HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, October 23, 1957.

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

MAINTENANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Maintenance Act Amendment Bill, 1957.

QUESTIONS.

SNOWY RIVER WATERS AGREEMENT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier any further communications from the Prime Minister concerning the preservation of South Australia's rights under the River Murray Waters Agreement that are likely to be affected by the Snowy River Waters Agreement, and can he say whether this State has issued a writ in this matter or whether it is proposed to issue it soon?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The last time the honourable member raised this question I said that the State proposed to go ahead with the writ and instructions were accordingly issued to the Crown Solicitor to issue a writ on October 22 (yesterday). The reason for the slight delay was that, as a matter of courtesy, I desired to acquaint the Prime Minister with the fact that the writ was being issued so that he would be able, if he so desired, to make a statement before being debarred by the fact that the matter was pending in the court.

Mr. Bywaters—It's a pity he did not show you that courtesy in the first place.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That courtesy is always extended by this Government, and I think it is a proper procedure. As a result of that delay, another factor has arisen. The Prime Minister has suggested that further talks might clear up some of the issues involved and he has invited me to attend a conference with him. I have accepted that invitation and those discussions will be held tomorrow.

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE GRADUATES.

Mr. STOTT—Some time ago, in reply to my question concerning the lack of students taking courses in agricultural science, the Minister of Agriculture said that the position was being examined. Has he received a report on this matter?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I had a full report, which I thought I had given to the honourable member, but which I have not with me today. It sets out the figures concerning graduates and the intake of students in the various courses. I can make that report available to the honourable member. We are at present examining the cadetships in agriculture and veterinary science and it appears that there will be more cadets needed this year than in previous years. This is due to various factors, including the time taken for the cadet to graduate. The Director is alive to the departmental requirements in this matter, which is being examined at present.

DIESEL FUEL TAX.

Mr. LAUCKE—Yesterday I asked a question about the purchase of diesel fuel for use other than in road transports. I believe that a system which imposes an initial charge common to all purchasers, which charge has a duty content of 1s. a gallon, is cumbersome and unfair to those who are not intended to pay the tax, namely, farmers and industrialists. I believe that a declaration covering the purpose for which the fuel is purchased and stating that it will be so used should be sufficient warrant for farmers and industrialists to qualify for purchase at the price not including the tax.

The SPEAKER—Order! I think the honourable member understands that under Standing Orders he may not debate the question or express an opinion: he may only explain his question.

Mr. LAUCKE—Will the Premier have this matter further investigated to see whether those who are exempt from this tax may not be charged with it in the original invoice?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This tax is levied under Federal powers and this State has no control in the matter of its collection, amount or disposition. We can, however, make representations and I will see that the honourable member's brief but pertinent remarks are brought to the notice of the Federal Treasurer.

CATCHING OF UNDERSIZE FISH.

Mr. BYWATERS—During the weekend two professional River Murray fishermen complained to me that visitors or campers were taking undersize fish from the river. Perhaps these people think that the fish they caught were of a reasonable size because they often catch only small ones off metropolitan jetties, but

professional fishermen must not take fish under 10in. long and they feel that the people taking small fish are prejudicing their interests, and they think that some action should be taken to police the law. That may be difficult, but they suggested that the police at Mannum, Murray Bridge, and other places should have a launch made available for them. Will the Minister of Agriculture take up this question with the Chief Inspector of Fisheries to see whether some action can be taken to prevent the taking of undersize fish?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will obtain a report on that matter.

RICHMOND WATER PRESSURES.

Mr. LAWN—I have received a letter from a constituent residing at Kingston Avenue, Richmond, complaining of poor water pressure. The 3in. main that brings water into this area was laid some 10 years ago. Will the Minister of Works see whether some improvement can be made to the pressure there?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes, but I point out that in every system where we supply water under pressure there must be some areas in difficulties at any one time. However, if the honourable member will give me further details we may be able to rectify the position. Other States have had to impose water restrictions to overcome this difficulty. There are two problems in water supply systems—one is the total volume of water available and the other is the reticulation system. Most States are suffering from the inability of the older pipes to meet the demand caused by increased populations and the greater demand *per capita*. The problem is not easy to overcome because even if larger pipes are laid in one street the water must be taken from another street, but if the honourable member will give me the number of the house I shall see whether it is supplied by a dead-end main, or whether anything can be done to improve the supply.

CITY INTERSECTION TRAFFIC.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Has the Premier, as Acting Chief Secretary, a reply to the question I asked recently about motorists making right-hand turns in King William Street to the inconvenience of pedestrians?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have received the following reply from the Commissioner of Police:—

The intersections in King William Street which are controlled by traffic lights are policed during peak periods, but during off-peak periods are irregularly manned consistent with other traffic duties. There has been no withdrawal of police from these intersections over the past three to four years, but to effectively police each of the busy intersections it would require more than one police officer, and without increasing the strength of the force this is not practicable. Instructions have been issued for police on duty at these intersections to give close supervision to this matter.

NANGWARRY SHOPPING CENTRE.

Mr. HARDING—Has the Premier a report on the shopping centre which is to be established at Nangwarry?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have a report in my case that I will make available to the honourable member.

COCKBURN ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, a reply to my recent question about complaints I have received regarding the supply of electricity to Cockburn by the Railways Commissioner?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I have a somewhat lengthy report, and I ask the indulgence of the House to read it. It states:—

The Railways Commissioner has advised that the electrical generating plant at present installed at Cockburn supplies energy during the hours scheduled hereunder:

Sundays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays	From 4.30 p.m to 9 a.m.
Mondays, Tuesdays	From 1.30 p.m. to 10 a.m.
Saturdays	From noon to 9 a.m.

The plant is not capable of supplying a continuous service. To do this it would be necessary to install additional plant, and make modifications to the circuits and protection appropriate to the continuous requirements.

These matters would involve considerable expenditure of capital moneys. The Commissioner also points out that because of the small capacity of this installation it is not feasible to provide maintenance staff at Cockburn, to attend to any breakdowns which may occur from time to time. This staff is more centrally situated on the Peterborough Division to meet calls of this nature. Another aspect in the provision of a continuous service is that the load factor would deteriorate. In view of this, and the capital expenditure which would be involved, it would be necessary to raise the present charges for electrical energy supplied at Cockburn by approximately 25 per cent, or 3d. per unit. If this additional charge were acceptable to the users, the Commissioner would be prepared to place an amount on the estimates for 1958-1959 for the provision of the additional equipment required.

VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 22. Page 1200.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I support the second reading of this Bill which arises as the result of an unfortunate accident which occurred in the hills last year whilst volunteer fire fighters were practising. Under the provisions of the Act they were not covered by the fund established to provide for volunteer fire fighters. This fund was established some years ago with equal contributions from the Government and insurance companies and the fund is administered by trustees whose decision is final in respect of claims thereon. The trustees in granting compensation must have regard to the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The provisions of the principal Act have operated satisfactorily. I agree that members of volunteer fire fighting organizations who seek to make themselves more efficient by training should be compensated from the fund if injured whilst so engaged.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—This Bill arises as the result of an unfortunate accident near Aldgate. Excellent work is done without fee or reward by volunteer fire fighters. My area presents probably the most serious bush fire risk during the summer, principally because of the inaccessibility of most of the country to vehicles. The only way scrub fires can be fought is on foot by a man carrying a knapsack containing two gallons of water on his back and climbing country that even a mountain goat would find difficult.

The volunteer fire fighters reveal tremendous enthusiasm and I have tried at all times to encourage, financially and otherwise, my own unit in Bridgewater. These units operate like a club although the members are engaged in hazardous undertakings. Many young boys —14 and 15 years of age—belong to these units and whilst they are not actively engaged in fighting a fire they man telephones and take and carry messages, thus releasing men to fight the fires. The Bridgewater unit has new equipment of which any unit could be proud and it has won many of the contests organized throughout the State by Mr. Kerr to enable volunteer fighters to exhibit their skill in performing fire fighting duties.

When this accident occurred the voluntary fire fighters were out training and I had no trouble in convincing the Minister to do something. By way of an *ex gratia* payment relief was afforded to those who had suffered. Heavy expense was associated with one boy who received severe head injuries. Three were hurt, but only one seriously. The Minister was most sympathetic and I thank him publicly for what he did. The parents concerned were deeply grateful. This Bill covers almost every eventuality that can arise not only in fighting fires but in training for such service. Every week-end in my own town and in surrounding villages the fire fighters practise.

On occasions it has been alleged that these units cash in on a drought—and there have been one or two in the hills in the last 12 months—by carrying water for profit to the unfortunate householders. That is not my experience. At times it is desirable, especially in hot weather, to maintain supplies of water in the outer lying areas of the hills—as for example on the Careys Gully Road, on the Mylor Road and back from Mylor towards Hahndorf—where small holdings have been established and where at times water supplies run out. If water is available a fire can be stamped out without doing much harm when first noticed, but when water is not available a fire can soon develop and endanger much country. The volunteer fire units make a practice of placing water at strategic points and I know the Minister is seized with the importance of the work being done and will not unduly restrict the activities of those carrying water. This work, I point out, provides experience for the younger members of the unit. They have to work the unit, fill it and empty it, and it is good drill practice for them because the time factor in getting a tank filled is important, perhaps vital, if a fire is raging and water is needed there. The Government is aware of all these factors involved in the drill. The Minister has probably had more fire fighting experience than I have had, although in my younger days I handled a knapsack spray. I commend the legislation to the House and particularly commend the Minister for his sympathetic approach to what is a very important matter.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—I support this Bill. I feel it covers a gap which previously existed. The whole of the emergency fire fighting organization depends on volunteer support and its members come from all walks of life. It is bad enough if a landholder who has something to lose is injured whilst out fighting a fire and is not entitled to

compensation, but in many country towns we have as fire fighters employees of shops, railways and stock firms, all people not directly interested at all, who have nothing to lose by the fire. They volunteer and take the risk of getting injured, and in the past received no compensation. This amendment remedies that. In my own district a case arose of an employee from a local store who volunteered to go out and fight a fire which could not have affected him in any way. Whilst jumping onto the lorry he missed the step and broke his leg. Under present legislation he was not able to get compensation. The local people subscribed to a fund to take care of him and his family whilst he was in hospital, but why should the townspeople be called upon to do that when this boy volunteered to go out to fight the fire when it was out of control? I agree that this is a good Bill because it covers not only the men fighting the fire or returning from fires, but it also covers them at weekends whilst they are training to fit themselves to fight fires. Throughout country districts these volunteer forces practice every week end in an endcavour to fit themselves to fight fires. This Bill covers their training and I strongly support it.

Mr. CORCORAN (Millicent)—I support the Bill and the sentiments expressed by the members for Onkaparinga and Rocky River. I have on many occasions witnessed the service that is rendered by fire-fighting organizations in my district and I appreciate their spirit. They are most enthusiastic. Some have no property of their own to worry about, but they do render service and the Government is to be commended on the introduction of such legislation because it is indirectly responsible for encouraging efficiency. They must practice to become efficient in times of fire and the community is deeply indebted to the men who render this service. I am happy to know that in future any who suffer from accident as a result of their activities in connection with this work will be compensated. I am happy to support the Bill and hope it will have a speedy passage.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—I too, congratulate the Minister for introducing this legislation. It fills a need which has been felt for some time by not only those engaged in emergency fire service work, but by those who encourage the work in the country. I have discussed this matter with men who are deeply interested in E.F.S. activities and this Bill covers all they seek. I think young men who are prepared to devote their time in training to keep their equipment in first-class condition and conduct social activities in various towns to raise money to build their fire stations and who engender a spirit of comradeship demonstrate much to local communities which is good, and I am pleased to see that the Government recognizes that men engaged on such work in the community should be adequately covered in the event of any accident. I heartily support the legislation and commend the Government for introducing it.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I congratulate the Government on introducing this measure and wish to pay tribute to those men of the fire fighting forces who have continued to do that work despite the fact that they have not previously had this protection. They have worked magnificently. Recently a very bad fire occurred in Clare and I attended it at 2 a.m. I was extremely proud of the men who fought that fire because it was a very dangerous one with drums of highly explosive material exploding in that building. Despite the dangers associated with that work they never faltered. Anybody could be proud of those men and everybody in Clare is proud of them. It is pleasing now to know that in the event of their suffering serious injuries, or in the even worse event of death as could quite easily have happened in a fire of the size of the Clare fire—they and their dependants are now to be covered by this provision. The member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) referred to the knapsack spray, but of all the monstrous contraptions a man can carry that is the worst for it is the most wretchedly designed of any device.

Mr. Heaslip—But it puts out the fire.

Mr. QUIRKE—Yes, but you can put out a fire in comfort without tearing the shoulders off a man. Anyone interested in the manufacture of such sprays should look at the old infantry pack carried in the first World War and he will find that a man could carry a pack weighing 70 lb. for long periods without his shoulders being torn off. The weight was carried on the heavy webbing belt around the waist, and at the end of the first hour of the march the men adjusted each others packs so that the weight was not on the shoulders. The same principle could be applied to the knapsack spray and then it would not cut a man's collarbone as it does today. I am happy about this measure because it will safeguard the interests of people who merit all the safety we can possibly give them.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I support the Bill and thoroughly agree with what has been said and with what the Government intends to do; but when the Bill goes into Committee I will move an amendment which, although dealing with section 13, is not connected with the original purpose of the Bill. My complaint with the original legislation in 1949 was that in certain instances conditions were too mandatory on the trustees, for that section provided that payment could not be made in certain cases. The very reason for the introduction of this Bill is one reason why that section must be amended because these men that have been referred to were injured while going to or from a practice fire fighting exercise. Section 13 (3) (*c*) states:—

> No payment shall be made under this section in respect of any injury or death which occurs by reason of the volunteer fire fighter wilfully and knowingly acting contrary to the directions of a fire control officer.

The reaction of most people to that provision is that it is sound and that if anybody is stupid enough to ignore the instructions of a fire control officer he does not deserve to be compensated, but I wish to amend it by making it less mandatory on the trustees so that under special circumstances, if they see fit, they may make payments where a man has apparently acted contrary to the directions of the fire control officer. If this is not done, some day it will be necessary to introduce a Bill similar to that now before the House in order to patch up the Act and make such payment possible to an unfortunate fellow who has been injured, or to his dependants if he has been killed, in a bush fire in which he has technically acted against the instructions of the fire control officer.

Many fire control officers, particularly in the early stages of the fire, wear no identifying armband. Although unidentified, such a man is still a fire control officer and if his instructions are ignored, even though he is not properly identified, I think that under the legislation the fire fighter would be ineligible for compensation. Further, the fire control officers, particularly in the early stages of the fire when no tasks have been allotted and people have had no time to make plans, may issue conflicting instructions. That is possible because with the best intentions it is impossible to act as though fire fighting were an army exercise. In another part a fire control officer may be temporarily passing and then move on further.

In a fire earlier this year there was a case that could have involved some difficulty on this point. There was a track in a gully densely covered with smoke and the fire control officer said, when the truck arrived, "I would not go down there." Whether that is an instruction I do not know; probably it would not be; but he might just as easily have said, "Don't go down there." He moved on to a point half a mile or a mile away and about 20 minutes later the smoke had cleared and it was obvious that it was safe to go down the track. The people went down and no doubt had the fire control officer been there he would not have objected, but technically, under the existing legislation, anybody injured in doing so would not have been able to be compensated by the trustees, for they would have had no discretion to make a payment in such a case.

This evidence indicates that my amendment was reasonable. At the same time it does not weaken the argument that if a man wilfully disobeys or deliberately ignores the order of a fire control officer he will receive no payment in the event of injury. The amendment merely gives a little discretion that the trustees may need in future. Under military law and discipline, although a soldier must obey the instructions of an officer, the authorities may not penalize him for disobeying such instructions under certain conditions. That is most unusual and I cannot imagine it happening often, but there may be a case and by carrying my amendment we will not weaken the Act, but merely prevent the necessity at some future time of having to amend it or having to say to a man, "There is no provision in the Act for you; however worthy your intentions were, you are not covered by this compensation fund and we can do nothing in your case." I shall move my amendment in Committee.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—In introducing the Bill the Minister obviously provided a spark that has fired the interest of members and also their keenness to thank the Minister on behalf of constituents fighting fires for what is to be done under the Bill. I also desire to do so myself because in my area we have a number of fire fighting organizations that are doing splendid work not only for the area, but for the good of the people of the State. One unit was recently established in the newest city in this State, which is in my area. I also have knowledge of other units in my area and in that now represented by the member for Barossa. These organizations do splendid work without

any hope or thought of personal reward, and on behalf of those volunteer fire fighters I thank the Minister for introducing this Bill, which enables a man injured when fighting fires or in the course of training to be compensated. I support the Bill wholeheartedly.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I, too, congratulate the Minister on bringing down this Bill. These volunteer fire fighters who are rendering excellent service to the community must be looked after. We should do all we can to protect them, and I want to refer to other aspects. Volunteer fire fighting organizations have grown rapidly in the past few years. I think they were established only about 10 years ago, but they are now developing into a highly efficient organization. I know that comparisons are not altogether desirable, but in my district we have several volunteer fire fighting organizations and the question arises as to which type of administration is the most efficient.

Most of these organizations consist of landowners or their families or workmen. Almost invariably their unit is situated in a town or the more thickly populated part of the district, but the fire control officers may live up to five miles away. One council decided to approach people to get the necessary finance, and it decided also to select the fire crew from motor mechanics who lived near the fire fighting unit and would be able to get to it within minutes. These mechanics not only drive and operate the machine at fires, but also attend to its maintenance. Every Thursday night they check the machine, and for these services they receive the grand sum of £12 a year. I emphasize that under the Act they would be debarred from participating in these insurance benefits that we are providing. It might be asserted that they would come under workmen's compensation, but I am not sure on that point. Section 29 (6b) of the Bush Fires Act states:—

> . . . no payment is to be made to such person as fees, salary, or wages for his services as fire control officer or as member of a crew as aforesaid. . . .

I have given one instance of a fire crew receiving some small remuneration, but as these organizations develop in the future I think there will be more and more crews receiving some reward for their services. I am not criticizing insurance companies now, but all members know that they will not pay a claim unless it can be clearly established, and in my opinion this Bill would excuse insurance companies from meeting any claim by these crews. It might be argued that the word "volunteer" was being abused or misused and that it was not a volunteer fire brigade, but is it not desirable to have someone capable of manning these machines within a minute of the siren going and racing to the fire? One man on the telephone tells others of the location of the fire, and the machine is loaded with water and many people go from all directions straight to the fire instead of having to go to the central spot.

I hope the Minister will consider what I have said. These men are not paid for their services in fighting fires but for maintaining valuable equipment. We have a Fire Brigades unit and the men carrying out somewhat similar duties receive about £2 a week, but they do only about 10 per cent of the work that these volunteers do for £12 a year. Those fire brigade men are covered by workmen's compensation, but I do not think these volunteers are.

Mr. JENKINS (Stirling)—I support the second reading and join with other speakers in paying a tribute to volunteer fire fighting organizations, whose efficiency has increased greatly in recent years. I do not agree with the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) that fire brigade employees do not do 10 per cent of the work of volunteer fire fighters.

Mr. Hambour—I did not say generally, but stated a location.

Mr. JENKINS—I know that where there is a fire brigade machine the men go out into surrounding country and co-operate with volunteer fire fighting units. Last year one unit in my district answered nearly 100 calls to small fires. I pay a tribute to those men and to all volunteer fire fighters throughout the State. We are approaching the summer months and will have to face fire hazards again. I have previously stated that camps established by Government or semi-Government organizations should take all precautions to prevent the outbreak of bush fires. Foremen in charge of these camps should be thoroughly versed in what is required under the Bush Fires Act, and they should be instructed to contact every authority necessary before carrying out any burning off operations.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I support the Bill, and I am pleased that at last we have a measure to afford some security to volunteer fire fighters. Many years ago when I brought forward a similar suggestion I was not successful in securing insurance for volunteer fighters. I sought to enable them

to receive the same rates of compensation as those covered by the Workmen's Compensation Act. During one serious outbreak in the hills I persuaded a Port Adelaide carrier to lend me a vehicle and, in company with Mr. Fred Carr, prevailed on 20 unemployed men to go and fight the fire. Unfortunately two of the men were burnt, one seriously. One man was unable to resume his employment for three months and the only financial assistance he got was from a fund to which his workmates contributed for the maintenance of his wife and family. There was not the same degree of control as now, but if this Bill is accepted it will meet such a situation. I am pleased that the Government has introduced this measure which should receive the support of all members. Every volunteer fire fighter should have some guarantee of protection in the case of an accident.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—The Bill relates specifically to voluntary and emergency fire-fighting services and I am pleased that the Government, so soon after representations, has introduced it. Volunteer fire fighting services play an important role in South Australia in preserving property and life and have rendered a magnificent service to the State. Members will recall that it is not so long since a disastrous fire in the hills devastated acres of property and burnt out homes, haystacks and out-sheds. At that time we only had a small semblance of organization of fire fighting services. The authorities were alerted to the necessity of having some organization that could go into action immediately an outbreak was observed. Mose of these fire fighting services are manned by young, vigorous men, and they should be protected financially in the case of injury arising from fire fighting. I know of one family where the breadwinner met with an accident and has been unable to carry out his normal avocation, with the result that it has suffered financially. The Government has introduced this Bill to meet such a situation.

I pay a tribute to those men who at a moment's notice leave their work and go to fight fires. We should also remember that many individual farmers have purchased what is known as a single power fighting unit. Sometimes of necessity he may have to engage labour to help man that plant and if an accident occurs in rushing to a fire the Bill will protect him. The Bill will receive the approbation of most people in rural areas because whilst they take every possible step to protect property, they agree that if any man is injured in fighting a fire he should be compensated. The emergency fire fighting services under the leadership of Mr. Kerr are rendering a valuable service and Mr. Kerr deserves high commendation. The fire fighters have every confidence in him as have all members. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—''Power of trustees to make payments.''

Mr. BROOKMAN—I have two amendments, the first of which is minor. It is perhaps advisable for me to deal with them together as the second is consequential on the first. I move:—

In line 1, after the word ''amended'' to insert ''(*a*)'', and in the last line, after the word ''fit'' to insert the following passage:—

and (*b*) by adding at the end of paragraph (*c*) of subsection (3) the following words:—

''unless the trustees are of the opinion that notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, special circumstances exist which justify the making of the payment''.

Section 13 of the Act states:—

(3) No payments shall be made under this section in respect of—

(*c*) any injury or death which occurs by reason of the volunteer fire fighter wilfully and knowingly acting contrary to the direction of a fire control officer.

At present it is mandatory on the trustees not to make any payment where a volunteer wilfully and knowingly disregards instructions, but I point out that in the initial stages of a fire, control officers are not always easily identifiable and before the fire fighting is properly organized an officer may instruct men not to go into a certain area, whereas a few minutes after he has left and the smoke has cleared it may be obvious that it is the safest and most proper place to go, but if a man is injured there he would receive no compensation. In all probability if the officer had remained he would instruct the men to go into the area. In other circumstances a fire fighter in order to save life when faced with a difficult situation, may go against the instructions of the fire control officer. I think this man should get compensation, and all this does is to allow the trustees to decide whether in special circumstances a payment is justified; it will not in any circumstance let in people who are the fools who have to be kept out. It is to cover the good man who cannot be compensated. I have confidence that this amendment

will be accepted. I cannot see any catch in it and I therefore move the amendment.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I do not oppose the amendment proposed by the member for Alexandra (Mr. Brookman). I think under the circumstances outlined by him that a discretion should be given to the trustees, but I should like the Minister to consider the manner in which the honourable member proposes to amend the Bill. The Bill before the House deals only with compensation for volunteer fire fighters whilst engaged in training manoeuvres. The honourable member seeks to provide that there shall be a discretionary power granted to the trustees where voluntary fire fighters are precluded from compensation under the parent Act because they have sustained an injury or met their death by reason of wilfully acting contrary to the directions of a fire control officer. He wants discretionary power given to the trustees to pay compensation in proper cases irrespective of that provision but we are dealing with compensation for training only, not for fighting fires.

Mr. Shannon—Section 13 of the Act is what the honourable member is seeking to amend.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, by amending clause 2 of the Bill. I want to be quite sure that we are doing the right thing in the right way by accepting the amendment.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Agriculture)—Mr. Brookman discussed this procedural point with me and I believe he also consulted the Clerk, and I believe we can accept the amendment. Having that information before me I do not raise any objection to the member putting the amendment. As to the subject matter of the amendment I do not think it a matter of great moment. The Government has no objection to the amendment because it desires to see that every *bona fide* person who can qualify for compensation under this Bill should be included within its provisions. The whole purpose of the Bill is to include volunteers on training exercises. If the amendment does in fact provide that certain people may receive the benefits under the fund who might otherwise be excluded but who are *bona fide* beneficiaries under the Act the Government has no objection. The people who will decide whether or not there are special circumstances are the same people who will decide in the first place on the admissibility or otherwise of the claim, so that I think the amendment does very little to extend the scope of the Bill nor does it take away from it very much. The honourable member, however, has decided that certain circumstances may prevent compensation committees from hearing and granting compensation under that clause as it stands. He has had considerable experience of difficult fires, and if he feels it would in any way further the purposes which the Government had in bringing this amendment forward we have no objection to his amendment.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—I appreciate the approach of the Leader of the Opposition to this matter and I agree with the Minister. I do not know that very much will be gained by including this extra amendment but I can visualize certain circumstances where a fire fighter has actually and willingly gone against the instructions of the control officer, not because of any wilful desire to oppose him but because on the spur of the moment he has seen something which required to be done and which would be too late to achieve if he waited for a direction. Under the Act as it now stands he would have gone against the direction of the control officer and would be excluded from compensation. Mr. Brookman is trying to include such persons. I would definitely oppose help for persons who deliberately and for no reason go against the wishes of the control officer. My experience has been that in many cases there are individuals who try to direct the fire officer and deliberately go against his instructions, and in such cases we have a rabble instead of a fire fighting force. If we are to get a fire fighting force we must have a control officer who must be obeyed. I do not think this amendment would deprive the control officer of his power and at the same time it may include someone who would not otherwise be eligible for compensation. I support the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

DAIRY INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 16. Page 1116.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill has been introduced as a result of the general review of the dairy industry made by an officer of the Department of Agriculture. Without knowing the need for

the review of an Act passed nearly 30 years ago such as the one we are now dealing with I desire to point out that certain other legislation could advantageously be subject to review. Further, it might have been worthwhile to submit to members the departmental report on which the proposed amendments were determined. In general, however, the proposed amendments are necessary. One general criticism of the method of control of the dairying industry is the number of separate Acts. The Dairy Cattle Improvement Act, the Dairy Industry Act, the Dairy Produce Act, and the Metropolitan Milk Supply Act provide that as a whole the industry is controlled partly by phase and partly by locality. Would it not be better for those engaged in the industry, who must be familiar with the provisions of the legislation under which they work, and for members of this Parliament, who must consider amendments relating to the various phases and localities, if there were a comprehensive piece of legislation covering every phase and locality to which these Acts apply? At present some phases and localities are not controlled at all. Under the Act—and as proposed in the Bill—certain areas have been or will be exempt. Although some of the areas proposed to be exempted merit exemption, I cannot understand why part of the Upper South-East, including the town and district of Bordertown, should be exempt. The West Coast is also exempt and, although that may be justified, I understand a considerable quantity of dairy produce is produced there, particularly in the southern part of Eyre Peninsula.

The Bill breaks new ground by providing that, if goats' milk is to be sold for human consumption in the metropolitan area, its sale shall be controlled under the Dairy Industry Act. At first glance I thought it rather severe on the owner of the goat, an animal generally considered indigenous to mining towns and dry localities where vegetation is scarce and where this animal, with its wonderful digestive powers and great faculty for foraging, can live on jam tins, scraps, and any other pieces that may be found; but from the second reading explanation and from a few inquiries I find that goats' milk is becoming increasingly popular and indeed necessary in certain cases.

Mr. Shannon—I have an area in my electorate that would vie with Taperoo.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I once had an area in my electorate that would vie not only with Taperoo and any district in our Adelaide hills, but with Moonta, because in the whole of the north-east area in earlier and more difficult times the goat was not only the source of milk and butter for most of the people there, but also the principal source of their meat supply.

Mr. Heaslip—It's not bad meat either.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so.

Mr. Shannon—It augmented the galah?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—No, it was a very good substitute for the galah. In days of yore I had occasion to eat goats' meat and I was much happier wrestling with a piece of youngish goat than with a piece of the tough mutton that, unfortunately, prevailed in the area at that time. Certain people, particularly young children, because of allergies must take goats' milk, so the production of milk from goats has become an important part of the economy and should be controlled to see that the keeping of goats, their milking, and the distribution of the product is done hygienically. The provisions to be applied in this regard are not unduly onerous, therefore I do not object to them.

The Bill also adds to the definition of "store," and I think this is necessary because in recent years the distribution of dairy products, like many other lines, has got away from being the prerogative of the specialist in that type of commerce, for we have emporiums engaged in selling meat, dairy produce and other commodities. I take it that the purpose of the provision is to see that these emporiums are made to conform to the proper standards for the storing of dairy produce, thus avoiding the possibility of deterioration for which these firms would not admit responsibility. Indeed, if somebody bought a pound of butter that was later found to be a little off, these firms would probably blame the factory rather than their method of storage, so I see no objection to this provision.

The proposed increases in licence fees are not unreasonable and a further important provision deals with the question of the over-run from factories. I understand that the over-run results from the practice of paying for the butterfat content of the raw material delivered to the factory on a percentage basis over which any production of butter—and maybe other products—is to be treated as over-run. The producer must be compensated by the factory for the amount of the production represented by the over-run over the percentage allowed.

The Act provides that these adjustments must be made monthly, therefore much bookkeeping is involved for the factories. Secondly, I understand some doubt exists

whether the amount should be distributed in the form of overall bonuses to all the suppliers or whether each individual supplier should get the quantity of over-run resulting from the manufacture of his cream or milk.

Mr. Shannon—That is a physical impossibility.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Possibly, but the Bill does two things: firstly, it provides that the calculation shall be on a yearly basis, and secondly, it resolves any doubt as to the legality of the refund to the individual. It provides that a refund shall be made over the aggregate of suppliers on an annual basis and based on the quantities they supply.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson—The old provision was impossible to implement.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I entirely agree, therefore I support that part of the Bill. The penalties for certain offences are to be increased, but that is a sign of the times, for we are increasing many penalties that were imposed years ago which, under the money values then ruling, meant much more than they do today. I see no objection to the proposed increases provided in the Bill; in fact, I see no objection to any part of the Bill and I support the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I, too, support the Bill, which is designed to bring up to date certain laws relating to this industry and to make them more readily enforceable by the departments concerned so that we may be certain that the industry in this State does not fall any further behind the standard set in the eastern States where it operates under more satisfactory conditions. The member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters), who represents what is probably as good a piece of dairying country as any in the State, may take exception to that remark, but although he has some nice reclaimed areas along the river, I remind him that they form only a small part of the total dairying area in this State.

Mr. Bywaters—I agree with that.

Mr. SHANNON—Therefore, I am not passing any derogatory remarks about certain districts. Generally speaking, this State operates under serious disabilities in regard to its dairying industry and therefore it is the more important that we keep our quality as high as possible. The legislation tries to do that. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) referred to the payment of over-run in excess of 22 per cent, but he did not make one point as clearly as I would have liked. In the basic price paid by the factory to the producer, the allowance for butter fat for the purpose of making butter is based on the assumption that the factory will allow 22 per cent over-run, which comprises moisture and salt. In the process of manufacture one cannot get all the moisture out, and salt is added because people want flavouring in their butter.

The normally well run factory should achieve 22 per cent. That gives the producer his payment to that point, but if, as a result of factory management some better figure than that is achieved, an adjustment must be made. The factories in which I have some interest find that this over-run varies from about 21 per cent to 22 per cent, year in and year out. There is little variation and we rarely get a decimal point over the 22, although we occasionally get down to about 21.5 because somebody has not been as careful with the churning as he should have been.

Another factor that comes into the picture today is the demand for unsalted butter by a section of New Australian buyers. There is only about an additional decimal point of over-run in unsalted butter. After all, a factory cannot put unlimited moisture into butter. If one put farm-churned butter under a magnifying glass he would find many tiny globules of moisture, but he would not, or should not, find any globules in well-churned factory butter. Of course, there must be some moisture in butter. If it were pure fat with no moisture at all the public would not like it.

The other clauses of the Bill are designed to tighten up old regulations that were made for the good management of the dairy industry and, in general, they improve the present position. I have had this Bill examined by Mr. McDonald, the manager of the Dairy Produce Department of a firm in which I am interested. I think he is as sound a man in the dairy industry as we have in this State. His comment was that this Bill is a step in the right direction, and he could not suggest any improvement to any clause and did not suggest the deletion of any clause. I drew his attention to one or two factors. For instance, we are altering slightly the method of getting rid of cream of poor quality or cream that contains vermin, such as mice or rats. The relevant clause will make certain that this cream does not get into butter. Mr. McDonald said that this is a better provision than the present law. As one interested in the industry, both in the production side and in the manufacturing side, I support the Bill. The Minister and his advisers have done a good job in drafting

this legislation, though I do not say it is the final word because there will be further changes in the future.

South Australia must keep its standards in this field as high as possible, for that is the only hope of surviving, as competition is getting keener. Our overseas markets are not as strong as they have been. There has been a further drop in the United Kingdom market for both butter and cheese, but unfortunately the costs of dairy farmers are more or less fixed. The dairy industry and the poultry industry are in serious trouble now in marketing their produce. Under those circumstances all they can do is to improve the quality. If that is done, I believe the home market would take more *per capita*. The industry should now seek to increase home consumption rather than look to the export trade, which fluctuates. The Governments of some other countries are providing bounties to their primary producers, and that has greatly affected our overseas markets, some of which we thought we had for all time.

Mr. Quirke—The less we sell overseas the more we charge our local consumers.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not know that that is the answer to the problem of the producer in making ends meet. I support the Bill.

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

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 17. Page 1166.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill makes three important amendments to the Act, but I do not think they are contentious. The first is contained in clause 3, which states:—

If a mining registrar is satisfied, after due inquiry, that the registration of a claim or title would cause severe hardship to the owner or occupier of any land included in the claim or title, he may, with the approval of the Minister, refuse to register such claim or title.

Then the clause goes on to give certain directions to the registrar that will guide him in exercising this discretion. It states:—

In exercising a discretion under this section the Minister and the mining registrar shall have regard to the following matters:—

(*a*) the value of the substance for which the claimant proposes to mine or prospect;

(*b*) the importance of the substance for the development and maintenance of industry within the State;

(*c*) the availability of alternative supplies of the substance.

In effect, it means that if we pass this Bill we remove the practice that has hitherto applied whereby any person with a miner's right can go on to any property where mineral rights are reserved to the Crown and peg a claim. There was a famous illustration last year of the position that can arise. An area quite close to the metropolitan area was subdivided for building purposes when a person with a mining right pegged a claim in the middle thereof for the purpose of mining building sand. I do not think anyone would suggest that building sand is one of the substances difficult to procure here or that the rights of the owner to subdivide his property for residential purposes should be affected by the pegging of the claim. I have had somewhat similar experiences in my own electorate. People who desired to secure cheap pasturage for their animals pegged out mining claims in areas and grazed their animals thereon and the owner of the property had no redress. This is a desirable amendment. The next amendment is consequential because it provides that instead of a claim being liable to forfeiture it shall lapse if the registrar exercises the prerogative under clause 3.

Clause 5, in my opinion, is a most desirable and important amendment. It is a pity it was not provided in the mining laws years ago. Throughout the State are scattered many mines which are derelict but which formerly were extensive producers of copper, usually from what are known as "blows" or very rich sections of the lode. These sections were exploited by predatory private enterprise which did not make any effort whatever to develop the whole of the lode material in the area. Once the rich sections were removed it was no longer economic to continue mining in the area. Clause 5 states:—

The following section is enacted and inserted in the principal Act after section 114 thereof:—

> 114a. (1) If the Minister is satisfied, after due enquiry, that it is in the best interests of the State that any mining lease should be granted or renewed subject to special terms and conditions prescribing the minimum amount of any substance which the lessee must extract in a specified time from land comprised in such lease, he may grant or renew the lease subject to such special terms and conditions.
>
> (2) This section shall have effect notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, or any regulation thereunder.

In other words, the Minister administering this Act has greater control over the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the State. I

agree with it entirely because we all realize that mineral wealth is not reproductive. There is only a certain amount of any particular type of mineral in the soil and once it is extracted that is the end of a mine. We have too many holes in the ground at present which are not producing but which might still have been producing if proper discretion had been exercised in their exploitation. The amendments are desirable and I support the second reading.

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

ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 22. Page 1198.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the second reading of this Bill, the principal purpose of which is to increase the amount of advance from £1,750 to £2,250. The governing factor for the increase is, I believe, the increases that have taken place in interest rates since £1,750 was established as the amount of an advance. It would not be incorrect to suggest that those responsible for dealing with our housing problems are perturbed about the future. Indeed, it has been suggested that the problem will become more difficult from 1961 because of the increase in our population and because of the increased number of people who will be of marriageable age then. Personally I do not think that the increased advance of £2,250 will have much effect on our building requirements.

We enjoy a reasonably high standard of living and the desire of many people is to own their own homes and possess some security in life rather than to pay rent, which from time to time increases. I believe that citizenship is better cultivated through ownership of homes. When an industry is established in an area it attracts population with the result that there is an increased demand for homes near that industry. There are still some vacant lands in my electorate which could cater for such a demand. At present the Housing Trust is paying, in some cases, £1,000 an acre and more for land in broad acres for home building. I do not know what the effect of such purchases will be. The Housing Trust is our most responsible organization for building homes, but I believe too heavy a responsibility has been placed on it. Whilst this Act dates back to 1928—and it has not been amended very often—we have not the number nor type of homes we desire. Even with the proposed increase of £500 in the maximum loan the purchaser of a home will have to find a large deposit because Housing Trust homes cost £3,200 or more. If we are to continue building the present type of trust homes could some better system of planning involving reduced frontages without reducing the size of blocks be arranged by the trust in order to reduce rentals. There is a big difference between the cost of a home and the maximum amount that may be loaned, and a borrower who has not been able to save will be unable to arrange finance to purchase a house, as he may need up to £1,500. Clause 3 (*a*) extends the term to 42 years on homes irrespective of whether they are of solid construction or timber frame. I favour that provision. Clause 3 (*b*) provides that a purchaser or borrower may pay to the bank any sum in reduction of the purchase price or advance and if the purchaser or borrower so requests the instalments shall thereafter be proportionately smaller by a readjustment of the amount of interest included therein. I do not know what clerical work would be involved, but it may be possible to fix a minimum amount of say £50 a year which would need to be paid in advance before any such adjustment should take place. On the credit foncier system it was said that clause 4 provides that in any future mortgage or agreement for the sale or purchase of a dwelling-house it may be provided that the interest payable under the mortgage or agreement is to be varied at the expiration of periods specified in document. It is now the practice of most lending institutions to provide that after a period the interest paid under a credit foncier mortgage will be revised by the lending institution when of course the interest rate may be increased or decreased according to the current price of money. The bank is of opinion that power to do this is desirable and the clause makes provision accordingly. I agree with that statement. Some people who have borrowed under the Homes Act from the credit foncier department have taken a certain sum of money at a specified rate of interest for the whole of the term. I think this should be reviewed on the occasion of re-sale, or later, and brought up to, or down to, the ruling rate of interest. Where a large sum of money is involved and the rate of interest is further advanced the borrower may find it extremely difficult to meet his payments. The Housing Trust permits borrowers to take a second mortgage loan so that they may own their own

homes. The Bill also provides for a further safeguard to ensure that properties are kept in repair. Some persons having entered into a contract to purchase allow their houses to deteriorate either because they have experienced ill health or through lack of pride. The provisions of clauses 5 and 6 give the bank the right to make inspection and to have repairs effected which may be charged against the purchasers. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I support the second reading. Too often I think members do not rise unless they are going to criticize the measure before the House. On this occasion I have no criticism at all but I rise to congratulate the Government for raising the minimum from £1,750 to £2,250. I think that is a very good step and one in the right direction. I would not have been induced to speak in this way if it were merely a matter of saying this, but as this was the first suggestion I made when coming to this House I feel some gratification that this proposal has now been introduced.

Mr. Frank Walsh—It was suggested long before the honourable member entered the House.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I thought the honourable member for Edwardstown or someone else would be unable to resist jumping in at that juncture, but what I was going to say was that on the very day I made my maiden speech in the House the member for Burra stole my thunder by asking a question on the same subject. Probably I am not justified in thinking my speech had anything at all to do with this measure but I like to think it had and that is why I am so pleased that the Government has taken this step. On that occasion I mentioned the appalling costs facing young persons contemplating marriage. I have since realized I have never spoken a truer word.

Mr. John Clark—That is one time you were right.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes. I am often amused to hear members on both sides of the House who are much older than I telling the House about the tremendous expense involved and how they feel for young people who have to set up homes under modern conditions, but unfortunately it never seems to extend to me personally. I often wish it did, because I am going through that period now. This measure will go some distance towards helping overcome what is a tremendous burden to people of my generation, the people who are now marrying and starting a family. I therefore felt it would be churlish of me not to rise and congratulate the Government on raising the maximum advance. I support the Bill.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—Like the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse), I feel that the Government is to be commended for raising the maximum advance to home builders. The additional £500 will enable many prospective home builders to bring their plans to fruition. The extension of the period for the repayment of loans on timber-frame houses is wise, for it will mean a lower weekly commitment, which will help people meet their obligations more easily. Clause 6, which re-enacts section 43 of the principal Act, gives the bank greater power to make inspections and obtain reports deemed to be necessary for the proctection of its securities, and such a provision is justified, as it will enable the bank to keep a closer watch on its securities now that the maximum advance has been raised. I support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Increase of maximum advance."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Now that the maximum advance is to be increased, will fewer loans be made, or is the Government able to make more money available to the State Bank for the purposes mentioned in the legislation?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—The amount available to the State Bank and to the Housing Trust is determined by the availability of Loan funds and that question does not come within the purview of this Act. The honourable member could raise this matter by way of a question and it could be considered.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Will the Housing Trust continue to take up a second mortgage as it has done in the past? Such a practice is essential to assist prospective home purchasers. The Premier has already stated that one of the reasons for increasing the amount to be advanced by the State Bank is that there are fewer prospective home purchasers and more money available.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The ability of the Housing Trust to make second mortgages will depend on its financial position at the time, but we hoped that, as this money would be coming out of the pocket of the Government, the trust would be relieved of some of its obligations and be able to build more houses. The young home builder will

be able to get an advance on first mortgage of £2,250, whereas in the past he may have had to rely on the Housing Trust for a second mortgage of £500, which would have meant a total commitment of £2,250; so he is as well off with the first mortgage now as he was previously with two mortgages. The trust is faced with difficulties because the institutions it has relied on for finance are tightening up severely. This week I have taken up this matter with those institutions, and unless we get some satisfaction the trust programme will have to be curtailed, so I cannot see how we can make unlimited advances to prospective home builders. This Bill is an indication of our earnest desire to help them.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Is it a fact that the General Manager of the Housing Trust is concerned about a possible housing shortage over the next six or seven years and even beyond that?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not heard the General Manager's views on that topic, and I doubt very much whether anybody can assess the housing position six or seven years hence, for that would be largely a matter of guesswork. The housing position fluctuates according to the prosperity of the country: if the country is prosperous it is always short of houses, whereas in times of depression houses are empty because people cannot pay rent and families live together. The number of persons per house has fallen over the past few years, but a housing problem still remains. The shortage is still as intense as ever because there has been a high level of prosperity. Building costs have risen; the value of money has tended to fall continuously; and this Bill seeks to place the legislation on a basis that would give at least as much support to the home builder as he had when the maximum of £1,750 was fixed.

During the year we may find that, as a result of raising the maximum, we may not be able to assist so many people. In Victoria the maximum has been fixed at £4,000, but if we were to raise our maximum to that amount we would only assist half as many applicants. That would be a wrong approach. It is much better to give two people £2,000 than one person £4,000. This Bill brings the maximum advance under the Act up to the level already approved under the Homes Act and to the level of the Savings Bank, and it will materially assist young people to establish a home because many of them will not have to obtain a second mortgage.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I am glad to have the information given by the Premier, but could he obtain from the Housing Trust an estimate of the housing requirements from 1962 onwards?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will see whether Mr. Ramsay has any views on that matter, but any estimate of future housing requirements will not affect the Government's policy because we are already building to the limit of the finances available. We are getting all the money we can from the Loan Council and using more money on housing than any other State. No other State took £4,000,000 from its Loan funds for housing. It will be difficult to carry out the Housing Trust's programme this year because one of the financial resources available to us appears to have dried up.

Clause passed.

Clause 3—"Period for repayment of loan."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—This clause enables a borrower to approach a lending authority to have adjustments made to the instalments if he pays an additional amount off his advance. For bookkeeping purposes, would it be easier to calculate future instalments by considering the total extra amount paid off during one year rather than to make the adjustment after each extra payment is made, which may be, say, each quarter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Sometimes purchasers wish to pay something extra off their advance if they have some money to spare because they feel that by doing so they are getting nearer the time when they own their own homes. Under the Act, if a purchaser pays an additional, say £10 to the lending institution it must adjust his instalments, but the period of the mortgage is not reduced. The purchaser may have to pay say, 24s. 11d. a week instead of 25s. 6d., but he may want to continue paying 25s. 6d. The clause provides that if he does not want to have that amount adjusted he can still pay that much and thereby pay off the mortgage more quickly.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (4 to 6) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

MAINTENANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 22. Page 1198.)

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—I support the Bill, which contains one simple amendment

to the Act that, I think, all members will support. As the Premier said in his second reading speech, section 150 of the Act enables a sum not exceeding 30s. a week to be paid to people in charge of a State child. This amount was fixed seven years ago, but money values have changed greatly since. The Bill enables those in charge of State children to be paid 50s. a week, and this increase of 20s. is certainly necessary and desirable. I understand that many people who took charge of State children have been reluctant to continue doing so because the remuneration is not enough to meet their expenses, and the amendment should meet their wishes, though in the light of present money values I think the increase could have been a little greater.

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

ROAD AND RAILWAY TRANSPORT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 22. Page 1197.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill seeks to provide that amounts paid by an interstate haulier under the Road and Railway Transport Act amendment recently declared invalid by the High Court shall not be recoverable:—

. . . unless (in addition to proving any other facts necessary to sustain his cause of action) he satisfies the court that his claim to recover such money is just and equitable having regard to all the circumstances including the extent, if any, to which the charges made by him . . .

Members will agree that where interstate hauliers paid the fees demanded by the Act and did not impose an additional charge on their customers in order to cover the fee they should be entitled to a refund, but hauliers who passed that charge on to their customers have not in equity a right to recover those fees from the State. If they did it would simply mean that they had made an additional profit as the result of our attempt to secure some reasonable payment from them for the roads they use in carrying out their business as interstate hauliers. I believe what the Government seeks to do is fair and reasonable, but in view of the peculiar decisions made by courts in days of yore, including the decision that makes this Bill necessary, I have grave doubts as to whether we will succeed in what we are attempting. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3 "Claims for recovery of money paid."

Mr. STOTT—The intentions of this clause are obvious, but I would like to know whether when it was drafted consideration was given to its possible effect in relation to section 92 of the Constitution. We have previously enacted legislation with the object of getting hauliers to pay for using our roads, but High Court decisions have declared that legislation invalid. The courts have given many conflicting judgments and it is difficult to secure a clear interpretation of section 92, which provides that trade and intercourse between States shall be free. This clause is prohibitory and states that no person shall be entitled to recover from the Crown any money paid pursuant to a licence or permit granted under the Road and Railway Transport Act. It is doubtful if this clause would stand if subjected to litigation.

Mr. O'Halloran—Surely the High Court would not determine that hauliers should get paid twice—by their customers and by the Crown?

Mr. STOTT—I do not know, and I want the position clarified. The High Court has determined that interstate trade should not be subject to hindrance. I would like to know the Crown Law Office opinion on this clause.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—There have been so many conflicting decisions on section 92 that no one could accurately forecast a decision it might make on this clause. This Bill has been founded on its last decision and I have been advised that it is doubtful if a challenge on this provision would succeed.

Mr. O'Halloran—There is only one way to find out.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That is so. I have been advised that the recent High Court decision means that the court is prepared to examine whether or not an amount should be refunded having regard to all the circumstances. If a carrier has passed on to his customers the amount of the fee obviously he has no moral grounds for recovering it from the Government.

Mr. Bywaters—It should go to the customer.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have grave doubts as to whether the customer would see it. I doubt whether this clause will be challenged because the amount involved is

so small. In New South Wales the charges were high and amounted to hundreds of thousands of pounds. If a carrier has not applied the fee to his customer he has the right to regain it from the Government.

Mr. STOTT—The Premier suggests that we should pass this Bill and then wait and see whether it is challenged. If it is challenged we will ascertain whether or not it is legal to prohibit a carrier from regaining the fees he has paid. I am pleased to know that the Premier believes this legislation will stand up to any legal challenge. Legislation of this nature brings home forcefully to this Parliament the fact that the Crown Law Office, the Government and this Parliament should have a little more knowledge of what section 92 does to the laws we are passing in this State. I desire to focus attention and emphasize strongly that we can pass laws of this nature to impose fees on interstate hauliers and they will avail nothing if we leave section 92 as it is. Therefore I am pleased to know that the Premier and the Crown Law Office are alive to what section 92 means and it behoves every member in this Chamber to observe its effect on some of our very important legislation.

Clause passed. Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ACTS INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 10. Page 1026.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the second reading of this Bill. The measure is necessary because the Commonwealth postal service has introduced a new mail service known as the certified mail which provides certain advantages for commercial and general purposes.

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

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 10. Page 1027.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I support the second reading of this Bill. The amendment of the Statute law for the deletion of certain obsolete Acts is a necessary thing. It is necessary for us from time to time to refer to the Statute Book on things that have grown out of date. In passing I must pay tribute to the ingenuity of the persons responsible for certain clauses of this Bill. Some years ago a Bill to amend the Juries Act came before this House and at that time I gave notice that when the Bill went into the Committee stage I intended to move amendments to provide that certain people on the Assembly roll should be permitted to act as jurors, including women. The Premier promptly saw that the Bill was not further debated and we heard no more about certain minor amendments to the Juries Act until they appeared in the schedule of this Bill in such a manner that it would be very difficult for me to move the amendments I had contemplated on the previous occasion. It was a very cunning move to get the matter through in a way which would not have been possible on the previous occasion. I do not intend to move those amendments to the Juries Act until such time as we have another full Juries Act Amendment Bill before us or until the rightful party is on the Treasury benches. I will support the second reading of this Bill.

Bil read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 and first schedule passed.

Second schedule.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—I desire to move an amendment to the second schedule page 3 line 23. After page 3, line 23, to add the following line:—

Subsection 319—Strike out "193" in the sixteenth line of subsection (3) and insert "196."

Since the Bill was introduced the Assistant Crown Solicitor has drawn my attention to a wrong reference in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. In section 319 of that Act—a section dealing with habitual criminals—there is a reference to section 193 of the Act which should obviously be section 196. Other provisions in the Act make it clear what section is intended. I am informed that the Courts have always interpreted the reference to section 193 as if it were a reference to section 196. It is desirable that this matter should be corrected while the Statute law Revision Bill is before Parliament. The amendment is for this purpose.

Amendment carried; schedule as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

METROPOLITAN TAXICAB ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Consideration in Committee of Legislative Council's amendments—

No. 1. Page 1, line 15 (clause 3)—Leave out the word "appointed" and insert in lieu thereof the word "proclaimed."

No. 2. Page 2, line 43 (clause 5)—Leave out the word "appointed" and insert in lieu thereof the word "proclaimed."

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The two amendments were made on the motion of the Minister of Local Government for the purpose of substituting "proclaimed" for "appointed," which had been used in the two places to describe the date on which the Taxicab Control Board would take over the control of taxis. The amendments are drafting amendments to make the intention clear, and as both deal with the same topic I ask that they be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (RATING).

Read and discharged.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir MALCOM McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes a considerable number of amendments to the Local Government Act. Most of the amendments contained in the Bill are the result of recommendations by the Local Government Advisory Committee and deal with administrative matters of one kind or another. The amendments vary in importance and it would, therefore, be more convenient in outlining the Bill to deal with them in their numerical order rather than in their order of importance.

Clause 2. Under the definition of ratable property it is provided that a hospital which is used solely for the purpose of affording gratuitous services to poor or helpless persons is to be exempt from rating. If, however, a hospital makes some charge to some of its patients although the greater part of the services rendered by it is gratuitous, it does not come within the exemption and is liable to rates. Clause 2 provides that where there is such a hospital and the fees received by it do not amount to more than one-quarter of its annual income, the hospital is to come within the exemption and is not to be ratable. The principal hospital to which this provision will apply is the Adelaide Children's Hospital.

Clause 3. Section 73 of the Act provides that a mayor or chairman on taking the judicial oath and the oath of allegiance is to be *ex officio* a justice of the peace during his term of office. However, if he is re-elected to that office under the present section he is required to take the oath again. This is considered unnecessary and clause 3 provides that in such circumstances where a mayor or chairman continues in office he will continue to be a justice of the peace without again taking the appropriate oaths.

Clause 4. Part V of the Act provides for the appointment of a committee consisting of the Auditor-General and an officer of the Highways Department to conduct examinations and issue certificates to qualified persons as local government auditors. With only two members on the committee it follows that they must always agree to reach a decision. Recently this has not been the case and it has been suggested that the committee should be increased to three in order to meet this position. Clause 4 therefore provides that there is to be a third member of the committee appointed by the Minister for the purpose.

Clause 5. Section 155 gives to persons interested the right to inspect the minutes of a council but subsection (2) provides that no inspection is to last longer than 30 minutes in any one day. Clause 5 repeals this subsection as it is considered that if an inspection needs more than 30 minutes there is no reason why the inspection should be limited in time as is now done by the subsection.

Clause 6. Section 158 authorizes a council to pay an allowance to the mayor or chairman. In the case of a mayor there is no restriction placed on the amount which the council may vote for the purpose but as regards the chairman of a district council it is provided that the allowance is not to exceed £100 in any financial year. A number of district councils are now of considerable importance with large rate revenues and the existing limit of £100 has the effect of providing a totally inadequate allowance to the chairman of such councils. It is therefore proposed by clause 6 to repeal subsection (2) of section 158. The

effect will be that a district council will have the same power as a municipal council to fix an allowance for the chairman.

Clause 7. The Local Government Officers' Classification Board is constituted under Part IXB of the Act and section 163z provides that before proceeding to make a determination the Board is to give reasonable notice of the time and place of its sittings to the parties interested. Clause 7 provides that a notice in the *Gazette* giving this information is to be adequate. A similar provision is included in the legislation relating to the Teachers Salaries Board.

Clause 8 also deals with the Local Government Officers' Classification Board and provides that in special circumstances the Board may make its determination retrospective to any date not earlier than the day on which the Board commenced the hearing of the matter in question. The power to make retrospective determinations is now given in the Public Service Board, the Teachers Salaries Board and Industrial Boards. The occasions on which such a power would be exercised would be limited but it is considered that the powers of the Local Government Officers' Classification Board in this regard should be brought into conformity with those of the other boards I have previously mentioned.

Clause 9. When a council which makes its basis of assessment land values adopts the Government assessment it can obtain from the Commissioner of Land Tax a copy of the Government assessment relating to the council area. It is now provided that it is to pay the Commissioner a fee of 8d. per folio of 72 words for any such copy. This fee was fixed many years ago and is now quite inadequate to cover the cost to the Commissioner of supplying these copies and it is therefore provided by clause 9 that the amount of 8d. per folio should be increased to 2s. per folio.

Clause 10. A ratepayer has the right of appeal against an assessment on the ground that his property is assessed above its full and fair value. He also has a right to appeal against anybody else's assessment on the ground that his property is not properly assessed. It sometimes occurs, particularly in the case of new properties, that a property is assessed at its full value although the other older properties in the area are assessed at a very much lower level. If the ratepayer of a new property appeals he is faced with the position that his assessment is correct and his appeal must fail and he is therefore under the obligation of appealing against everybody else's assessment. Clause 10 provides in such circumstances where the appellant's property itself is properly assessed but the tribunal is satisfied that a substantial number of comparable properties are assessed at less than their full and fair value, the assessment appealed against may be reduced to a value comparable with those of the other properties. Clause 11 authorizes a council to expend its revenue for any purpose approved by the council but other than a purpose specifically provided for in the Act so long as the amount spent in any financial year does not exceed £200 or one per cent of the rate revenue for the previous financial year, whichever is the less. The purpose of this is to enable a council to expend a relatively small amount on matters which may arise from time to time and for which there is no specific authority in the Act at present. Councils in other States have this sort of power.

Clause 12. A council is required to publish in the *Gazette* its balance-sheet before November 1 but it sometimes happens that the Government Printer is unable to include all the balance-sheets in the *Gazette* before that day and it is therefore provided by clause 12 that the duty of the council will be to forward its balance-sheet to the Government Printer before November 1 for publication in the *Gazette*.

Clause 13. Section 308 and the following sections provide means for determining the alignment of public streets in council areas. It provides that the Registrar-General or the Surveyor-General or the council may start proceedings for this purpose. Clause 13 provides that in addition to these the Commissioner of Highways will have power to start the necessary proceedings.

Clause 14 increases from £10 to £20 the penalty for damaging barriers and similar structures on streets.

Clause 15. Section 322 provides that a council may authorize the erection of petrol pumps on footways. When a pump is to be erected on a main road the Commissioner of Highways must approve the erection if the pump is within 50ft. of any corner formed by the junction of the main road with any other road. When the junction is in the form of a T it is obvious that the pump at the head of the T is not within 50ft. of a corner although it is considered that such a pump should come within the purview of the section. Clause 15 therefore corrects this matter by striking out the words "any corner formed by" and the effect will be that the

Commissioner of Highways will have jurisdiction if the pump is within 50ft. of the intersection.

Clause 16 authorizes a council to construct fire stations and similar buildings.

Clause 17. Section 424 sets out the borrowing powers of councils and these provisions have not been altered for very many years. The amount which a council can borrow is limited to the amount which results from the rates of various amounts as set out in the section and, as previously mentioned, these amounts have not been varied although the value of money has changed appreciably and many councils are finding that the present borrowing powers are inadequate to enable them to finance road construction and other works which are essential to the rapid development of the State. The effect of clause 17 is that the borrowing powers will be doubled with a further increase in the limit of annual interest and sinking fund repayments.

Clause 18. Section 435 provides that in addition to borrowing under section 424 a council may with the consent of the Minister borrow under section 435 for reproductive works and undertakings but a poll of the ratepayers must be held in each case. The general rule as regards financial polls is that a poll can be demanded by the requisite number of ratepayers but need not be held unless so demanded. It is considered that this principle should be applied to section 435 and clause 18 provides accordingly.

Clause 19. Section 442 (5) provides that where debentures have been raised on the security of a special or separate rate and part of the loan is repaid, the rate is to be reduced proportionately. However, this does not take into account the fact that the assessment may have increased substantially and in the case of one metropolitan council the result is that the amount which is got in annually is very much in excess of the amount needed to pay interest and otherwise service the loan. Clause 19 provides that in these circumstances, instead of the special rate being a proportion of the original rate, the council is to determine a rate sufficient to service the loan, that is, to pay interest and provide for the redemption of the principal.

Clause 20. It sometimes occurs that when land is subdivided small areas are left out and marked as reserves. It has been suggested by the Lands Department that there should be power to dispose of these small areas where they are not needed by the council for reserves, and clause 20 provides that in such circumstances the council may advertise its intention to dispose of the reserve and may, after considering any representations made to it in the matter and if the Minister consents, sell or dispose of the reserve. The clause is limited to land not exceeding one-half of an acre in area.

Clause 21. This provides that if a council sells any gas or electricity supply undertaking and any debentures are outstanding which were raised for the purpose of the undertaking the council is to repay those debentures out of the proceeds of the sale, or if the debenture holders do not wish to be paid off before the due date, it must hold sufficient of the proceeds in a sinking fund to meet the debentures in due course.

Clause 22. It is provided by the Act that in certain circumstances a council may require all the houses in its area or any part of the area to be provided with septic tanks. Clause 22 provides that the council may give permission to an owner of any property to provide a chemical action dissolvenator in lieu of a septic tank.

Clause 23. Section 537 gives a council power to impose an annual charge for the removal of nightsoil. Clause 23 gives power to make a refund of this fee where a septic tank is installed in the premises subject to the annual charge.

Clause 24. Section 666 authorises a council to remove vehicles left in streets but does not provide any machinery as to what happens if the vehicle is not claimed by its owner. Clause 24 enacts such machinery provisions similar to provisions in the Road Traffic Act. The council is to give notice that the vehicle has been removed and in the absence of its being claimed can sell it by public auction and recoup the cost of so doing.

Clause 25. Honourable members will recall that some years ago an amendment was inserted in the Act to give councils power to make by-laws dealing with unsightly structures and chattels. Parliament has not approved of by-laws which have been submitted to it under this power. It is considered that in view of the difference of opinion on this matter it would be better if there were a specific provision in the Act to give power to councils in this regard and not leave the matter to be dealt with by by-laws. Clause 25 provides that a council will have power to secure the removal of unsightly chattels, but this will be subject to an appeal to the local court. The present by-law making power also applies to unsightly structures, but it is felt by the Government that this power is

too wide, and that the exercise of the power for unsightly structures could bear harshly, and that in any event councils have fairly wide powers under the Building Act to deal with any dangerous or neglected structures which should be adequate for the purpose. In addition, clause 25 contains a definition of "chattel" limiting the power to such things as disused vehicles, machinery, furniture, packing cases, rubbish and debris. As a consequence of the enactment of this specific section in the Act the existing by-law making power and the provision giving an appeal to the local court are repealed.

Clause 26. This authorizes a council to set up a controlling body to undertake the management of such things as a reserve, oval, hall, hospital, cemetery, etc. Particularly in the country, many councils have ovals or halls in different parts of their areas where it is most convenient for them to be managed by a local committee. In point of fact this has been done in instances without any legal authority and the clause proposes to give this authority. The controlling body may consist either of members of the council or persons who are not councillors or both. The council will fix the number of members of the controlling body, its term of office, the quorum, its powers and duties, and lay down rules for the conduct of its business. The clause provides that a council can delegate to a controlling body power to receive and expend revenue from and for the undertaking. It is provided that a council may at any time abolish a controlling authority but in such circumstances the council is to take over the liabilities of the authority. This particular clause should provide a very convenient method for a council to delegate to a local body the control of an undertaking and thereby enable local enthusiasm to be applied to the management of the particular undertaking.

Clause 27. Section 667 now provides power for a council to make by-laws requiring owners and occupiers of land to destroy inflammable grass, etc., on the land and so to provide fire breaks. It is proposed by clause 27 to extend this power to enable a council to require owners and occupiers to destroy grass and similar growth before it becomes inflammable if it would become inflammable in the course of time. Obviously, the sensible thing to do is to destroy or plough in undergrowth when it is green and the ground is soft and this provision will enable this to be done.

Clause 28. Under the by-law making powers of councils penalties not exceeding £10 may be imposed. It is proposed by clause 28 to increase this amount to £20, as it is considered that £10 as a maximum penalty under existing circumstances is inadequate.

Clause 29. This authorizes a solicitor to accept the service of a summons or writ on behalf of a council. At present it must be served on the mayor or clerk.

Clause 30. This clause merely repeals an obsolete provision in section 719.

Clause 31. Section 783 provides penalties for the deposit on roadways of such things as ashes and rubbish of various kinds. Clause 31 extends this provision to dead animals and birds and bricks and stones. In addition, it provides that when the court imposes a penalty under the section it may order the defendant to pay the cost to the council of removing the rubbish, etc. deposited on the roadway.

Clause 32. This clause increases from £5 to £20 the penalty for leaving beehives on a roadway.

Clause 33. At present justices, medical practitioners, post masters, members of the police force, and bank managers are authorized witnesses for the purpose of postal voting. The purpose of clause 33 is to provide that people holding these offices in other States will be authorized witnesses so that a person in, say, Sydney who wishes to exercise his right to a postal vote may go before a Justice of the Peace for New South Wales.

Clause 34. Division IV of Part XLIV of the Act gives the Adelaide City Council powers as to the acquisition of land for the widening of streets and the making of new streets and also gives the council extended borrowing powers for these purposes. Clause 34 provides that the Governor may by proclamation declare that the provisions of this Division will apply to other municipal councils named in the proclamation.

Clause 35. This clause deals with a small fund of about £260 which is held by trustees at Henley and Grange. These funds were raised by regattas in 1928 and 1929 and were intended to be used for the purpose of providing a fire brigade for Henley and Grange. In the meantime the Fire Brigades Act has been extended to apply to the municipality and obviously the purpose for which the money was raised has ceased to exist. The trustees wish to pay the money to the council to be applied by the council for the purpose of a

community hospital. Clause 35 authorizes this to be done.

Clause 36. This clause brings into conformity with present-day costs the fees which can be charged by bailiffs when exercising distress for rates. Clause 37 and the schedule make a number of drafting amendments to the Act. I point out that this Bill has already been passed by another place. It contained one controversial clause, but that was eliminated. It related to zoning and the fixation of a differential rate, and as that clause has been eliminated I think that many of the difficulties that members may have had in debating the Bill have been removed.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

[*Sitting suspended from* 5.58 *to* 7.30 *p.m.*]

VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with an amendment.

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Bill is to provide for a general increase in the pensions and benefits payable under the Police Pensions Act, both to existing and future pensioners. The question of police pensions received the attention of Parliament in 1954 and again in 1956, and members may wonder why it is again necessary to consider the question. The reason is that since the present rates were fixed in 1954, other pensions and salaries which were taken into account at that time have been increased to such an extent as to justify a review of police pensions. The 1954 Act set a standard which was reasonable at the time when the matter was before Parliament. The aim of that Act was to give members of the force pensions of the same standard as the Public Service, having regard to the different retiring ages, and also rates which would be reasonably in line with those of other States and particularly Queensland, where the system of pensions closely resembles our own. However, since the passing of the 1954 Act other Government pensions have been raised 20 per cent or more, and there have been increases in police salaries in this State, as well as in the pensions payable to police in other States.

Bearing these matters in mind the Government recently referred the question of police pensions to the Public Actuary for an investigation. The Actuary's finding was to the effect that the pensions were now a little over 20 per cent below the standard aimed at in the 1954 Act. The 1956 Act did not improve the general level but merely gave a small increase to the commissioned officers. Upon receipt of the Actuary's report the Government asked him to work out a scheme of increases for the purpose of maintaining the standard of 1954 in the light of the increases which had been granted in other pensions and salaries, and the rates which he recommends are embodied in this Bill. In addition to a general increase in pensions the Bill makes an alteration in the general scheme of pensions. Formerly there was a basic rate of pension for all members of the force other than commissioned officers, and separate rates for commissioned officers, varying according to their rank. In this Bill a further variation has been introduced, providing a special rate of pension for officers holding the rank of sergeant.

In addition to increasing pensions the Bill also increases the rates of contributions by about 12½ per cent. This is based on the recommendation of the Public Actuary. The percentage increase in contribution is not as great as that in pensions. This is because the Actuary is now able to value the Police Pensions Fund on the basis of interest being earned at 4 per cent whereas previously it was necessary to work on a figure of 3½ per cent. The increase in the interest rate makes it possible to maintain the position of the fund without increasing contributions in the same ratio as pensions. I will now explain the main provisions of the Bill.

In clause 4 there is an interpretation clause to define what rank the Principal of the Women Police shall be deemed to hold for the purpose of the pension scheme. This officer is not called a constable, sergeant or inspector but on the basis of salary it seems that she should be regarded as a sergeant and the Bill lays down a rule to this effect. If there should be any other member of the force who does

not hold one of the usual ranks, his rank for the purpose of pension will be determined by the Commissioner.

Clause 5 prescribes the new rates of contribution. Contributions payable by members below the rank of sergeant are increased by about 8½ per cent on the average. Contributions payable by sergeants and commissioned officers will be the new rates applicable to the members below sergeant, plus a percentage of those rates, commensurate with the higher pensions proposed for sergeants and commissioned officers. The maximum limit of contributions is also increased in harmony with the general increase. Clause 6 is a consequential amendment which has been rendered necessary mainly by the legislation providing for a Deputy Commissioner of Police to be appointed, with a retiring age of 65.

Clause 7 sets out the amount of the general increase in police pensions. It will be seen that the normal annual pension on retirement is being increased from £364 a year to £420 and the cash payment from £1,250 to £1,500. These figures represent an increase of 20 per cent in the cash payment and 15½ per cent in the annual rate for constables. In addition, however, sergeants who formerly received the constables' rate of pension will obtain substantially larger increases, thus bringing the average increase to sergeants and constables to about 21½ per cent.

Clauses 8, 9 and 10 make corresponding increases in the pensions payable on retirement through injury and invalidity, and in the benefits for widows. Under the present law a person who retires through an injury received in the course of his duty is entitled to the ordinary annual pension of £364, plus a cash payment based on the length of his service and age. If the length of his service is ten years or more the payment of £400 plus £40 for each year by which the contributor's age at retirement exceeded forty. It is proposed in this case to increase the annual pension to the new basic figure of £420. The cash payment will be raised to £500, and the additional payment for each year of the member's age at retirement in excess of forty, will be raised from £40 to £50. The maximum cash payment in these cases is raised from £1,250 to £1,500.

Invalidity pensions are also raised proportionately by clause 9. Under the present law a man who retires on invalidity with between ten and fifteen years' service gets a pension of £182 and a cash payment. The pension is being raised from £182 to £210. The cash payment, which is at present £400, plus £40 for each year by which the member's age exceeds forty, is raised to £500, plus £50 for each year. Corresponding amendments are made in the pensions for members who retire on invalidity after fifteen years' service.

Clause 10 increases the pension for widows and children. The pension for widows of members who die while still in the force is raised from £182 a year to £210. The cash payment which a widow receives is raised from £400, plus £40 for each year of the member's age in excess of forty, to £500, plus £50 for each such year. The special allowance of £39 a year for children of a deceased member is raised to £52. The annual pension for the widow of a pensioner is raised from £182 to £210 a year and a child's allowance in these cases from £39 to £52 10s.

Clause 11 sets out the new rates of pension for sergeants and commissioned officers. These rates are based on the basic pension for ordinary members of the force, with an additional proportion depending on the rank of the officer. The table in clause 11 sets out the additional proportions. Sergeants will receive one-tenth more than the basic rate, third class inspectors three-tenths, second class inspectors two-fifths, first class inspector one-half, and senior inspectors, superintendents, deputy commissioner and the Commissioner three-fifths. These incremental amounts are, in general, at least 10 per cent higher than the incremental amounts formerly prescribed. Finally clause 12 prescribes an increase in all existing pensions of 21½ per cent. The normal annual rate of £364 will be raised to approximately £442 and other rates will be raised in proportion to these.

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

MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH (Minister of Marine)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has been introduced for the purpose of enabling the Government to take measures to ensure a greater measure of safety for coast trade ships and fishing vessels. Some recent losses of vessels, as well as the growth of the fishing industry, indicate the need for legislation of this kind. The Bill inserts two new provisions in the Marine Act. One deals with wireless installations, and the other with manning and equipment of fishing vessels. The

provisions dealing with wireless installations apply to coast trade ships, that is to say, to ships trading between one port and another in South Australia, and also to any ships which carry passengers for hire on journeys beginning and ending at the same port. The Bill provides that these ships must be equipped with wireless transmitting and receiving equipment complying with the regulations and kept in efficient working order. Every such ship must also carry a person who holds the prescribed qualification as a wireless operator.

Provision is made for exempting individual ships or classes of ships from the obligation to carry wireless. No doubt there will be some ships which will have a claim for exemption either because of their small size or the short journey which they make, or the fact that they do not carry persons other than the owners. If a ship does not comply with the requirements as to wireless and goes to sea the owner and the master shall all be liable to penalties not exceeding £100. There is little need for me to stress the great value of wireless to any ship which gets into difficulties, but unfortunately all owners do not avail themselves of it—sometimes with disastrous results. The other provision of the Bill deals with the manning and equipment of fishing vessels. It is provided that regulations may be made on a number of topics aimed at securing the soundness and safety of these vessels. Among other things the regulations may prescribe the examinations and qualifications of skippers and officers and requirements as to survey and equipment. Unseaworthy vessels may be prohibited from going to sea and other regulations may be made for the general purpose of ensuring the safety of vessels and the officers and crews thereof.

The regulations may also provide for the exemption of any vessels from the regulations. It is obvious, of course, that it may not be necessary to control every fishing boat in the State irrespective of its size or where it is used. Most of the other States of Australia have found it necessary to have legislation on the lines of this Bill. Regulations requiring intra-state passenger vessels to carry wireless equipment have already been made in all the other States. I stress this point in regard to the first part of the Bill. While most of the intra-state vessels in South Australia do carry some form of wireless, it is not at all certain that it is in all cases adequate, properly maintained and operated by a competent person. As regards fishing boats, regulations on this subject are already in force in Tasmania and Western Australia, and harbour authorities in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland are now seeking legislation on this subject. Recent events have proved the necessity of this form of legislation. Members will have every opportunity in due course of examining the position as the regulations will have to go before Cabinet and Executive Council and, in due course, before the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation. It will then come before Parliament again.

Adequate provision has been made to see that no hardship shall be done to anybody, but at the same time a greater measure of safety will be given to those who go down to the sea in ships.

Mr. TAPPING secured the adjournment of the debate.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks for the Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It extends the operation of the Prices Act for a further 12 months. It has been introduced by the Government after careful consideration of the arguments for and against the maintenance of control. The Government believes that control is still necessary in the interests of economic development. It is of the utmost importance that the costs of production in this State will be such as to enable our industries to compete with those of the eastern States. The competitive strength of our industries depends upon their ability to keep costs under control, and failure in this matter might have very serious results with widespread unemployment. There is little doubt that our system of price control has had a considerable effect in keeping costs reasonable and has contributed to the prosperity and expansion of our industries and the resulting high level of employment.

At this moment South Australia is experiencing the greatest period of development in its history. Our population is growing rapidly. According to the Commonwealth Statistician's figures the rate of increase is greater in this State than in any other State of the Commonwealth. Concurrently, there is an unprecedented expansion of industry. We need more schools and houses, extended transport systems, more roads, water, electricity, hospitals, recreational facilities and greater

supplies of basic materials of all kinds. The expansion which is essential and unavoidable places a great demand on capital, labour and material. These factors all tend to cause inflation, and not much can be done to counteract it except through the medium of Government action.

In considering whether there is a case for continued price control it is relevant to look at what has happened in the four Australian States where price control has been abolished —namely, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.

In New South Wales price control was abolished in the middle of last year. Since then the increase in her cost of living as revealed by the "C" Series Index has been more than twice as high as the increase in South Australia during the same period—7s. a week as against 3s.

In Victoria control was abolished at the end of 1954. Since then the "C" series index in Victoria has risen by 30s., while in the same period the increase in South Australia has been only 20s. In Tasmania price control was abolished about the same time as in Victoria, and Tasmania's "C" series index has risen by 29s. as opposed to 20s. in this State. Western Australia abolished control at the end of 1953. Since then the Western Australian cost of living has risen by 45s. The corresponding figure in this State is 22s.

The figures which I have given allow for the recent increase of 2s. in this State. It is not unreasonable to infer, from what has happened, that price control is an effective factor in keeping down the cost of living. The Government has a great deal of information showing the prices of specific goods and services in all the States, and these clearly indicate the lower prices prevailing in South Australia.

We have recently had experience of the effect of de-control under our own legislation. Earlier this year a representative cross section of goods in ample supply and on which fair margins were allowed, were de-controlled. Since de-control, price movements on these lines have been carefully watched and although costs have shown only a small increase, the price increases in many cases have been substantial. The Prices Department knows of numerous instances in which traders, after incurring a legitimate cost increase, take steps to increase selling prices to a far greater extent than is justified by the increase in costs.

The effect of price control on the cost of houses has been highly beneficial to the South Australian public. The Government is advised that in other States where building and materials are not controlled a five roomed house costs about £500 more to build than the same type of house in this State. From all the information which is available to the Government it can fairly be inferred that in present circumstances price control is not only beneficial but necessary. Apart from the question of hardship to individuals resulting from constantly increasing prices, our industries can only progress, find new markets and maintain employment if their costs are kept within proper bounds. This applies both to primary and secondary industries, but particularly to primary industry, the major portion of whose products is sold in competitive world markets. To these producers price control brings a great benefit by maintaining reasonable stability in the prices of commodities such as superphosphate, petrol, kerosene, oil, fuel, pipes and fittings, tyres and tubes and other items used in production. The Government itself is also a very large buyer of all kinds of goods for public works and the day to day operations of the State and has a duty to the public to see that the prices charged are not unduly inflated.

There are two other matters of interest which may be mentioned in connection with this Bill. The first is that, contrary to the views expressed in some quarters, price control is favoured by a large majority of the public. A Gallup poll was held in May of this year on the questions whether prices should be controlled or not, and whether control should be under the State or the Commonwealth. A large majority favoured price control—well over two-thirds of those who expressed opinions. In this State the majority in favour of price control was the highest of any State —nearly three to one.

While every State of Australia favoured price control, opinion was divided whether it should be a State or Federal matter. South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland favoured State control. Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland favoured Commonwealth control. On this question the majority in favour of State control was highest in South Australia, and more than two-thirds of those who had an opinion on the subject favoured the State.

Another point which may be mentioned is that the Prices Act does not merely operate through the medium of the specific orders

which are made for controlling prices. The mere fact that the Act is on the Statute Book and that action can be taken in appropriate cases enables the Prices Department to make numerous voluntary arrangements with traders and manufacturers, which are highly beneficial to the public.

Finally, it must be stressed that price control does not mean that traders are denied fair margins or reasonable profits. The aim is to secure a fair, just, and stable price as opposed to an excessive and constantly increasing one.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the Bill, which contains three clauses and which continues the operation of the Prices Act for 12 months. The Minister's second reading explanation was surely the longest that has ever explained merely the extension of certain controls for a year. We have been told that a Gallup poll was held earlier this year on certain aspects of price control and that people had been asked whether price control should be administered by the Commonwealth or the State Government; but Commonwealth price control was much more effective than State price control in keeping down prices, preventing inflation, and maintaining real living standards.

Under Commonwealth price control the rents of our homes were controlled, but what has happened since the State took over price control? Most of our rental homes are not controlled today because they are owned by the Housing Trust. The Minister had much to say about the control over prices of home building materials. I remind him that on October 9 I asked the Premier, as Minister in charge of prices, the following question:—

I understand that an officer in the Prices Department on a full-time salary also carries on a private practice similar in nature to his departmental duties. Will the Premier ascertain whether this is correct, and does the Government permit a full-time officer to engage in another occupation?

On October 17 the Premier said that the Prices Commissioner had reported as follows:—

Investigation into this matter discloses that the officer concerned does not carry out business as a consulting engineer other than in an honorary position in his own time at the request of the executive committee of a certain institution with which he is actively associated. Other than this, the officer does a few odd jobs at week-ends at the request of personal friends. He has never received or sought a profit for the few jobs he has done. The officer has also given a Statutory Declaration to the above effect. There appears to be little substance in the allegation.

In my original question I asked about the type of employment in which the officer was engaged. I understand he is an investigating officer working on electrical equipment and installations. I did not say that he was a consulting engineer. This matter should be thoroughly investigated, because, although I am not concerned with this officer's private practice, I am concerned about whether he is an electrician qualified to effect certain installations. Electrical installations should not be carried out by people who consider themselves to be handymen. Is it any wonder that we sometimes read of people receiving fatal electric shocks because of faulty workmanship carried out by unqualified people? If I wanted any electrical work done I would engage a qualified electrician. I do not know whether the Prices Department officer that I referred to is a qualified electrician, and I did not say he was a consulting engineer, so I think the Government should examine my question again.

The Minister's second reading speech indicated that we have had some relaxation of rent controls, but the Premier has often said when announcing relaxation of controls over certain items that if he found the position was getting out of hand he would bring those items under control again. I admit that the public may benefit by releasing certain items from control if they are sold in a competitive market. We must have a Prices Department so that it can closely watch prices, but instead of announcing that the Prices Commissioner will send out investigators to check retail prices it would be better if that fact were not publicized. Then the consumers would get a better deal. I understand that price control applied to the electrical trade generally as many electrical installations have to be carried out in the construction of a new home, particularly in areas not supplied with gas. Is the Treasurer in a position to ascertain whether there is much competition in electrical installations? If so, is price control necessary? I know there is considerable competition in other sections of the building trade because not enough money is being made available for the erection of homes.

In his second reading speech the Minister referred to price control in other States. He mentioned the question of cost of living adjustments. I wonder whether Housing Trust rents have any material effect on the C series index. If the tenants are paying more than the

amount allowed in the C series index their standard of living must suffer. Again, does the C series index allow a certain amount for fares incurred in going to and returning from employment? Many people in Housing Trust homes reside five miles or more from their place of employment, so there again their standard of living is affected. I remind the House that only last week it was announced that the cost of living for the past quarter rose by two shillings a week, but the basic wage is not being adjusted accordingly. This Bill contains only one operative clause, but the Minister's second reading speech had to be bolstered to make out a good case to justify the introduction of the measure. I firmly believe that the economy of this country was in a better condition under Federal price control than it is now under State price control.

Mr. MILLHOUSE secured the adjournment of the debate.

DECENTRALIZATION.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. O'Halloran—

That in view of the alarming concentration of population in the metropolitan area of South Australia, an address be presented to the Governor praying His Excellency to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon—

(*a*) Whether industries ancillary to primary production, such as meat works, establishments for treating hides, skins, etc., and other works for the processing of primary products should be established in country districts; and

(*b*) What other secondary industries could appropriately be transferred from the metropolitan area to the country; and

(*c*) What new industries could be established in country districts; and

(*d*) Whether more railway construction and maintenance work could be done at country railway depots; and

(*e*) What housing provisions should be made to assist a programme of decentralization; and

(*f*) What amenities, particularly sewerage schemes, are necessary to make country towns more attractive.

(Continued from October 2. Page 912.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—When I sought leave to continue my remarks on this motion I was pointing out the declining number of rural holdings in South Australia and was urging the House to support the motion. I shall not keep the House long because I appreciate the opportunity that has been given for this debate to continue and so that the member for Wallaroo (Mr. Hughes) who is vitally interested in this motion, may express his views. When he moved the motion the Leader of the Opposition did not claim that the Labor Party had all the answers to the problem of decentralization. He rightly said that this is a matter of great importance, but considered that no member of Parliament could furnish a satisfactory solution of the problem. He urged that a Royal Commission be set up to inquire into and report on decentralization. The commission would be able to collect evidence from all parties and sources and come down with a finding that would be of great assistance to the Government. The Premier, who is obliged to carry out the directions of the Liberal Party, was opposed to the appointment of a Royal Commission because he knew it would tell the truth and show that centralization of industry was in line with the policy of the Liberal Party and that the party by very clever methods was forcing the population of South Australia into Labor districts, thus enabling the Liberal Government to retain control of this place and the State.

Mr. John Clark—It would not have assisted the Government, but it would have assisted the State.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Exactly, but Party politics being the foremost consideration of the Liberal Party it is not prepared to co-operate. Recently, when Labor was accused of having a temporary interest in the Wallaroo district, we had a plea for a share of State industries and some of us who went to Wallaroo saw—and I am sure the honourable member for Wallaroo will support me—the sorry result of centralization. In that once prosperous district we saw broken families; the people of that area are in the main aged folk whose families have been sent away from the district to find employment because it was not available there. These determined people who have a great faith in their area are confident that, given the proper representation, they would be able to build and establish industry and build the Wallaroo, electorate comprising the towns of Wallaroo, Moonta, Kadina and other towns into a prosperous and highly industrialized area if they were properly represented. They ensured for themselves proper representation by returning Mr. Hughes to further their desire for decentralization.

Mr. Jenkins—Why haven't they started the industries?

Mr. HUTCHENS—They believed that if they had a man to truly represent them something

could be done. They did not appreciate, of course, that to make progress they would need the co-operation and sympathy of the Government in office. The people of Wallaroo adopted a very definite stand and, in effect, I believe they said "We will send our David to handle the great Goliath who has suppressed in no uncertain manner our progress in this area." This is not common only to the Wallaroo electorate. We find that the hills districts, which are almost part of the metropolitan area, are similarly suffering because of lack of sympathy from the central Government. We find in the Oakbank dairying district and in Balhannah that a committee has been set up for the purpose of acquiring industry. So diminished is their confidence in the central Government that they have gone to great lengths to obtain finance to support and assist industry to come to their area.

Mr. Hambour—Do you believe the Government should set up these industries in country areas?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I believe there are occasions when the Government has to set up industries in the areas and I believe that Wallaroo is an ideal spot for the Government to concentrate on. I submit that the meat works promised to Wallaroo are beyond the capacity of private enterprise at the moment and that if the Government can set up a meat works in the metropolitan area and finance it, as it has done also at Port Lincoln, it has a duty to provide a similar service for the people of Yorke Peninsula. We have had the support of members opposite in our claims for decentralization of industry, and a more sympathetic outlook towards the people. I refer to the remarks made on this subject by the member for Alexandra not very long ago. He appealed for consideration for country people and referred particularly to the difficulties encountered by people living at Kangaroo Island who are engaged in primary production. He spoke of the difficulties met by them due to a monopoly in the shipping industry and showed what exorbitant freights the Kingscote people are forced to pay. I desire to examine the arguments advanced in opposition to the motion. The Premier said, in effect, that it was wrong to challenge the Government. He said, "How dare you talk about decentralization? I am the beginning and the end of these things. You leave it to me." He built himself up in this place like Hercules on his pedestal and said, "I will show the members of the Labor Party what this Government has done." He was pressed into making statements of that kind. He said "We built a house at Alford." The Government built one house at Alford and that was put forward as a claim for decentralization. I was recently in that town, but I did not see the house, nor did I see any great industry. It appeared to me to be a great field. The Premier said that the Government had built a house at Baroota, and one at Brinkworth, and mentioned 33 towns where one house had been built and he claimed this was decentralization. That is an amazing argument. I have to confess that the Premier said that the Government which has been in office since 1938 under his leadership built 8,921 homes in the country and he excluded 830 rural dwellings, soldier settlement dwellings and emergency homes. I thought that was a pretty thin argument and I am supported in this view when I find that 5,000 of these homes were built in non-Government members' districts. In other words, they were built in Labor districts. I submit this proves conclusively that centralization of industry is the policy of the Liberal Party and it builds houses in Labor districts so that its own chances will not be prejudiced at elections. That is the only conclusion that any reasonable person could come to. I believe this decentralization motion has done some good because it has put members opposite on their toes and we now find them talking about decentralization wherever they go. The Leader of the Opposition went to a great deal of trouble to obtain information from various districts and he was able to name 25 towns where the population had declined between 1932 and 1954. I went through more recent statistics and I can show where a lot more towns have decreased in population between 1947 and 1954. I was surprised, following certain remarks made by the member for Chaffey on populations increases through natural causes, to find that Chaffey now had fewer people enrolled.

Mr. Jenkins—Quite a large number of towns have increased.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I acknowledge that. The member for Stirling obviously has not followed my argument. The population has increased in certain districts where the seats are held by non-Government members. I desire to show just what this motion proposes, and even though it may not be carried I hope members opposite will be generous enough to accept an examination and inquiry. The honourable the Minister of Education has joined with many others in trying to convince us that

all is well in South Australia regarding decentralization. He made a speech during Apprentice Week which was reported the following day in the *Advertiser* in which he said:—

It can truly be said that Australia is the land of opportunity, and today, as never before is the age of youth. There is no high office of state, no high distinction of scholarship, no high calling or enterprise, which is not open to the assault of youth's talents. All the glittering prizes of life may be grasped by those who have the ability, tenacity and courage to seek and attain them.

That is very encouraging, but I doubt whether people in such places as Jamestown, Kapunda, Kadina, Kimba, Wallaroo, Snowtown, Wasleys, and other places where they find their towns are rapidly becoming ghost towns have any reason to believe that they have an equal opportunity with the densely populated metropolitan area where people have the high schools and the secondary industries to employ the young people. Members should note that the Opposition, through its Leader, has only one desire: to see this State develop. We retain the principles for which we stand and we wish to make the full use of our natural resources by the decentralization of population and industry. I support the motion.

Mr. HUGHES (Wallaroo)—I, too, support the motion, and deeply appreciate the interest that has been shown in Wallaroo by members of both sides during the past two months. If the recent Wallaroo by-election has done nothing else it has certainly put Wallaroo on the map of Australia.

Mr. Hambour—That's your job now.

Mr. HUGHES—Yes, and I will see that it is carried out. Firstly, I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) on the excellent case he made for his motion and on the valuable figures he submitted. I also commend the member for Gawler (Mr. John Clark), who followed him with more figures. I have perused with interest the *Hansard* reports of this debate and I believe that members have agreed that the motive of this motion is a desire to develop the State and to decentralize in the interests of defence, in the common interest, for the good of mankind generally, and for a better understanding and the confidence that should exist between all people.

The motion urges the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the means whereby industries may be encouraged to establish themselves in country centres. The idea behind the motion is a balanced State economy, the distribution of industry and population throughout the State, and the general well being of our people. During election campaigns we have been told that members opposite are free to speak and vote as they desire, but I am beginning to wonder whether that is only campaign talk. In perusing the *Hansard* reports of debates I noticed that one member opposite only last year strongly favoured decentralization, yet a few weeks ago, speaking on this motion, he strongly opposed any move for a Royal Commission. After reading his fine speech in last year's Address in Reply debate, I really thought he would have been one of the first to support this motion. I also read the Premier's reply with interest, especially the part about the investigation of mineral deposits.

Mr. Hambour—Don't you think your district has had more than its fair share of boring for copper?

Mr. HUGHES—It has had its share, which I appreciate, and I trust it will continue. In my electorate the level nature of the country with its lack of outcrops has rendered prospecting in the past difficult and costly, as the surface indications gave little or no information relative to any ore bodies that may be underneath. However, after visiting the Mines Department laboratories recently I am convinced that modern scientific methods are a great advance on the older and slower methods and can be considered reliable.

Mr. Jenkins—The Government is doing something then.

Mr. HUGHES—Yes, and I have acknowledged that. If strong lodes are found to exist, ores of much higher value from shallow depths are almost certain to be obtained, for this was the experience in the opening lodes in the district in the past. This condition would afford high and quick returns at lower cost and amply supply the means to provide capital for further development and plant. A good reply to the Leader's arguments on this motion was spoilt when the Premier said:—

It may be well to indicate to members an example of the type of investigation carried out. Incidentally the example I shall cite relates to an electoral district in which members opposite have some interest at the moment. I am afraid, however, that it will not be a permanent interest. The Opposition's interest in this electorate, of course, prompted the present motion, which can be regarded as a stock in trade motion that is brought out, not necessarily every year, but on appropriate occasions to emphasize how anxious members opposite are to ensure that there is decentralization

in the particular district in which they happen to have a fleeting interest at that moment.

If the Government considers that is true, I challenge it to use this remedy and put a stop to the alleged practice by appointing a Royal Commission. My electoral district will receive more than a fleeting interest in the future. Indeed, decentralization has been a burning question there for years and my constituents will demand a permanent interest in the future.

Mr. Hambour—Don't you think your predecessor gave your district more than a fleeting interest?

Mr. HUGHES—Yes, but I am talking about the future, not my predecessor. The Premier also said:—

I know many arguments can be submitted dealing with the undesirability of a large proportion of the population beng centred in Adelaide, and I quite agree that it is undesirable for that position to apply to any capital city in any country.

If it is undesirable for a large part of the population to be concentrated in the city why does not the Government do something about it? In view of the Premier's statement, I cannot understand why Government members so strongly oppose the idea of obtaining independent information on the proposed methods of encouraging decentralization. Labor members do not demand anything: we are prepared to abide by the findings of a Royal Commission if one is appointed. With all due respect to members opposite who say that a Royal Commission would not serve a useful purpose, I submit that that is only an opnion taken against expert advice. Recently, Mr. R. G. Downes, a Victorian authority on soil conservation, addressed a meeting of the Institute of Agricultural Science at the Waite Institute and commented critically on the growth of capital cities. The following is the report of his address contained in the *Advertiser*:—

The "urban explosion" of major Australian cities was swallowing up too much valuable agricultural land. Valuable market gardens and orders had been lost in Melbourne's expansion and the same was happening in Adelaide. He thought the Adelaide airport had been well placed on poor agricultural land, but he doubted the wisdom of industrial expansion on good land north of the city. "This land might prove to be too valuable in the long run," he said. "Despite the advance of technology and chemistry, we still rely on such land for our food and prosperity. I cannot see that this will change for many years to come."

Mr. Jenkins—But there are good industries on good land in the country.

Mr. HUGHES—We would not do that if they were sent up our way. We should note the comments of such men as Mr. Downes when they criticize the use of good land for the expansion of industry in preference to food production, which is the lifeblood of every nation, every country and every State. This is, of course, only one aspect, albeit a very important one, of the problems created by centralization. We are in the world not only to live but to think, not only to think but to strive for an order of society in which people of all ages will be satisfied. With this heritage in our hands we cannot afford to stand still. Greater industrial and business development throughout our State will enable the average standards of life of its many people to be lifted more readily. A greater improvement in the progress of this State mainly depends upon a seizure of opportunities for extending the potential that exists here. The findings of a Royal Commission after an inquiry into the decentralization of industry and population would be instructive to the Government and the adoption of those findings would be of untold value to the State, if not immediately, at least ultimately.

Recently Professor Orchard, who last April assumed office as the Foundation Professor of Highway Engineering at the New South Wales University of Technology, said:—

As in all other countries the cities of Australia have been designed and built long before present day traffic was known or could even reasonably have been contemplated. The result is that in common with all countries Australia is presented with cities which from the traffic aspect are out of date and are outmoded. Clearly, he says, the first step is that the growth of cities like Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide must be halted. They are already too big. Australia has a considerable intake of migrants every year and these all have to be housed. The easiest way is to squeeze them into existing houses and to add houses on to existing towns and cities. This is what is being done, but the former cannot continue indefinitely and the latter will only accentuate the existing serious traffic problems. My view is that this growth of population should be absorbed by building entirely new towns at a sufficient distance from the existing large towns to prevent them from becoming dormitories of the large towns. The first essential, according to Professor Orchard, is that new towns should have their own industry, so that the people who live in them can also earn their living in them. This would eliminate the necessity to travel to other towns. However, this is perhaps the biggest obstacle, as industry must for its success have a large market, and therefore a large population, close at hand. This means that the new towns must in general be near the large cities, say at a distance of 60 miles, but not so near that there

is a danger of the urban districts merging. It also means that there must be the best possible road and rail communication with the large city.

In studying Professor Orchard's opinions I was reminded of a recent statement by the member for Torrens (Mr. Coumbe). He said that the Main North Road from North Adelaide to Enfield carried 95 per cent of all northern traffic and that a recent count showed that up to 3,000 vehicles passed in one direction in an hour. Traffic was expected to increase still further with the growth of Elizabeth. How closely is that problem associated with the theory set out by Professor Orchard that entirely new towns should be at a sufficient distance from existing cities to prevent their becoming dormitories of those cities. That is exactly what has happened and will continue to happen because the Premier has been reported as saying that he can visualize a million people on the Adelaide plains in the next 20 years. It has been frequently said that a great mistake was made in selecting the site for Elizabeth. After all, it is only an extension of the already congested metropolitan area. It should have been built at least 60 miles from Adelaide and what better place than on the Murray where the water flows past the door. When people are taken from country areas it only means the building up of cities and the more that happens the more their populations will suffer from a shortage of essential needs. Centralization brings with it evils that decentralization could stamp out, one of which is an unwholesome cult for teenagers that has caused much trouble in Adelaide and suburbs for some time.

Mr. O'Halloran—And in Elizabeth.

Mr. HUGHES—Yes. It sickens the soul to think how many good minds have been discouraged or misguided. From the point of view of defence there can be no argument against decentralization. Today there are nations which would not hesitate to use modern weapons of destruction if given the opportunity. With unscrupulous people in the world, the city with most of its power lines, industries and water services assembled together could be reduced to a shambles overnight. Centralization must be arrested and the flow of people to the city stopped. If this is not done the State will be at the mercy of those who thrive on centralization. Recently the member for Burra (Mr. Quirke) drew attention to submarines powered by atomic energy that could travel around the world without refuelling. Scientists tell us that atomic energy could be a great force in industry, but evil men could use it to destroy all that civilization has accumulated. In the next 50 years we will witness developments and discoveries that will make those of the past 50 years seem utterly insignificant. Surely we must remember the destruction and horror of other countries during the last war. That, in itself, should be sufficient justification for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the desire of a large proportion of the people to spread industry and population over a wide area. Some people express a smug feeling of security in the belief that the tragedies associated with the use of these weapons will prevent their use, but does anyone believe that if Hitler had developed the atomic bomb, or if Japan had possessed one when she attacked Pearl Harbour, they would not have used it? This attitude is most dangerous and could bring about our destruction. There will rise again other Hitlers and other Tojos. The need for decentralization is most important from a defence point of view. Industries of all descriptions established in and around a capital city are a sitting shot in the event of enemy atack.

Australia—and South Australia particularly—needs populating, but unless provision is made to populate the State as a whole no scheme can be successful. It is a matter of deep concern that circumstances should be such that this problem cannot be solved easily and quickly. The building up of cities is recognized all over the world as strategically wrong and one the size of Adelaide could be obliterated within half an hour in modern warfare.

It should be possible to develop efficient slaughtering units in the form of abattoirs at certain selected centres for slaughering meat both for local consumption and export. It would remove the continuing difficulties in country areas concerning butchers' slaughtering facilities and the cost of maintaining them, particularly in the smaller communities, if the meat could be killed at a central depot and delivered to a number of towns within a radius of 20 or 30 miles. In addition meat could be killed for export during the export season. The combined population of Kadina, Wallaroo and Moonta is approximately 8,000 and the meat required to feed this population is 25 to 30 cattle, 400 sheep and lambs plus a few pigs. When the export season finishes at Port Lincoln the requirements of the local abattoirs are met by a few solo workmen, the chain closing down after 12 or 16 weeks' operation. If killing

units were established in country areas there would not be sufficient work to keep all men employed throughout the year. It would be a seasonal occupation between July and November. In Wallaroo there are two fertilizer companies which require seasonal labour between December and June, and if such labour could float between the companies and a meatworks there would be continuity of employment. Auxiliary industries, such as skin and hide treatment, the manufacture, disposal and sale of stock foods would assist further in the continuity of operations.

There are advantages in the selection of Wallaroo as a country meatworks, firstly, because it is a deep sea port; secondly, because the conversion of what is known as the power alcohol plant could meet the requirements for a meatworks and, thirdly, it would be a reasonably convenient centre to supply Wallaroo, Kadina, Moonta, Bute, and Paskeville. The advantages of the power alcohol plant are its close proximity to the jetty, and economic disposal of effluent to the sea, a railway siding already established on the plant and some saving in construction costs when compared with the cost of a new building. Land adjacent to this plant could be purchased for stock paddocks. The establishment of a meatworks at Wallaroo would relieve gluts such as have occurred because of the lack of capacity in the metropolitan abattoirs. If the export trade revealed losses in the country it would still be a benefit to the State and to the producer. The question to be decided was hard, cold economics, or the development of the State. For this type of industry it was better to provide facilities at the source of production than to travel long distances to reach a meatworks. I take it that the Port Lincoln works is of great benefit to this State, and to producers generally, yet it has only shown a profit in two years out of the last six. It may be of interest to members if I give the figures.

In 1950-51 the total number of sheep and lambs treated at Port Lincoln, both for export and for local consumption, was 71,526. In that year the works showed a loss of £29,913. In 1951-52, 67,290 sheep and lambs were treated, and the works showed a loss of £28,740. In 1952-53, 189,333 sheep and lambs were treated, and the works made a profit of £9,420. In 1953-54, 133,419 sheep and lambs were treated, and the works made a loss of £26,546. In 1954-55, 184,305 sheep and lambs were treated, and the works made a profit of £3,317. In 1955-56, 145,350 sheep and lambs were handled, and the works made a loss of £10,155.

Mr. Hambour—Who met the losses?

Mr. HUGHES—I am not in a position to say. The honourable member should ask those in charge, but those losses are only small in comparison with the benefits sustained by the producers. The question of decentralization of industry in my electorate has been the subject of much correspondence in the past. Since 1939 the town councils have been active in this matter, but with very little result. Members opposite are no doubt well aware that the Wallaroo by-election was won on the issues of decentralization. It is the most talked about subject not only in my district, but in most country districts. Country newspapers are taking it up, and I think that this issue will mean the end of the present Government. Many people who have supported the Government for years are talking about decentralization now. They say that the drift to the city is undesirable and that something should be done about it.

The Premier has stated that he cannot direct any industry to go to the country. I agree with him on that point, but I firmly believe that he could use his powers of persuasive eloquence to influence industries to become established in certain country centres. As regards the decentralization of population, which my Party believes should be encouraged, I assure members that there would be no need to use compulsion. As I have already stated, many families have been forced to leave country districts and go to the city because they could not obtain employment in the country. In some instances men have endeavoured to maintain their homes in the country and work in the city, returning home at week ends, but this arrangement, besides being undesirable, is far too costly, and in any case it is an arrangement which no one should have to make. A large proportion of the people now living in the metropolitan area would willingly go to the country if work were available there.

That was borne out when it was thought that a meatworks would be established at Kadina. A number of men living in the metropolitan area applied for employment at the proposed Kadina abattoirs, and if they could have obtained employment there they would have returned to the district. They were disappointed because nothing came of the much publicized proposal. I firmly believe that if

the Government had pressed on with the proposal a meatworks would have been established at Kadina. One of the problems of centralization is the raising of families in country districts. Boys and girls are given a reasonably good education, but when it is time for them to seek employment for which they may be qualified their parents find that no suitable employment is available for them. The young people must either go to the city, sometimes at considerable expense to the parents, or if work can be obtained nearer home, they remain in the country doing work for which they are totally unsuited, and they become a liability rather than an asset to the country.

I mention all these things to show the fallacy of the statement of members opposite, "These things will come." The time that these things take to come is amazing. I shall now read an article by a representative of the Chamber of Manufactures. This is what he thought of a certain country town:—

The little town of Wallaroo, on the eastern shore of Spencer Gulf, has hit the headlines. A while ago the press carried a report that the mayor, learning that the Philip Morris Company of America had decided to establish a cigarette factory in Australia, had cabled the company's New York office, urging them to consider Wallaroo as the site for their factory. Such enterprise deserves success. It also indicates that the town must have possibilities. To see for myself what Wallaroo had to offer this American company—and, incidentally, any Australian company—I visited the town recently. I was not prepared for what I saw. In the days of the copper boom, when the Wallaroo-Moonta district mined the richest copper deposits in the world, 18,000 people lived in Wallaroo, Kadina and Moonta and the surrounding country. Besides the fabulously rich copper mines and the smelting works, the district embraced some of the best farming land in the State.

Wallaroo was, and still is, one of the principal grain ports of the State. But the mines petered out in the early 1920's. The population dropped to about 8,500. What remains could be described as the solid core of the district—the farming (Yorke Peninsula is today the principal barley-producing area of South Australia) and the Wallaroo-Mount Lyell and Cresco Fertilizer Works. This was the background against which it was proposed to assess Wallaroo's potentialities as an industrial centre. In many ways it appeared a familiar picture, once seen all too frequently: a district, once bustling with activity, falling into a decay when its prop—its main industry—had been withdrawn; the loyal "pro-home-town" authorities trying their best to bring back its faded glories. Too often, sadly enough, with nothing to back them up.

This time it was different. Why? Why has it not followed the fate of so many other towns and districts which had similar experiences? The answer is Wallaroo's unbounded faith in itself. People of the whole district—Wallaroo, Kadina and Moonta—know the possibilities are there. With the realization of these possibilities, they know their town and district will regain its former position. What are the main requirements of a successful industry? Briefly, they are accessibility to raw materials and markets, good communications, cheap and good factory sites, ample power and water, an assured labour supply and adequate housing and amenities for employees. Let us see how Wallaroo measures up by these standards. The town is 97 miles by road from Adelaide and 65 from Port Pirie. It is a natural deep-water port, with a modern jetty that can accommodate four 10,000 ton ships and two smaller vessels at the same time. Two broad-gauge railway lines on the jetty connect directly with the State's main system at Port Wakefield.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—Aren't you making out a good case for the Government in saying that all those amenities have been provided at Wallaroo?

Mr. HUGHES—There were many people at Wallaroo before this Government had anything to do with providing those amenities. The article continues:—

A first-class bitumen road connects directly with Adelaide, the main towns of Yorke Peninsula and Port Pirie. It is thus easily accessible to both raw materials and markets. Good land is cheap and plentiful close to the town. many excellent factory sites are close to the shores of the bay. There is a ready-built factory, erected by the Commonwealth Government during the war at a cost of £660,000. This large building has hardly ever been used. Ample water is available from the Beetaloo, Bundaleer and Warren reticulation systems. If need be, the nearby Morgan-Whyalla pipeline could be connected. Labour could be drawn from the district. The previous population of 18,000 could be built up again. The area is close enough to both Adelaide and Port Pirie to attract labour from those centres. In the immediate future a pool of labour will be available from a local fertilizer factory when it commences drawing supplies of sulphuric acid (at present manufactured locally) from Port Adelaide.

Mr. Hambour—It seems that Wallaroo has everything. With all that why have there been no takers to establish an industry there?

Mr. HUGHES—Because the Government has not used its influence. The article continues:—

One could go on and on reciting the good points of this town and district, simply by stating cold facts. For example: Kadina, six miles away, is the largest town on Yorke Peninsula. It has a modern shopping centre and may also soon have an abattoirs. Sporting and fishing facilities at both Wallaroo and Moonta are second to none. North Beach less than a mile from the centre of Wallaroo, boasts an expanse of white clean beach that would be difficult to equal.

Wallaroo has everything adequate except an industry. It is situated on the eastern side of Spencer Gulf about 70 miles from the entrance and 50 miles from Whyalla in a deep water bay sheltered on the north by Point Riley and on the south by Moonta shoals. The present jetty has accommodation for six vessels, two of 26ft. draught, two of 27ft. and two of 28ft. Vessels have loaded to 29ft. 5in. and steamed from the jetty safely. The jetty is well protected from rough weather, and vessels can lay there and work in any weather. The bottom is good holding ground, and with two anchors out vessels can ride in safety in any gale. The jetty is served by four lines of rail built to carry heavy locomotives and trucks loaded up to 60 tons each. No difficulty is experienced in working six steamers simultaneously.

This port, with its wide expanse of deep water, and no navigation difficulties, has never required the services of a tug. Steamers berth and sail from the jetty under their own power. In the days of the sailing ships the sails were hoisted at the jetty and the ships sailed out.

In conclusion, may I stress the point that our councils are of the opinion that more should be done to decentralize industries. Much has been said on this matter in the past, but there is still a tendency to centralize in the capital cities whereas it must be patent to all that our people should not be congregated together in one area. At Wallaroo we have a port with every facility and unlimited possibilities, which has been proved in the past. It only needs a little development and support to make it a large industrial centre again. I heartily support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. JENNINGS secured the adjournment of the debate.

COUNCIL BY-LAWS: UNSIGHTLY CHATTELS AND STRUCTURES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham) I move—

That By-law Not 62 of the Corporation of the Town of Glenelg, made on 26th February, 1957, and laid on the table of this House on 30th July, 1957, and By-Law No. 36 of the District Council of Salisbury, made on 29th January, 1957, and laid on the table of this House on 23rd July, 1957, both dealing with Unsightly Chattels and Structures, be disallowed.

These two by-laws are in exactly the same form as a number which came before the notice of this House last year which were subsequently disallowed on my motion following instructions from the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation. On that occasion the by-laws were disallowed by a very large majority.

There were then two substantial reasons why the Committee unanimously felt that the by-law should be disallowed and recommended accordingly. The first one was that there was a lack of definition under the by-law on unsightly chattels and structures, and that was felt to be a great defect leading to the second reason why the Committee had to recommend its disallowance and that was it led to a great discretion by councils. It was felt that such a discretion could create a precedent. At the time I moved the disallowance last year I said it was proposed to promulgate a model by-law for those councils that wished to deal with the subject. Apparently it was found extremely difficult to frame a model by-law satisfactory to all parties and it has now instead been decided by the Government to insert an amendment in the Local Government Act giving a definition of "chattel," and I think with due respect, dealing with the whole subject.

Members will find in their files under the Local Government Act Amendment Bill a clause which deals with unsightly chattels. In the meantime the Salisbury and Glenelg councils, one of which had its by-law disallowed last year, have re-submitted the by-law in exactly the same form and the members of the Committee hold exactly the same view this year as they did last year. Therefore I have been instructed to move for the disallowance of the by-law in exactly the same way as I did then. I do so in the confident expectation that it will not inconvenience or affect the council because an amendment now before the House under the Local Government Act Amendment Bill will satisfactorily cover the position.

Mr. RICHES secured the adjournment of the debate.

REGISTRATION OF DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.25 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 24, at 2 p.m.