young life in the channel referred to, but I believe that channel has been in existence for about 50 years and I doubt whether there has been such a tragedy there before. I realize there have been in other areas. As I mentioned yesterday, we are waiting on material which we hope to receive in a few days. The work will then proceed.

WILD PIGS.

Mr. TAPPING—In last Tuesday's *News* the following appeared:—

Selling Pigs with Worms?—The South Australian Department of Agriculture is carrying out a full investigation into the marketing of wild pigs in Adelaide. It is feared worm-infected animals might be among the pigs being sold.

Has the Minister of Agriculture any statement to make on this matter?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am making inquiries in an effort to ascertain the origin of these alleged wild pigs, but have not obtained conclusive information. When I get it I will make it available to the honourable member.

BUSH FIRE FIGHTING INSURANCE.

Mr. LAUCKE—I understand that legislation will be introduced this session to extend insurance covers under the Bush Fires Act so as to provide cover for emergency fire fighting volunteers during training exercises. I feel there is a real need for liberal and wide reviewing of all phases of insurance as it affects fire fighting personnel and privately-owned equipment. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether consideration will be given to the provision of a comprehensive cover of all fire fighting equipment and personnel travelling to, returning from, and operating at a fire?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member is correct in saying that an undertaking has been given to include a cover for members of emergency fire fighting units undergoing training exercises, and in certain other respects. The question of a general cover for all fire fighting personnel, vehicles and equipment is a wide one. The whole matter has been examined from time to time by the Bush Fires Advisory Committee and certain recommendations are now being considered. Following this a Bill will be prepared for approval of Cabinet and Parliament. It must be remembered as a general principle that volunteer fire fighters are volunteers and to attempt to cover them all in every respect would go beyond the ambit of volunteer fire fighting. I do not say that in an attempt to escape an obligation. A volunteer always risks something and he would cease to be a volunteer if all the risks associated with his services were covered.

Mr. Stott—Are you referring to fighting a fire?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I suggest that we must draw the line somewhere in the cover. For instance, it would be easy in a dragnet cover to include even people only remotely connected with a fire. It might include a person changing the wheel of his vehicle whilst on the way to fight a fire. It could be argued in extreme cases that a person who has an accident while boiling a billy or cutting a sandwich should be covered. There are difficulties in legislation of this nature. Whilst the legislation will be drafted sympathetically we cannot say in easy fashion that people in all circumstances of fire fighting should be covered. There is an impression, I believe, that vehicles insured under a comprehensive policy are, in effect, placed outside coverage when engaged in fire fighting. Inquiries have been made from the insurance companies and while no general statement has been made on their behalf I understand that in no case where a vehicle is so involved will a company refuse to maintain the coverage. In part that answers the question raised by the honourable member. Matters have been submitted by the Bush Fires Advisory Committee and certain recommendations are being considered. The best possible attention will be given to them before the Bill is introduced.

MOUNT MEREDITH ESTATE.

Mr. HARDING—My question relates to the Mount Meredith estate near Mingbool in the South-East, which was purchased 10 to 12

years ago for soldier settlement purposes and has been unoccupied since then. Can the Minister of Lands indicate the intention of the Government regarding the estate?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It is true that the area was purchased some years ago but since then we have had for development many tens of thousands of acres of better country, which we have proceeded to develop first. The Mount Meredith estate is in the very wet Dismal Swamp area. It was hoped that by now we would have reached an agreement with the Victorian Government on a drainage scheme for the area. If one is reached in the near future the estate will become a valuable property indeed. The department is at present improving the vermin fences around the area to keep out rabbits from the properties of other settlers, and it is making improvements to the home. If we do not get a satisfactory arrangement on the drainage of the swamp I feel sure the Government will favourably consider making the property open for application.

TOWN PLANNING.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I understand that a number of local government authorities in highly developed areas are delaying issuing by-laws in connection with town planning because of the absence of a master plan. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Local Government confer with his colleague and ascertain when one might be expected?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

LOXTON SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AREA.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Lands tell me when further allotments will be made in the Loxton soldier settlement area, and when the valuations will be completed?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I think allotments in the Loxton area are almost complete. Federal officers commenced some time ago on the valuations and have already completed one area. They have for some weeks now been continuing with valuations at Loxton. I have no idea when they will be completed.

PILDAPPA WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question regarding a water supply for Pildappa?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have received the following report from the Engineer for Water Supply:—

Since 1939 a number of requests have been made for laying a connecting main between the Tod River system and the mains from the

Pildappa tank and a further request dated 24/2/57 has now been received. The last request prior to this one was from the late A. W. Christian, M.P., and the reply sent by the Honourable the Minister dated 25/2/52 herein sets out the position which has not materially changed since that time. After going dry in 1952 water was available from the tank continuously until early this year except for a period of approximately one month early in 1956. In other words since 1933 it has only been emptied on six occasions. The extension of the Tod River system to connect with the 11 mile Pildappa Tank system cannot be justified on financial grounds and there is in addition a considerable physical difficulty that would have to be overcome if water was to be supplied by these mains to the Pildappa tank system. It is usually in the summer months that the Pildappa tank goes dry and at this time of the year it would not be possible to make additional water available from the Tod River system.

The branch main from the Tod trunk main which would have to be extended to supply the Pildappa tank area goes through rising country, the elevation of which is such that combined with the demand for water from the existing main makes it necessary to operate a boosting plant on the branch main to meet the present summer demand. The demand for water generally from the Tod River trunk main has increased to such an extent that last summer it was also necessary to operate a booster on the trunk main near Lock and even then difficulty was experienced in maintaining supplies. As has been previously mentioned, the farmers who obtain a reticulated water supply from the Pildappa tank do not pay anything for this very considerable benefit but notwithstanding this, the department maintains the tank and mains in good repair. The inconvenience caused to the farmers of the Pildappa tank area in having to cart water for their stock on the infrequent occasions when the Pildappa tank empties is not sufficient to justify the very considerable expense that would be incurred in enlarging the present branch main from the Tod River trunk main and laying a connecting main between the two systems.

Mr. LOVEDAY—When I discussed the question of an improved water supply for Pildappa with the settlers concerned I told them they might get an adverse report on their application, so I suggested that they put up as an alternative the provision of another tank to catch natural water off the rock. They did that, and the settlers are prepared to pay a reasonable rate if the scheme were carried out. Will the Minister of Works get a report on that aspect and let me have it as early as possible?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes, and I am glad to know that the settlers are prepared to give an undertaking on rating. So far they have not been rated at all because of the uncertainty of the supply, though I under-

stand it has failed on only minor occasions in the last few years. If they are prepared to undertake responsibilities in this matter I am prepared to help them to get a better supply.

GLENELG-GLEN OSMOND BUS SERVICE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question concerning the bus service between Glenelg and Glen Osmond?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—No. Immediately on its receipt a petition was forwarded to the Municipal Tramways Trust, which I understand also received representations from other bodies. Bishop Gleeson has seen the trust, which suggested that the parents who signed the petition evolve a scheme to justify the continuance of the service; but up to the present that proposal has not been accepted. I will again take up this matter with the trust.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, you properly drew the attention of members to the Standing Order which stated that they must not be unnecessarily lengthy and prolix in explaining their questions. As Ministers have occasionally taken the opportunity, in replying to questions, to give not only replies but lengthy and sometimes prolix speeches that bear little relevance to the question asked, will you, Sir, keep Ministers to the requirements of Standing Orders the same as you keep private members?

The SPEAKER—In my capacity as Speaker I will try to adhere to Standing Orders and carry them out to the best of my ability as far as they apply to all members.

FAIRVIEW ESTATE.

Mr. HARDING—Has the Minister of Lands a further reply to my question of yesterday concerning the development of the area known as Fairview Estate?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—As I indicated yesterday, a considerable area of this land is being developed under the Crown Lands Act. As it is a wet area much of it will not be suitable for development until it is drained. At present, however, no further funds are available for its development, but further consideration will be given to the matter when the area has been drained.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. RICHES—The *Advertiser* last week reported that the Public Works Committee was

dissatisfied with expenditure by the Education Department on what are called extra-curricular buildings. In view of the fact that people in my district are asking for such buildings as domestic arts and woodwork centres and sheet metal work shops, will the chairman of the committee say whether that report was accurate; did it relate to all schools or to only one type of school; and were representatives of parents' and friends' organizations asked to tender evidence before that decision was reached?

Mr. SHANNON (Chairman, Public Works Committee)—Craft and science subjects, although not academic in the same sense as high school subjects, are curricular in certain schools, the establishment of which is now being considered. My committee was a little concerned about the space being allotted for purposes other than teaching and from which scholars would not benefit. Although it is not denied that the staff should be allocated space, the committee believes that it must be allocated within reason. The press report was correct. After consulting the Minister, his superintendent and the Architect-in-Chief on the matter, the committee believes that a plan will be prepared so that the department will be given all the required services and the teaching staff ample accommodation outside the classrooms.

Mr. Riches—Did your statement relate only to one school?

Mr. SHANNON—No; the committee wanted to arrive at a master plan that could be used for all schools of one type. For instance, there is an almost standard plan for high schools with a certain number of scholars, and the schools that have already been built in compliance with that plan are working well.

CARRYING OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS.

Mr. STEPHENS—I understand that in this State few people are allowed to carry firearms. I have no objection to people such as farmers carrying firearms, and I do not think any other member has, but some people say that they carry a knife or dagger for their own protection. Will the Premier call for a report from the police on whether a law should be passed to prevent people from carrying dangerous weapons?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will get the views of the police and advise the honourable member in due course. I think there are some provisions preventing the carrying of lethal weapons surreptitiously, but I will ascertain the scope of the law.

NEW IRRIGATION LANDS ON THE MURRAY.

Mr. KING—Some time ago I wrote to the Minister of Irrigation and asked him whether he would investigate proposals for the development of highlands near Renmark, Berri, Barmora and other places on the river. Opportunities for increasing the area of land under irrigation have been availed of in other States. Recently when blocks were opened at Buronga, there were four applicants for each block, and under a private scheme at Renmark there were 23 applicants before the land was opened up, and I think that many applicants could not be satisfied when a scheme on the Murrumbidgee was carried out. Has the Minister instituted inquiries into the practicability of opening up new irrigation lands on the Murray for allotment to exservicemen and civilians?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The areas to which the honourable member referred have not yet been investigated, but I will examine them. Recently, when the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. McMahon), was in Adelaide, I mentioned these matters to him, and particularly mentioned land in the hundred of Gordon.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have received certain information relating to a discussion that is now proceeding in another place. It seems to me that the importance of the business of this House has been overlooked, and I ask the Premier whether he can suggest how the House can be adjourned after question time today to a suitable time instead of our having to wait until perhaps midnight before the honourable gentlemen of another place deal with the Address in Reply at the inconvenience of this House?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is not the practice in this House to refer to the conduct of another place, but it has always been the practice of this House to try to assist in the carrying forward of public business and to insist on considering the convenience of members generally. I cannot take the matter further than that.

SITES FOR INDUSTRIES.

Mr. BYWATERS—The Premier told the House yesterday, in answer to a question by the Leader of the Opposition, that some time ago, when an industry was interested in a site at Murray Bridge, it had some difficulty in getting offers of land. People interested in

starting an industry there could get a wrong impression from that statement. The people of Murray Bridge do not want that to happen, and they believe that land is available there for industries. Will the Premier ask the Housing Trust to see what land is available at Murray Bridge that would be suitable for industrial purposes and encourage industries to go there?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As I said yesterday, the Government attempts to assist any industry in efforts to secure land. During the last 15 or 20 years various industries have been told where they can purchase land on advantageous terms. The Government recommended Murray Bridge as a suitable site for one firm, but I do not think it secured any offer of land there. However, I could not recommend the Housing Trust to purchase land in every country town and thereby tie up large sums on the mere supposition that an industry might ultimately go there. The trust buys land where it knows it will be turned over quickly, as this assists industrial development. If we permit a large sum to be tied up in land at Murray Bridge it is only reasonable to permit the same thing at Gawler, Whyalla, Peterborough, Wallaroo and elsewhere. Under those circumstances I could not recommend it.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

Mr. COUMBE—Some time ago it was reported in the press that the Premier would attend a Commonwealth Civil Defence School at Macedon in Victoria, together with other Premiers. Did the Premier attend this school? In view of the terrifying results of atomic warfare can he say whether the Government intends to establish an advisory committee on civil defence, as has been done in other States, to work in collaboration with the Commonwealth committee on civil defence?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The school, designed particularly for Premiers, was called off, but I understand it is to be held at a future time when other Premiers are in the mood to take the necessary instruction. The second part of the question is important. Defence is laid down in the Constitution as a Commonwealth responsibility and it automatically follows that the advice on these matters must emanate from Commonwealth defence authorities. If the States attempted to undertake any action they would probably not take the right type of action and would spend large sums ineffectually. Furthermore, there would probably be no co-ordination between the States. The lead must come from the Commonwealth authorities. Up to the present there

has been no clear lead which would justify the Government in spending money in connection with this matter. Certain suggestions have been made and have been adopted by this Government in close co-operation with the Commonwealth authorities; but until we get an indication of what action is desirable, based on a military appreciation and not upon appreciation of persons with no knowledge of the general defence system of the country, we can only wait. To illustrate our difficulty, I received a highly confidential appreciation of the situation from the Commonwealth. It was so confidential that I could not seek opinions from my advisers as to its meaning, and I wrote to the Commonwealth asking what it meant in ordinary English. After a lengthy delay the Prime Minister wrote saying that the appreciation had been referred back to the authorities and it was hoped that in due course they would be able to advise us what they meant. They have not advised us yet.

RENTS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED HOUSES.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yesterday, in reply to my question concerning rents of Government-owned houses, the Premier, among other things, said:—

One or two supplementary matters arose: for example, whether a refund should be paid in a lump sum or over a period; but, by and large, Cabinet recommended that refunds be made over a period rather than in a lump sum. I imagine that meant by way of an adjustment in rent.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—That is so.

Mr. JENNINGS—Can the Premier say whether the adjustment was to be made by reducing the rent for a period or by not charging any rent until the credit cut out?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Frankly, I do not know. I will get the information.

TRANSPORT LICENCES.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads ascertain from the Transport Control Board its policy in issuing licences to private bus operators for excursions for aged people in country areas? The matter that particularly concerns me is that a pensioners' organization sought to make an excursion—a round trip *via* Port Wakefield to Port Pirie and back through Clare. They desired to stop at certain places on the route and enjoy the scenery. The board refused a permit on the ground that the excursion could be made to Port Pirie and

back by rail. As a result the trip was not made and the pensioners were not able to enjoy their sight-seeing. A train could not run off the railway line to the places they wanted to visit. Under these circumstances it appears that people have been prevented from taking an ordinary pleasure trip that they could not possibly make by any other means. Will the Minister take this up with the board and ascertain whether people cannot be given freedom to make normal excursion trips in the normal manner?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes, I will gladly do that.

[Sitting suspended from 3.39 to 5.25 p.m.]

CELLULOSE AUSTRALIA LIMITED
(GOVERNMENT SHARES) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1).

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.28 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 23, at 2 p.m.