

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 3, 1957.

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

SUPPLY ACT (No. 3).

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

QUESTIONS.**STANDARDIZATION OF RAILWAY GAUGES.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I noticed in the Canberra commentary published in the *News* of Tuesday last a reference to the expediting of the alteration of the railway gauge between Wodonga and Melbourne, and a statement that it is expected the Broken Hill-Port Pirie section will be the next started and that work will probably commence about 1960. Can the Premier say whether, since he last reported on this matter to the House, further negotiations have taken place between the Commonwealth and the State Governments for the broadening of any or all of the gauges in South Australia under the 1949 agreement?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No further communications have been received from the Commonwealth Government on this matter.

SHORTAGE OF SURVEYORS.

Mr. HAMBOUR—There is much concern in my district about the lack of surveyors available to execute certain works and I ask the Minister of Lands whether he will make a statement as to the number of surveyors in his department?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It is true that there is a shortage of surveyors, but the Government has been endeavouring for some time to rectify the position. In the Lands Department we now have only 11 surveyors. A number over the last few years have been attracted away to private firms because of the extraordinary amount of business that has gone their way, but we hope that in the near future our numbers will be back to normal and we shall be able to attend to some of these important works.

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT'S WORKS PROGRAMME.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Minister representing the Minister of Roads say whether the Government would be prepared

to alter the Highways Act so as to enable the Loan Estimates for the Highways Department to be presented to Parliament as in respect of other Government departments?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As this is a question relating to finances I think I am able to answer it without referring it to the Minister of Roads. The Highways Department's main funds normally come from two sources. One is fees for the registration of motor vehicles and the other is the amounts that are allocated by the Commonwealth Government from petrol taxation, and by Act of Parliament those amounts are expropriated to the use of the Highways Department by standing authority. Under those circumstances, Parliament has already appropriated those amounts to the Highways Department. Every month, as the money is collected, it is paid into the Highways Fund and used by the department. Only a very small amount of loan funds is ever made available to the Highways Department, and that money, of course, is submitted for consideration by Parliament each year. Speaking from memory, the amount this year was either £50,000 or £100,000, and was for bridge work.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Can we be given the department's programme of works?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That is an entirely different question. I do not see why the department's approved programme of current works cannot be obtained and supplied to Parliament, and I shall be happy to take up that matter with the Minister of Roads.

SALE OF SUBSTANDARD COTTAGES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—In my area rows of cottages have been sold that are more or less fit to be condemned and would have been condemned but for the housing shortage. These cottages are being bought as multiple dwellings, everything being perfectly legal, renovated sufficiently to meet the requirements of council by-laws and sold separately. Has the Government ever considered amending the Building Act to prevent this practice and, if not, has the Registrar of Deeds ever been asked to report on the problem?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will have inquiries made. If the houses are in such a condition that they could be condemned the council could do so out of hand. However, I can see the problem facing the honourable member. It is not merely a question of whether the houses should be condemned but what would happen to the inmates.

WINDSOR GARDENS FACTORY NUISANCE.

Mr. JENNINGS—In the new Housing Trust settlement at Windsor Gardens a factory was recently established by Peters Ice Cream Company. I believe the land was sold to the company by the Housing Trust which also rendered signal assistance in the company's establishment. Since the company commenced production nearby residents have had a noise nuisance inflicted on them and a couple of days ago I was invited to investigate complaints of flooding of nearby backyards by water from the factory. I was horrified to see that some are completely flooded with dirty, slimy water apparently from the washing of ice cream cans and vehicles. These matters have been taken up with the company on several occasions by the residents and on one occasion by myself in correspondence with the manager, but I regret that the company is apparently adopting a most unco-operative and un-neighbourly attitude. The local authorities have been approached but have not been able to do anything so far. Will the Premier take this matter up with the Housing Trust—because trust buildings and trust tenants are suffering—to see whether it will negotiate with the company to remedy the situation?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not in a position to say whether the land was purchased from the Housing Trust, but will obtain a report on that aspect. The question of the overflow from the company's washing operations would more properly come under the control of the Health Department and I will obtain a report from one of the health inspectors and advise the honourable member in due course.

QUEEN MOTHER'S VISIT.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Some time ago when it was first announced that Her Majesty the Queen Mother would visit Australia next February, the Premier made representations that South Australia should be included in her itinerary. Has the Premier yet received any reply to his representations?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is not expected that a final decision will be reached until the Director-General of the Royal Tour, Sir Allen Brown, confers with the Palace authorities in a week or two. The Under Secretary, Mr. Pearce, yesterday, and on a previous occasion, visited Canberra to put South Australia's case before the authorities. Our representations are being strongly supported and I am hopeful of a successful outcome.

CITY INTERSECTION TRAFFIC.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yesterday Mr. Bywaters referred to motor vehicles making right-hand turns in King William Street against the amber light and crossing through pedestrian traffic. The law permits a motorist to make such a turn, although he is bound to consider pedestrian traffic, but last evening I was informed that because of the Police Department's policy, police officers have been withdrawn from King William Street at certain times of the day and motorists are taking advantage of this position and taking a risk by forcing pedestrians to hurry from their path. I appreciate that that is the motorists' risk. Can the Premier say whether police have been so withdrawn and, if so, will an attempt be made to restore them?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will obtain a report and advise the honourable member when it is received.

TOMATO CROP FAILURES.

Mr. CUMBE—On September 17 I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question relating to complaints received from tomato growers about the effects of Murray water. Has he a reply?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Chief Horticulturist, Mr. Miller, reports that last year when considerable quantities of River Murray water were used there was a record production of glasshouse tomatoes. There are a large number of glasshouses around Murray Bridge using nothing but Murray water. Trouble from fusarium wilt and leaf mould are frequently confused with the effects of bad water, and both diseases are common on the Adelaide Plains. The former is controlled by soil fumigation and the latter by adequate ventilation in the houses.

MANNUM TO MURRAY BRIDGE ROAD.

Mr. BYWATERS—My question relates to the sealing of the Mannum to Murray Bridge Road. In this week's Murray Valley *Standard* an article headed "Sealing Still Awaited" states:—

People who frequently use the route consider the time must be almost ripe for the Murray Bridge-Mannum main road to be given the title of "the worst main road in S.A." Although a combined deputation from Mobilong and Mannum councils went to the Highways and Local Government Department about two years ago with a request to have the road sealed, this seems as far away as ever.

This week the clerks of both councils concerned (Messrs. R. H. Tapp and R. W. Reed) said they had heard nothing recently about

any major works on this road. Last March Mannum council applied for £20,000 for the bitumenizing of two miles at the Mannum end of the road. The plan was to cover two miles a year over a four-year period.

Mobilong council were granted £1,000 at this month's meeting for the upkeep of the road. The councils grade and repair the road frequently with the limited finance available. Mannum and Murray Bridge residents who used the road frequently bitterly complained of the surface and the dust.

I concur entirely in that statement and ask the Minister of Works to take up this matter with his colleague, the Minister of Roads, with a view to expediting the sealing of this highway, which is extensively used not only by people residing at or between Murray Bridge and Mannum, but also by tourists.

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up this matter with my colleague, but I remind the honourable member that it concerns only some of the thousands of miles of roads in this State that are considered to have equal claims.

FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT AT MOUNT CRAWFORD.

Mr. LAUCKE—Has the Minister of Forests a reply to my recent question concerning the provision of additional fire-fighting equipment at Mount Crawford?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I have received the following report from the Conservator of Forests:—

Kersbrook Forest Reserve has its own fire-fighting unit which is similar in all essential details to the equipment at Mount Crawford. This unit is available to assist at Mount Crawford when required. In addition an auxiliary power fire-fighting unit is now being assembled at Mount Crawford forest and will be ready for the coming fire season.

SNOWY RIVER WATERS AGREEMENT.

Mr. STOTT—Some days ago the Federal Minister for National Development (Senator Spooner), in a forthright statement, made it clear that South Australia had nothing to worry about because of the Snowy River Waters Agreement, and this morning's *Advertiser* contained a letter from him, which stated, *inter alia*:—

The Commonwealth believes that the legal rights of South Australia under the River Murray Agreement are fully protected under the Snowy Mountains Agreement. Your State cannot suffer a disadvantage owing to the Snowy scheme.

In view of the report that the Premier is to go to Canberra to confer with the Prime Minister on this matter, can he say whether he has now abandoned the idea of taking High

Court action or, in view of the statement by Senator Spooner that South Australia has nothing to worry about, will the Premier attempt to solve this problem by conciliation?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Our advice from counsel is that the South Australian case is excellent and that we have grounds for taking action. Yesterday afternoon the Prime Minister, by telephone, asked whether we were prepared to discuss the matter in Canberra. The answer to that question was obviously "Yes," so the Prime Minister has arranged for discussions in Canberra tomorrow. That does not mean that South Australia is abandoning its claim in relation to the water.

CROWN LANDS.

Mr. HARDING—Has the Minister of Lands any comment to make on a news item recently broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission concerning the areas of Crown land leased or sold over the past few years?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I heard the news item and, in anticipation of a question, I have had the following report prepared:—

The area of the State is 243,244,800 acres, and of this area 87,000,000 acres comprise salt water and fresh water lakes, reserves (including the aboriginal reserve containing 17,500,000 acres in the north-west corner of the State), roads, railways, and Crown lands not considered suitable for settlement. This leaves approximately 156,000,000 acres for settlement. An area of 15,000,000 acres of this has been sold or dedicated for public purposes, and 140,000,000 acres have been allotted under lease, agreement, or licence. It will be seen therefore that the area available for allotment is limited to approximately 1,000,000 acres, much of which is unsuitable for settlement. During the year lands open for allotment and lands comprised in expired leases were allotted to a total area of 1,500,000 acres; during the same period 93,250 acres were sold. The net increase in lands held under lease, agreement, or licence for the year was 46,000 acres.

WEST BEACH DRIVE-IN THEATRE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier a further reply to my question of August 28 concerning the proposed drive-in theatre on the West Beach reserve?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The aviation authorities informed me that it was not their policy to make reports on matters outside their control, but I interviewed a number of civil aviation officers highly qualified to speak on the matter and found a very strong opinion that the proposed site, immediately on the end of the runway, was a silly place to put a drive-in theatre from the

point of view of the convenience of theatre patrons, because, as traffic increased and jet planes were used, there would be a tremendous amount of noise. Further, it would be foolish to put a large number of people in a position that could be dangerous. Therefore, exercising my authority as Acting Minister in charge of places of public entertainment, I refused to grant a licence for that area and informed the ex-Director of the Tourist Bureau, who is chairman of the West Beach Trust, that he could negotiate, if he desired, for a more suitable site elsewhere, saying that the objection was only to the location. I have heard since that negotiations have been conducted and agreement reached on a more suitable site, but that has not come to me officially.

SOOT NUISANCE AT OSBORNE.

Mr. TAPPING—I have frequently referred to the soot nuisance from the Osborne powerhouse, and the Premier said that when Mr. Milne returned from overseas he would make a report. Today I received a letter from the Taperoo School complaining about the nuisance and I have received other complaints. Has the Premier received Mr. Milne's report yet?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will check up on the reports I have received, but as far as I know no report is yet to hand. The last time I replied to the honourable member's question I said that the report was not expected to be available for some time.

ADELAIDE HILL ROAD.

Mr. JENKINS—Will the Minister of Works obtain from his colleague, the Minister of Roads, a report on when work will be resumed on the Adelaide Hill Road, between the turn-off on the Mount Compass Road and Goolwa township?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes.

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION FEES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Recently several people have told me that they think the fees payable by students sitting for the Intermediate examination are excessive. I understand that the fee is 10s. to sit for the examination and 7s. 6d. for each subject, and some people find those fees a hardship. Can the Minister of Education say who fixes the fees, and will he investigate whether they can be reduced?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I investigated this matter a little while ago and I have myself heard some complaints about the fees, but I would be pleased to take up the matter again in response to the honourable member's question. The fees are fixed by the University

of Adelaide at the instance of the Public Examinations Board, and the reply I received to a question I raised in the last week or so was that the fees were considered to be very moderate compared with those charged in other States. I understand that in New South Wales no fees are charged, but that in every other State they are even higher than the increased fees in South Australia, where the Public Examinations Board is still showing a loss.

SINGLE UNIT FARMS.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I asked last Tuesday about how many single unit farms have been approved, apart from those acquired from the Australian Mutual Provident Society?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The figures are—dry lands 55; irrigation 23. That makes a total of 78, of which 10 are Australian Mutual Provident properties.

NAPPERBY AND NELSHABY VEGE- TABLES.

Mr. RICHES—The market gardeners of Napperby and Nelshaby, near Port Pirie, depend on the Adelaide market for the disposal of most of their produce, and they supply the State with a fair proportion of tomatoes and other perishable goods. It is necessary for them to have a transport service to Adelaide on Thursday afternoon or evening so as to get their produce to the Friday market. In past years a rail service has been available, but it is not now, and I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Railways whether it is possible to have the rail service restored or, if that is not economical, to obtain a licence for a road service so that the produce can reach the market in good time?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will take up the matter with my colleague. Obviously, I do not know anything of the circumstances, nor will the Minister until it is brought under his notice, but as I have often pointed out, the entire responsibility for running trains rests with the Railways Commissioner, so it is a matter that does not come under Ministerial control.

PORT LINCOLN ABATTOIRS.

Mr. STOTT—Last Friday the Minister of Agriculture made a statement about the slaughtering of lambs at the Port Lincoln abattoirs. Since then some members of my organization have told me that they have been informed that only 5,000 lambs can be killed each week at the abattoirs, which in their view is totally inadequate to deal with the number

of lambs coming in from dry areas. Buyers are going out to the farms, but they cannot buy more lambs than the works can handle, otherwise they are told that they must hold them for two or three weeks, and then the lambs deteriorate. Will the Minister get the works to handle more lambs so as to overcome the difficulty facing producers on Eyre Peninsula?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member said that the capacity of the works was stated to be 5,000 a week.

Mr. Stott—For five days.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I want to correct that statement because the capacity of the works now, with a three-quarter chain, is a daily killing of 1,500 lambs. That gives a capacity of 7,500 for five days, but approval has been given for the abattoirs to work on Saturdays. Certain people who are skilled slaughtermen are able to return to the works then and it will be possible to work a full chain on that day. Over 2,000 will be killed on Saturdays, giving a total killing capacity of 9,500 lambs for six days. In addition, efforts are being made to secure additional labour for the ordinary week day shifts, so it may be possible to work a full chain for six days a week, giving a capacity of about 12,000 lambs a week. On account of the labour position that is the utmost that we are able to do at present.

NAPPERBY TEACHER'S RESIDENCE.

Mr. RICHES—I understand that some months ago a deputation representing the Napperby School Committee waited on the Minister of Education and requested the provision of a teacher's residence at that school. It was promised that this matter would be examined with a view to having it included in the building programme for the forthcoming year. Will the Minister use his best endeavours to see that provision is made for this urgent work in the 1958 programme?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

POLICE MOTOR CYCLES SIDECARS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Premier a further reply to the question I asked concerning specifications for police motor cycle sidecars?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I took up the matter with the Commissioner of Police, who has informed me that when additional sidecars are required by the department specifications will be prepared to enable local manufacturers to submit tenders.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. STOTT—Some district councils are anxious for section 289 of the Local Government Act to be amended to enable them to defray expenses for food and other items incurred by councillors and council employees. At present they are unable to do so. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Local Government ascertain whether such an amendment will be introduced?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The Act is under consideration at present. I am sure this matter has been taken up previously, but I will see that it is considered.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) 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 for an Act to amend the Advances for Homes Act, 1928-1951.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) 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 for an Act to amend the Homes Act, 1941-1956.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its purpose is to increase from £1,750 to £2,250 the amount of the maximum housing loan which may be guaranteed by the Treasurer under the Homes Act. The Act originally provided for a maximum loan of £1,000. This was increased in 1947 to £1,250, in 1949 to £1,500 and in 1951 to £1,750. These increases were considered necessary to make the Homes Act conform, in some degree, with the increases in building costs which have occurred since the end of the war. It is now considered that

the maximum loan should be increased to £2,250 in order to conform with present-day building costs and with the mortgage loan limits of some of the principal institutions lending money on first mortgage.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

AMUSEMENTS DUTY (FURTHER SUSPENSION) 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 for an Act to suspend further the levy and collection of amusements duty under the Stamp Duties Act, 1923-1956.

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.

It suspends the levy of amusements duty under the Stamp Duties Act until July 1, 1961. If a Bill is not passed, amusements duty will automatically come into force again on July 1 of next year. The collection of amusements duty in this State has been suspended ever since the Commonwealth Government imposed entertainment tax as a wartime measure in 1942. The Federal entertainment tax was abolished in 1953, but the State did not re-enter this field of taxation. It is not the policy of the Government to reimpose amusements duty at present, and this Bill is accordingly introduced for the further suspension of this impost.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT 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 for an Act to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1934-1956.

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.

It makes amendments to the Road Traffic Act dealing with a variety of matters, including traffic rules, administrative procedure and registration, as well as some consequential amendments. The explanation of the clauses is as follows:—Clauses 3 and 4 are consequential amendments, rendered necessary by amendments previously made. Clause 5 provides for a minor change in departmental practice. For a good many years, an applicant for registration of a motor vehicle has been required to make a statement that his vehicle is insured, and also to produce a certificate of insurance from an insurance company. Under the practice now followed in the Motor Vehicles Department there is no longer any need for the applicant's statement as to insurance, because the certificate is a sufficient safeguard to ensure that no vehicle is registered without insurance. The statement merely adds to the cost of printing the forms. It is proposed, therefore, to repeal the provision requiring the statement.

Clause 6 deals with the registration fee for diesel-engined vehicles. In 1951 the registration fee for these vehicles was doubled. The reason was that diesel fuel was not subject to a Federal tax, as petrol was, and in order to secure an equitable contribution to the roads from the owners of diesel-engined vehicles, Parliament decided that they should pay a higher registration fee. But in view of the recent Federal tax of one shilling a gallon on diesel oil the justification for the higher registration fee no longer exists, and the Government desires to repeal the provision imposing it.

Clause 7 deals with the transfer of the registration of a vehicle which has been registered at a concessional registration fee or without payment of any registration fee. The present law is that such a registration is not transferable. This rule was enacted some years ago to prevent evasion of the payment of the proper registration fees, because in some instances owners entitled to concessional rates had transferred their vehicles to persons who should have paid full fees. However, in recent years the Registrar has found that the risk of evasion is small and that it would facilitate administration and meet the needs of the public if transfers of concessional registrations were allowed in cases where the transferee was entitled to the same concession as the transferor. Clause 7 will enable this to be done.

Clause 8 makes amendments to authorize a new system of issuing traders' plates. In the past traders' plates have been provided by the owners of the vehicles, and the same

plates remain in force year after year, subject to the owners paying the appropriate renewal fee. This system has some unsatisfactory features. The Registrar has reason to believe that there has been a fair amount of misuse of the plates by people who have ceased to be carrying on the business for which the plates were issued, but detection and prosecution in specific cases has been found difficult. With the object of securing better control the Registrar has recommended a new system. Under this the plates will be issued from year to year by the department. There will be a different colour each year so that the plates will be readily identifiable. Further, there will be less likelihood of plates remaining in the possession of people who have ceased to be traders. In order to cover the cost of the new scheme, and the cost of the traders' plates, it is proposed to increase the fees. The fee for limited traders' plates will be raised from £2 to £3 and that for general traders' plates from £16 to £17.

Clause 9 provides for an alteration in the period of operation of drivers' licences. Under the present law every drivers' licence continues in force for a period of 12 months, commencing on the first day of the month in which it was issued. Thus licences expire on the last day of a month and work in connection with renewals accumulates at that time. The Registrar has found that in order to obtain an even flow of work, it is desirable that each licence should be current for a year from the day when it comes into force. This will mean that a new licence will operate for a year commencing on the day when the applicant completes compliance with all the conditions for the issue of the licence, including payment of the fee. A licence issued by way of renewal will operate from the day after the expiration of the previous licence, unless the holder of the licence is more than a month late in applying for renewal. If he is more than a month late, he will be treated as an applicant for a new licence so far as the period of operation of his licence is concerned. As time goes on this new system will result in an even flow of work throughout the year in connection with drivers' licences.

Clause 10 deals with clearance lights on wide motor vehicles. These lights were provided for by the amending Act of last year. In laying down the rules as to the position of the lights the Act followed standards which had been worked out by competent authorities, but it has been found that more flexibility

in the rules as to the position of the lights is essential. Last year's Act provided that the front clearance lights had to be within twelve inches of the front of the vehicle. However, the Government has been informed that there are some vehicles which are narrow in front and on which it is impossible or highly inconvenient to affix the clearance lights within twelve inches of the front. Similarly, it has been found as regards some vehicles that if the clearance lights are placed within twelve inches of the rear of the vehicle as was required, they are difficult to see. It is therefore proposed in the Bill to provide that front clearance lights may be not more than two-fifths of the length of the vehicle from the front, and rear clearance lights not more than two-fifths of the length of the vehicle from the rear.

Another rule enacted last year which was in accordance with the standards code stated that rear clearance lights must be not less than two and not more than five feet above the ground level. On some large vehicles, however, and on tramway buses it has been found more convenient to have the clearance lights higher up. Some of the buses which were built before last year's Act was passed, are equipped with rear clearance lights somewhere about eight feet high. An inspection of the buses showed that these were satisfactory. It is proposed to amend the law as to the height of rear clearance lights by allowing them to be at any height not more than nine feet above ground level. It is also proposed that clearance lamps need only be carried between half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise.

Clause 11 deals with the amount of the fine imposable for a first offence of driving under the influence of liquor. At present this fine must be not less than £30 and not more than £50. In conformity with recent increases in penalties and on the recommendation of magistrates it is now proposed to raise the maximum from £50 to £100. Honourable members are, of course, aware that imprisonment and disqualification from driving can also be imposed as penalties for a first offence of driving under the influence of liquor. Clause 12 is a consequential amendment. Clause 13 deals with the offence of driving while disqualified by order of a court. At present it is an offence punishable by imprisonment for a person to drive a vehicle anywhere, whether on a road or not, while he is disqualified. It has been submitted to the Government that this provision causes

undue hardship in a case where the disqualified person desires to drive a vehicle on privately owned property, such as a farm or pastoral holding and the Traffic Committee has recommended that it should be limited to driving on roads. Clause 13 makes an amendment for this purpose.

Clause 14 makes an amendment consequential on that made by clause 5. Clause 15 deals with the approval of insurance companies as insurers authorized to issue third party motor insurance policies. Ever since third party insurance became compulsory all companies applying to be approved as insurers under the Act have been required to give undertakings that they will not refuse to grant policies to members of the public except in certain specified cases. A very large majority of insurers have honoured their undertakings with complete fidelity and the Government has not had a word of complaint from the public about them. From time to time, however, there have been complaints against a small number of companies from members of the public alleging unjustified refusals of insurance. Some of these complaints were undoubtedly based on good grounds and the Government has had to intervene. The matter now appears to be satisfactorily settled, but what has occurred reveals the desirability of having provisions in the Act to amplify the provisions as to approved insurers.

Under the present law there is little doubt that the Treasurer can grant approvals for a limited time, and can refuse to renew the approval of a company if reasonable cause exists for doing so. But it is doubtful whether the Treasurer can withdraw an approval before its normal term expires, or whether he can suspend an approval. These are desirable powers and less drastic than the power to refuse a renewal. Another question which arose for consideration is whether a third party policy issued by an approved insurer whose approval was not renewed upon expiry thereof would remain a sufficient policy for purposes of the Road Traffic Act. In order to deal with these and allied questions it is proposed to insert in the Act a short clause which will give statutory sanction for the present system of granting approvals and also make it clear that the Treasurer can withdraw or suspend the approval of an insurer who has contravened the terms of his undertaking. It is also proposed to lay down a rule that withdrawal, suspension or non-renewal of an approval will not affect policies previously issued by the insurer.

Clause 16 deals with the amount of the fine which may be imposed for the offence of

dangerous or reckless driving. At present the fine for a first offence is not less than ten pounds and not more than fifty pounds. It is proposed to increase this amount so that the prescribed fine for any such offence, whether a first or a subsequent offence, will be not less than £50 and not more than £100. The minimum of £50 will of course be reducible under the Justices Act in the case of a first offence, if circumstances justify this course. For any second offence of dangerous or reckless driving, imprisonment for not more than three months can be awarded under the existing law and it is not proposed to alter this.

Clause 17 deals with compulsory stops at railway crossings. About two years ago, in view of some serious accidents, a strong demand grew up for a law that passenger buses should be required to stop in all cases before crossing a railway line. The Traffic Committee supported the idea and a general rule was enacted applying to all railway crossings requiring large passenger vehicles and all vehicles carrying inflammable gases or explosives to stop before moving across the railway line. However, experience of the working of this rule, particularly at elaborately-equipped crossings such as Emerson, has shown that the compulsory stopping of any limited class of vehicles is undesirable at crossings where there are signals giving warning of the approach of each train, or gates or barriers which close against road traffic when a train is coming. These devices are reliable and if they are not operating so as to indicate the approach of a train there is little reason why vehicles should stop. Bus drivers complain that although they are obliged to stop, drivers of other vehicles are not, and this sometimes creates awkward or dangerous situations. After consideration of the information and recommendations received the Government has decided to suggest to Parliament that the general duty of buses to stop at railway crossings should be limited to crossings other than those where there are warning signals or gates. Clause 17 carries this decision into effect. It is not proposed, however, to alter the effect of stop signs at railway crossings.

Clause 18 deals with the placing of lines or marks on roads for the purpose of indicating the route to be followed by vehicles turning to the right. At a number of intersections where there are islands, beacons or special arrangements for controlling traffic such as at Emerson, it is necessary that the ordinary method of making a right-hand turn should be modified. One modification often required is

that vehicles when making a right turn, should keep on the right of the island or beacon, instead of on the left as the general law requires. In order to make this duty clear to motorists it is necessary that some public authority should have power to place lines or marks on the road for the purpose of indicating the route to be followed by vehicles making a right turn. It is also essential that there should be some arrangements for ensuring a uniform policy in this matter. For that purpose it is proposed that the Commissioner of Highways will be the controlling authority, and that he shall have power to place the necessary lines or marks on the road or to authorize a municipal or district council to do so. The Commissioner now has an expert traffic engineer on his staff who can advise on such matters.

Clause 19 also deals with the law as to the mode of making right turns. The first part of it is complementary to clause 18. It provides that when lines or marks are lawfully placed on a road for the purpose of indicating the route to be followed by vehicles turning or about to turn to the right, motorists must act as indicated by them. The other part of clause 19 deals with the duty of a motorist who is making a right turn at an intersection, to give way to approaching traffic. Until recently it was commonly accepted that in all cases a motorist turning to the right had to give way to oncoming—as well as overtaking—traffic and should not make the turn until the road in front and behind was sufficiently clear to enable him to do it with safety. This was thought to be the law whether there was or was not a traffic island in the intersection. In a recent case, however, relating to an intersection in which there was a traffic island the Supreme Court held that a motorist making a turn to the right did not have to give way to oncoming traffic, but on the contrary was entitled to be given the right of way by an approaching motorist. The Government, of course, accepts this decision as being the law at the intersections to which it applies, but there is much doubt about the scope of its application. It is obviously not applicable to every intersection in which there is an island, irrespective of the size of the island. No-one can say what intersections the principle of the decision applies to. The decisions given by magistrates on this subject are not easy to reconcile. The police have been embarrassed by a real doubt as to the legal duty of drivers turning at

intersections where there are islands and at intersections in double roads such as the Port Road and Anzac Highway. There is a strong opinion among traffic authorities that the former rule as to the duty of motorists turning to the right should be restored, that is to say, the onus should be placed on a motorist turning to the right to give way in all cases to oncoming traffic, and it is thought that this duty should not be affected by the existence of an island or a traffic beacon or a median strip in the road. It is proposed, therefore, by clause 19 to restore the old rule.

Clause 20 makes an amendment dealing with the towing of one vehicle by another. Under the existing provisions of the Road Traffic Act, when one vehicle is towing another, a competent person must be in charge of the towed vehicle so as to control it so far as the condition of its brakes and mechanism will permit. The Government has been recently informed that there are towing devices now on the market which keep the towed vehicle in its place and obviate the necessity for having a person in charge of it. The State Traffic Committee has enquired into the matter and is satisfied that such devices are practicable and safe and recommended that provision should be made for exempting a towed vehicle from the necessity to have a man in charge of it provided that it was attached to the towing vehicle by a device complying with regulations to be made for the purpose. Clause 20 carries this recommendation into operation.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, 1942-1957.

Read a first time.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) 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 for an Act to amend the Land Settlement Act, 1944-1948.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to extend the operation of the Land Settlement Act until the end of next year. At present there are two provisions of the Act which are about to expire. The prescribed term of office of members of the committee will expire on December 31 next. Section 27a of the Act, which enables the Government on the recommendation of the committee to acquire certain lands in the South-East within nine years after the passing of the Land Settlement Act, 1948, will expire on December 22. The Government considers that in present circumstances there is justification for continuing the Act in operation, and therefore proposes to extend the term of office of the members of the committee and the operation of section 27a for a further 12 months.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

FRUIT FLY (COMPENSATION) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 2. Page 912.)

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the Bill, which merely continues legislation which has been on the Statute Book since 1947 to compensate those who lose fruit as a result of fruit fly infestation. It is interesting to note that since the legislation was first enacted it has cost the State £1,306,197. There have been 25,513 claims for compensation, of which only 775 have been disallowed. The actual compensation paid was £312,110 and the balance represents labour costs involved in stripping, spraying and the cost of the tug which takes the fruit out to the anchorage at Outer Harbour for dumping. This pest has proved costly, but the expenditure has been wise because if stringent action had not been taken possibly millions of pounds worth of fruit and vegetables would have been lost. The disease could remain with us for many years and it is wise to continue the legislation to enable the necessary work to continue and to compensate sufferers.

Last year I referred to complaints from the Port Adelaide Local Board of Health and residents of Osborne that some of the infected fruit had been washed up on the beach between Outer Harbour and Largs Bay. This could have happened either through bags containing the fruit falling overboard from the tug and being

washed ashore or through insufficient rock being placed in the bags to sink them. The local board holds the view that this could be serious because if the maggots were not dead they could contaminate fruit grown in the district. The possibility of danger is present. The department's report indicated that every possible precaution should be taken and the main precautions would seem to be to ensure that the bags are in good order and that sufficient rocks are placed in them to take them to the bottom of the sea. I support the Bill.

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

METROPOLITAN DRAINAGE WORKS (INVESTIGATION) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 2. Page 913.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—As indicated by the Minister, the Bill provides that a scheme for the drainage of the South-Western districts shall be submitted to the Public Works Committee. An expert committee has already submitted a comprehensive report and a detailed plan to Parliament, and I agree with the Minister that Mr. Susman of the Marion Council deserves high commendation for the part he has taken in the preparation of the plan. Much of the area covered by the plan lies within my district. I draw attention to the flooding that occurs at the Emerson Crossing after a heavy rain: adequate drainage facilities simply do not exist. Much of this floodwater comes from outside my district and the position at the Emerson crossing and in other parts should be alleviated in order to protect homes and business houses.

The proposed scheme will take some years to implement. Because of the increase in home building in my district and neighbouring districts land hitherto covered with vines, fruit trees and vegetable gardens has been subdivided and thrown open for purchase by prospective home owners. Consequently, provision must be made for the drainage of land that formerly absorbed the rains. All local councils and members of Parliament concerned in this matter will have a chance to give evidence before the Public Works Committee. Until the drainage problem on the Marion Road and in adjacent districts is tackled that road cannot be rehabilitated, because at present it would be damaged as a result of

heavy rains. Much could be said on this matter, but as it will be investigated by the Public Works Committee I content myself at this stage with supporting the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Inquiry and report by Committee."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Could the Public Works Committee make an interim report so that work could proceed on the reconstruction of the Marion Road?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—As the honourable member knows, that committee is a non-Party committee and is not subject to direction from the Government, but I am sure the committee will take note of his suggestion.

Clause passed.

Clause 5 and title passed.

On the motion for the third reading:

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—I regret that my attention was drawn to other matters when the Bill was in Committee and I also missed the opportunity to speak on the second reading, but I do not think anyone would object to any of the provisions of the Bill. However, I want the House to know that there are country centres with serious drainage problems, which councils cannot tackle because they have not the necessary financial resources. Some councils have sought financial assistance from the Government, but it has been refused. Clause 3 refers a scheme drawn up by Government departments to the Public Works Committee, and the Bill conveys the assumption that the Government shall meet at least half the cost. Will the Government provide similar assistance to country councils facing drainage problems? In the past these councils have been told that the Highways Department has no funds for these works. Other departments have given similar replies, yet this measure gives financial assistance to councils in the

metropolitan area. Before I vote I want an assurance from the Minister that similar consideration will be given to country councils with drainage problems.

The SPEAKER—I understand that the member for Alexandra wishes to speak, but before he does I point out that any debate on the third reading must be strictly relevant to the Bill. I think I made that position clear when the Long Service Leave Bill was before the House.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I commend the member for Stuart for pointing out that we are giving sympathetic treatment to metropolitan councils and for asking for the same treatment for country councils with drainage problems. There is a drainage problem at Christies Beach, which is a growing town, but I think the problem there can be overcome fairly easily. I support the Bill wholeheartedly, but I support the member for Stuart in his request for sympathetic consideration to country councils facing drainage problems.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—I agree with the remarks of the member for Stuart, which were endorsed by the member for Alexandra. This Bill provides a precedent which may result in applications for assistance to overcome drainage problems in country areas. I have in mind certain country interests.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member not to open that question. Perhaps I allowed the member for Stuart more latitude than I should have. I do not mind a passing reference to country problems, but I cannot allow a debate on that subject. This Bill deals with metropolitan drainage works, and the honourable member must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. LAUCKE—I support the Bill in its present form, and I hope that the principle of the Bill will be applied to other districts.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.57 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 8, at 2 p.m.