

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 24, 1957.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor intimated by message his assent to the following Acts:—Metropolitan Drainage Works (Investigation), Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act Amendment, Fruit Fly (Compensation), Amusements Duty (Further Suspension), Homes Act Amendment, and Metropolitan Milk Supply Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.**OODLAWIRRA SCHOOL BUS SERVICE.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—For some time negotiations have taken place dealing with the difficulty which has arisen at Oodlawirra because the school population served by the bus which runs from Oodlawirra to Peterborough has outgrown the size of the bus. Two suggestions were submitted to the Minister of Education—one that the school at Oodlawirra be re-opened, and the other that a larger bus be provided. The Minister agreed to supply a larger bus, and I ask him whether he can indicate when it will be made available?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Following on the representations made by the honourable member I considered the matter and thought it would be better to have an up-to-date bus service than to re-open the school. I am pleased to be able to inform him that a new Fargo bus will be put in service on Monday week.

SALE OF BOTTLED MILK.

Mr. SHANNON—In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture I direct my question to the Minister of Lands, as Leader of the House. When speaking on the Dairy Industry Act Amendment Bill yesterday I stressed the need to increase the local consumption of primary produce, and I ask the Minister whether his attention has been drawn to a letter in today's *Advertiser* signed by A. C. J. Humphrys, of St. Bernard's Road, Magill. Apparently he has converted his business into a self-service supermarket, but the Metropolitan County Board has refused him a licence to sell bottled milk. I understand that some shops may use milk supplied in bulk for milk drinks, but they are denied a licence to sell bottled milk for family consumption. Obviously, that does not assist the dairy industry in getting rid of surplus butterfat. This is one of the ills from which

we suffer under the present control of milk supplies.

The **SPEAKER**—The honourable member may not debate the question.

Mr. SHANNON—I am not debating the question, but drawing the Government's attention to this problem, and I ask the Minister whether the Government will examine this problem.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I did not see the letter to which the honourable member referred, but I will submit his question to the Minister of Agriculture and get a report.

ENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. JENNINGS—On previous occasions I have asked the Minister of Education questions about the grading of the grounds at the Enfield high school, and he gave me a reply that I thought was unsatisfactory or not conclusive. I asked him whether he would personally investigate the question and he promised to do so. Has he a further answer to the second question I asked?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes. As promised, I have personally investigated the matter and, as I pointed out in my previous reply to the honourable member, a survey has been carried out to enable investigation of the possible means of levelling and grading the Enfield high school grounds so that playing grounds may subsequently be developed. This investigation is proceeding, and the project is being treated by me as a priority job. A detailed scheme is now being prepared, and it is hoped that it will be possible to call tenders for the proposed work by the end of this year.

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION FEES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked on October 3 about complaints that I have received that the fees for the Intermediate Examination are too high?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have received from the Registrar of the University of Adelaide a statement showing the fees for public examinations in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. This confirms the information I supplied when I replied to the honourable member's question on October 3, namely that the overall fees charged in South Australia are less than those charged in the other States. The increase in fees made on December 20, 1956, was an endeavour to lessen the losses of nearly £4,000 made in conducting the public examinations in each of the years 1955 and 1956.

MILANG DISTRICT WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. JENKINS—Farmers in the area adjacent to Milang rely solely on wells for stock water supplies. The water has a high salt content particularly in the dry season. Two or three years ago the Minister of Works intimated that he had a plan for a water service for this area. Can he indicate what progress has been made with that plan?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The vast resources of the department under my control are continually planning for works ahead because usually years elapse from the commencement of planning until the project is operating. Most projects must undergo scrutiny by the Public Works Committee. I do not know how far this particular plan has developed but will make inquiries. There is nothing on this year's Estimates to meet the dry conditions that are applying throughout the State.

PLANS OF CHAMBER SEATING

Mr. FRED WALSH—My question relates to a report appearing in the *Advertiser* concerning a reply from the Minister of Works to a question I asked. The press report states that the Minister was replying to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Frank Walsh, who had asked a question concerning the Glenelg Sewage Treatment works. I do not complain about the fact that my name was not mentioned in the report on the debate on the Marriage Bill—although I was the only member left out of that report—but I am concerned because this is not the only occasion when I have been confused with the member for Edwardstown. Would you, Mr. Speaker, consider having diagrams of this Chamber drawn showing the seating of members and placed in the respective press galleries? I am not being facetious, but I appreciate that there are certain changes in the reporting personnel, particularly of the *Advertiser*.

The SPEAKER—I appreciate the honourable member's concern over this particular matter and I will consider his problem to see whether something can be done to obviate similar occurrences in future.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD BANKS.

Mr. KING—As members know, the Government has spent a considerable sum in building flood banks around various irrigation districts adjacent to the Murray and the re-siting of some of them is now taking place. Unless the flood banks are properly cared for much money will be lost through the effects of erosion.

Has the Minister of Lands considered this aspect and will he appoint local committees whose responsibility it will be to ensure that the banks are properly maintained to meet future emergencies?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will consider the question because this is an important matter and it would be a waste of money if proper care were not taken of the banks referred to. A highly-qualified committee deals with this matter and I will place this question before it and advise the honourable member. I feel that perhaps this could be the responsibility of local councils.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS.

Mr. LAUCKE—As we are living in an era in which science and technology play an increasingly important part in the life of our nation and we have, on a *per capita* basis, twice as many students enrolling for various faculties at our universities as there in Great Britain, but are turning out on the same basis *per capita* only half the number of scientists and technologists, can the Minister of Education indicate what steps are being taken in our schools to impress on students the national importance of science and engineering and their possible future in such avocations?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The honourable member informed me he intended asking this question and I have gathered together as much information as possible in the limited time that was at my disposal. I shall be pleased to supply further information next week. However, this question has been in the forefront of the minds of those connected with education for some years. In the secondary schools conducted by the State, the answer is found in more schools, more science laboratories, more trained secondary teachers. The Education Department has taken vigorous steps on each of these proposals. New secondary schools, all equipped with science laboratories, are being erected as fast as funds, labour and material permit. The drive to enrol more students for the Teachers College has been increasingly successful in each of the last three years, and the number of students who will be trained for work in secondary schools in the next four or five years will rise sharply.

At the higher level of the University and the senior technical college, that is the School of Mines, classes for degree and diploma courses are larger than they have been for

years. The School of Mines courses are available now at Port Pirie and Whyalla, where there has been a steady demand, particularly in Naval Architecture and Metallurgy. The training of top technological men was the particular concern of the new proposals for a Degree in Technology to be taken at the South Australian School of Mines—the degree to be awarded by the University. These courses, which commenced at the beginning of the year, were developed through the close co-operation of the councils of the two institutions. They provide for courses leading to the Degree of Bachelor of Technology in the following fields: Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Extractive Metallurgy, Physical Metallurgy, Mineral Dressing, Surveying.

The enrolments in the first year have been most encouraging. There are, including both full-time and part-time, 262 students, of whom 12 are students from Asian countries under the Colombo Plan. These courses should provide in increasing numbers the men wanted for the constructive and production sides of industry, and should go a long way to meet the needs of our rapidly expanding economy. At the same time, the University is endeavouring to meet the heavy demands on its technical courses for scientists and engineers. Architecture, Accountancy, and Business Management are catered for by existing Diploma courses at the School of Mines.

OIL REFINERY FOR WALLAROO.

Mr. HUGHES—In view of the surveys being taken in connection with the proposed establishment of an oil refinery in this State, can the Acting Leader of the Government indicate whether the coastline near Wallaroo is to be surveyed, and if not, will he bring before the responsible authorities the strong claims of Wallaroo as a suitable site?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

INDUSTRY AT AMERICAN RIVER.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I wish to address a question to the Minister of Marine, but before putting my question, Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the House to make a statement explaining it.

Leave granted.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I hear that the area north of the jetty at American River is to be leased to the plaster company that is to work the Kangaroo Island gypsum deposits. I was staggered when I heard this, because this small area is the most important in

American River for tourist trade. It is here that cars and buses are parked and fishing boats beached and maintained. The American River shoreline is mostly shallow tidal flats except for a few yards each side of the jetty. This small jetty area is the hub of the important American River tourist activity. No-one, least of all myself, wishes to hinder the plaster company, but one must keep a sense of proportion.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member not to debate his question. He has leave to make a statement explaining it, but that does not mean he can debate it or express an opinion.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Can the Minister of Marine assure me that opportunity will be given at least to discuss alternatives before final arrangements are made by the Harbours Board?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—This question came to my notice for the first time only yesterday, and I found that considerable progress had been made towards the establishment of an important industry on Kangaroo Island, the depot of which would be sited near the area to which the honourable member refers. It is a question of conflicting interests, and probably the greater part of the people on Kangaroo Island would desire the industry to proceed irrespective of its effect on the tourist traffic. The honourable member used the words “sense of proportion.” After he had mentioned the matter to me yesterday I discussed with the Chairman and the General Manager of the Harbours Board the question of alternative sites, but up to the present they have been unable to indicate any. The question therefore resolves itself into whether there is to be the industry or the scenic advantages, which I admit are great, and the amenities which are enjoyed on Kangaroo Island and which I would not say for a moment would not be depreciated because of the establishment of this industry near the jetty. I left the matter with the Harbours Board this morning, and asked them to negotiate further with the company concerned. In fact, the board members themselves went over to Kangaroo Island last week and suggested to the people involved that, if they had any objections to the particular site, they might get in touch with the honourable member.

Mr. Brookman—Whom did they see?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I do not know, but general discussions were held. I think that probably originated the idea that

the honourable member might be approached in regard thereto. In any case such as this there are always conflicting interests, so the sense of proportion to which the honourable member refers will have to be kept in mind as to which is the more important in the long run: the interests of the industry or the aesthetic rights of the people adjacent to the site and of the people who go there to enjoy the beautiful surroundings on Kangaroo Island, particularly at American River. Those considerations will not be lost sight of. Indeed, the Premier has taken an interest in the establishment of the industry and on his return over the week-end I will take the earliest opportunity to discuss with him whether an alternative site can be arranged so that the amenities referred to are not interrupted.

STIRLING-QUORN.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—On Tuesday last the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Roads, supplied me with information concerning the amount provided for the Kanyaka district council to maintain the Stirling-Quorn road. The sum of £4,000 was provided for 1956-57 and £3,000 for 1957-58. Will the Minister take up with his colleague the Minister of Local Government the changed circumstances that have arisen recently since the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner discontinued running trains between Quorn and Port Augusta, which means that all the freight and passenger traffic formerly carried by rail is now carried over the Stirling-Quorn road, and, in view of the additional traffic, will he consider increasing, instead of reducing, the amount provided for maintenance this year?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Yes.

PARINGA BRIDGE.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Lands say whether contracts have been let or tenders called for the redecking of the Paringa Bridge, and what is the reason for the delay in the execution of the work?

The Hon. C. S. HINKS—I have not the information available now, but I will get it for the honourable member on Tuesday next.

EMERGENCY FIRE SERVICE 'PHONE NUMBER.

Mr. SHANNON—My question, which is directed to the Acting Leader of the Government, concerns the secret number of the tele-

phone at the home of the Director of the Emergency Fire Service. I do not complain about the fact that the Director (Mr. Kerr) has a secret 'phone number, for I realize it might be embarrassing at times for him if he could be rung up by all and sundry merely by reference to the 'phone book. That should not be possible, for he has an onerous job and might suffer as a result of such a practice. I have had complaints made to me that responsible bodies whose concern it is to take action promptly for public safety in connection with the emergency fire fighting services are not aware of Mr. Kerr's number, but would like to discuss with him just what steps should be taken to meet the emergency. Obviously he is the best informed man on the subject, and I think if the Minister will consult with the Minister of Agriculture suitable arrangements could be entered into so that all necessary clearing houses involved could be apprised of his telephone number and so get in touch with him promptly if necessary.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will advise the Minister of Agriculture. I think the request is very reasonable and the fire organizations all wish to talk to Mr. Kerr; therefore I think something should be done so that they would know the secret number.

CLOSURE OF MELTON VALE SCHOOL.

Mr. HUGHES—Parents of children attending the Melton Vale school are concerned at rumours circulating in the district that the school will be closed at the end of this year. Can the Minister tell me whether there is any foundation for this rumour?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I cannot tell the honourable member now but will obtain the information and give him an answer when the House next sits.

TRANSPORT OF STOCK FROM DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREAS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Because of the state of emergency which has arisen owing to drought conditions and the necessity to transport stock promptly to areas where feed is available I ask the Minister of Transport if a recommendation could be made to the Transport Control Board that it should promptly issue permits in response to applications for permits to transport stock by roads. I understand that the failure to issue permits is inflicting heavy losses on stockowners.

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—If the honourable member will give me some

instances I will direct them to my colleague and he in turn could get in touch with the board, but there are very few areas where feed is available and I think the railways could adequately handle the traffic. I do not think the question can be answered in general terms, but I will see whether similar instances can be avoided in future.

BORE WATER FOR ST. KILDA.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Some time ago the Mines Department put down a bore to reticulate a water supply to the St. Kilda area. There was some difficulty as to the quality of the water. Is the Minister of Works able to tell me if this difficulty has been overcome?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—Obviously I am not conversant with the state of all the many bores but I will follow the question through.

WATER RESTRICTIONS AT GAWLER.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—A persistent rumour is abroad in Gawler suggesting the possibility of water restrictions. I ask the Minister of Works whether such restrictions have been contemplated and, if so, has any decision been reached by the Minister of Works?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—No decision has been arrived at, nor has the Engineer-in-Chief or the Engineer for Water Supply, Mr. Campbell, suggested that restrictions should be applied. People generally are fearful lest the necessity for restrictions should arise. Yesterday's paper reported that Sydney with a rainfall double that of Adelaide has had water restrictions applied which will operate for some years to come. Were it not for the River Murray water the Gawler area and the whole of South Australia would be under restrictions, but we are hoping to maintain supplies without restrictions. I am not prepared to go further than that at present because there is no foundation for such rumours as restrictions have not been discussed.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF MOUNT GAMBIER SAWMILL.

Mr. HARDING—It has been suggested that members may be invited to attend the official opening of the new sawmill at Mount Gambier. Will the Minister of Lands see if honourable members can be advised of any arrangements which are made before the House rises?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

GRANTS TO UNIVERSITY COLLEGES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—During the Estimates debate I asked the Minister of Education how the grants to University colleges were split up and at that time he undertook to seek information. Has he that information now?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I obtained the information from the Registrar of the University of Adelaide, which is as follows:—

By agreement, each of the four colleges receives a grant of £500, and the balance is divided between the colleges in approximate proportion to the number of students. At the present time, St. Mark's receives one-third of the balance, and each of the other three two-ninths of the balance. The actual amounts at present paid from the grant of £5,200 are as follows:—

	£
St. Mark's College	1,567
Aquinas College	1,211
St. Ann's College	1,211
Lincoln College	1,211

That grant of £5,200 is from the Commonwealth towards the residential colleges, not from the State.

OVERWAY BRIDGE AT WALLAROO.

Mr. HUGHES—Last week I asked the Minister representing the Minister of Railways when the extension of the overway bridge at Wallaroo would be completed. Has he a reply to my question?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—The Railways Commissioner has advised that it was necessary to construct an extension to the existing overway footbridge at Wallaroo on account of the widening of the yard to accommodate additional tracks required for working the Co-operative Company's silo. The bridge was closed to enable the necessary earthworks to be carried out.

The foundations for the abutment of the new span have now been constructed and materials for same are in hand. The work of constructing the additional span has been delayed, owing to demands account urgent maintenance which could not be foreseen, but it is now expected to be completed early in November and will be erected as soon thereafter as practicable.

BUSH FIRE HAZARDS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Last summer a considerable number of fires originated along the Gawler-Angaston railway line between Gawler and Lyndoch from coal burning locomotives. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Railways say whether further consideration will

be given to the replacement of these locomotives by diesel electric locomotives during the coming summer months?

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—I will address the question to my colleague, but I point out to the honourable member that a great proportion of steam engines must be used somewhere, and wherever they are they might be said to be the cause of fires. However, when travelling through the country I have often noticed that the best fire breaks were those adjacent to the railway and made by the railways themselves. If the adjoining landholders had made adequate breaks they would have been adequately safeguarded. Only a limited number of diesel engines is available and I am sure they will be used where, in the judgment of the Railways Commissioner, fires are most likely to occur. I will address the question to my colleague, but where diesel locomotives are to be used is not for him to decide.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

REGISTRATION OF DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to increase the fees payable for registration of dogs under the Registration of Dogs Act. The fees now payable are set out in the second schedule to the Act which provides that the annual registration fee for a male dog is to be 5s. and for a female dog 7s. 6d. By an amendment made to the schedule in 1948 it is provided that, if the registration fee for a dog is not paid within 31 days of the due date, an additional fee of 1s. is to be paid. The enactment of legislation relating to dogs was a very early and frequent preoccupation with the South Australian Legislature and it is interesting to see how the fees to be paid for registration of dogs have varied over more than 100 years of legislation. The first Dog Act was passed in 1852 and it has the following preamble:

Whereas the streets of the City of Adelaide and other places within the province are invested by great numbers of dogs, which are allowed to go loose at all hours of the day and night, to the danger of passengers as well as the great annoyance of the inhabitants at large: And whereas much loss is occasioned to the owners of poultry, of sheep, and other

small cattle, by the ravages of such dogs, as well as by dogs of the native breed:

The enactment then proceeded to require the registration of dogs kept within 10 miles of Adelaide and fixed a registration fee of 1s. In 1860 another Act was passed extending the liability to register dogs to the whole of the Province and the registration fee was increased to 10s. In 1867, a further Act was passed and, apparently, the fee of 10s. was then considered too high, as it was reduced to 5s. These fees continued until 1884, when the fee was fixed at 7s. 6d. for a dog and 12s. 6d. for a slut. Yet another alteration was made in 1889, when the registration fee was fixed at 5s. for a dog and 7s. 6d. for a slut. These are the fees now provided in the present Act although the term "female dog" has been substituted for the more robust word "slut," but in this Bill the word "bitch" has been inserted. Thus, the existing fees have been left unchanged for some 67 years although the value of money has altered tremendously during that period.

The point is taken by councils that the existing fees are inadequate to cover the cost of administration and the Government has been asked to introduce legislation giving effect to a recommendation of the Local Government Advisory Committee to increase the present fees of 5s. and 7s. 6d. to 10s. and 15s. respectively. These increases are provided for in clause 3. It will be seen that the fees proposed are only slightly higher than those thought appropriate to the occasion by the Legislature many years ago. It is also provided by clause 3 that the additional fee of 1s. for late registration should be increased to 10s. It is obvious that the payment of an additional fee of 1s. is, in these days, not a very powerful inducement to owners to register their dogs by the due date and it is considered that the penalty fee of 10s. proposed by the Bill is a suitable fee for the purpose. This amendment also was recommended by the Local Government Advisory Committee.

The annual registration fee for Alsatian dogs is fixed under the Alsatian Dogs Act, 1934, at £2. No alteration in this fee is proposed by the Bill. Clause 4 makes a drafting alteration to the fourth schedule to the Registration of Dogs Act. Section 20 provides that, if a stray dog is seized, it may be sold or destroyed unless claimed within four days. The fourth schedule contains a form of notice to be sent to the owner of a registered dog which is seized and sets out that it will be sold or destroyed if not claimed within 72 hours. Obviously, the

reference to 72 hours should be four days to conform with section 20 and clause 3 alters the form accordingly. Clause 2 also may be regarded as a drafting alteration. It deletes the term "female dog" from the Act and substitutes the term "bitch."

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—This Bill, which increases the fees for the registration of dogs by 100 per cent, is long overdue. It will be remembered that I have urged the Government to increase fees to enable councils to afford to police dogs. I think it is 67 years since there has been any variation in the fees. When one considers the variation in the value of money it is amazing that the fees have remained static for so long. This has had tragic results because councils have found it difficult to meet the expenses involved in controlling dogs. Many councils, realizing they have no chance of recouping their expenditure, have not bothered with this matter with the result that dogs have become numerous in the metropolitan area and in country areas. This morning I observed five dogs, only one of which was registered, immediately in front of a council's chambers. They represent a menace to traffic and a nuisance to people. I recently requested the Minister of Education to take action to relieve schools of the problems associated with stray dogs on their properties.

I believe the Bill will rid us of the discomfort suffered from stray and unwanted dogs. Alleged dog lovers have suggested that this will penalize them, but the genuine dog lover will not suffer. Many people keep large dogs in small allotments and this represents cruelty to some dogs. A fine of 1s. for the late payment of a fee is ridiculous and is no deterrent to people who will not meet their obligations, but the increased fine may produce the desired result. I would be the last to penalize people in rural areas by imposing large fees on dogs, but I point out that at present, with the small fees, many dogs are not registered and when a stock-owner suffers losses through the depredations of such dogs he has no means of checking on their ownership. I support the second reading and believe it will have the support of all thinking members.

Mr. JENNINGS (Enfield)—The member for Hindmarsh was over-confident when he suggested that all members would support the Bill.

Mr. Hutchens—I said "All thinking members."

Mr. JENNINGS—I regret, Mr. Speaker, that you would not permit me to reply appropri-

ately to that interjection. However, the Bill proposes to inflict a grave injustice on a worthy and deserving section of the public: it is unfair to dogs. I cannot see why dogs should be singled out. Why should not we also legislate for cats, canaries and budgerigars? I do not agree with the principle contained in this Bill. The Bill provides for taxation without representation and I believe there is grave unrest among dogs as a result. That great confusion can arise from having to register dogs is evident and I remind members of the wellknown Australian short story in which a man past middle age and living in the country advertised for a wife of sufficiently muscular proportions to enable her to be useful about the farm. Having secured a candidate who seemed eminently suitable he took her to the local police station to secure a marriage licence, but was followed in by a stray fox terrier bitch. He went to the counter, and pointing in the general direction of the prospective bride and the bitch, said, "I want a licence for her." He paid over his money, got the document and left. Later, when his wife became troublesome—as they sometimes do—he went to inquire about securing a divorce, and to his great delight found that he was not married, but had secured a licence for a female dog. These are the type of matters we must consider. I think any of us who have a spark of chivalry must oppose the Bill because it imposes a higher form of taxation on the fairer sex than on the stronger sex.

Mr. JENKINS (Stirling)—I support the Bill which is long overdue. The licence fee will certainly discourage a number of people from owning dogs—certainly those who want to have a dog, but do not care whether it remains at home or roams at large. Such dogs become a nuisance, particularly on beaches where people congregate in summer months, and they play havoc with town gardens. Shopkeepers continually complain to local councils about the mess dogs make by their front doors and on their windows. These dogs, in the main, are not registered. The people who own such dogs will probably think twice whenever they have to pay the increased fee. After many years' striving my council has secured the services of a dog catcher. This has paid dividends, but it is rather costly to send him around after the fees are due to check on those people who have not paid them. This rise will recompense councils for the cost of that service, and will probably have the effect of curtailing the number of dogs that harass sheep and cattle on nearby farms dur-

ing the night. Those dogs get together in packs and worry the sheep, causing much loss to local owners. I heartily support the Bill which is a good one.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I oppose the Bill, because the increased registration fee will deprive many children of their pets. I agree with the member for Stirling (Mr. Jenkins) regarding the nuisance of stray dogs and if that were the only consideration involved I would support the Bill, but thousands of children have pet dogs and their parents are to be burdened with this increased registration fee. Some previous speakers said that many unregistered dogs are running around country towns, but the increase in registration fee will result in many more. Country councils have much trouble coping with this nuisance as it is difficult to get a dog catcher. His occupation is most unpopular, particularly if he catches many dogs belonging to people, especially children. Mr. Jenkins said that dogs hunt in packs, but I cannot see how this increased registration fee will prevent that because they hunt in packs with or without discs. The responsibility is surely with the owner and such dogs should be destroyed. A man has a perfect right to destroy any dog that destroys his sheep or to take action against the dog's owner.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—If he can catch the dog.

Mr. DAVIS—The local dog is known to everybody and the owner of the sheep would recognize it when it attacks his flock. The Minister said that the original legislation was introduced in 1852, when the fee was 1s. per dog, and this tenfold increase is unjustified. I have much pleasure in opposing the Bill.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—A mistake has been made in drafting the Bill, and, although there has been a change in money values, I deplore the drafting committee's recommendation for a penalty of 10s. for late registration. A man in the country may not find it convenient at the appropriate place at the appropriate time to renew the registration of his dog, yet he probably intends to pay the registration fee and will see that his dog is registered when he goes to town. He will not make a special trip merely to pay the fee, yet late registration is to cost him 10s. extra. If it is a fair thing to double the registration fee, then it is fair to double the penalty rate to 2s. There is no need to send a man out to remind the dog owner that the registration fee is due: a letter through the post can be used as a reminder and to advise him of the

penalty to be incurred for late registration. Further, a person who disobeys the law by failing to register his dog can be dealt with through the courts by a fine of much more than 10s. The sum of 2s. would more than cover the cost of postage of the reminder to the dog owner, who could then advise the council whether the dog had died or of some other circumstance. The 10s. penalty is a little savage and would be resented by the true dog lover as an unnecessary impost on a man who could not get in on the day the registration was due. In Committee I will move to reduce the penalty to the more appropriate sum of 2s.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—That is too low.

Mr. SHANNON—It would be the same ratio of increase as the increase in the fee. If I had my way, in certain country districts where the dogs become a nuisance by attacking flocks of sheep and causing great loss to graziers and farmers, I would make it an offence if the owner of the dog did not keep it under control every night. He would have either to pen the dog or tie it up. If a pup is trained to the leash it is no hardship for it to spend a night on it, because it becomes accustomed to the leash. We do worse than that, and get away with it, when we keep cockatoos chained permanently to a perch. I would shoot the dog that was not properly controlled by its owner. If members had suffered as some of my constituents have suffered from the ravages of packs they would feel hot under the collar and advocate drastic action. The nuisance of stray dogs will not be remedied by the increase in fees. Parliament increased the registration fee for Alsatian dogs to £2, but there are just as many today. The dog nuisance is just as bad in the city as it is in the country, and is caused by the owner who does not properly control his dog. That aspect has not been dealt with in this Bill.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I support the Bill wholeheartedly. Although I support much of what Mr. Shannon said, I would not reduce the proposed penalty for late registration. I suggest that people should have the option of paying a little more to cover the cost of postage so that when a dog is registered the owner may rest assured that the authority issuing a licence will, on the next occasion when the registration falls due, send him an account. The list of all the things one is required by law to do annually such as registering motor cars, obtaining broadcast

listeners' licences, and in the case of dairy farmers, bull registration, and so on is formidable, and one could not be expected to remember them all if it were not for the reminders which are sent out. This is one case where a reminder is not sent out. I can see no objection to raising the cost of dog licences to a reasonable figure as proposed in the Bill but I think if there is to be an extra cost to cover such items as posting and so on owners should indicate whether they desire to avail themselves of such service. I agree with the member for Onkaparinga on the ravages of dogs which are not properly cared for. There are too many dogs in Australia that are badly cared for and ill treated and too many good dogs that are spoilt through not being confined at night. I support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Fees."

Mr. SHANNON—I move—

In subclause (c) to strike out "10 0" and insert in lieu thereof "2. 0."

I agree with the member for Alexandra that it is necessary to register dogs, but I do not think it is necessary to inflict a savage penalty and surely to increase the amount from 1s. to 10s. is a savage increase. The ordinary registration fee is in any case doubled. The man who is out to avoid payment of a dog registration fee does not come in late to pay. Unless he is found he gets off scot free. A dog catcher or an inspector has to find these dogs before payment can be enforced. Then there is the case of the honest man who has always registered his dog but who may be a couple of days late. We are going to deal harshly with this man who intended to obey the law. The chap we have to chase, the man who has to be discovered with an unregistered dog, should not be allowed to pay a 10s. fine and get away with that. He is a nuisance and I would punish the man who intentionally disobeys the law.

The Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh—I see no penalty provided for that.

Mr. SHANNON—Then the Act should be amended on those lines too. We are not penalizing the real nuisance in the dog owning field.

Mr. Quirke—The man who does not register.

Mr. SHANNON—The man who never registers. The honest man who is a bit late and has to pay another 10s. fine will probably be converted into one of the malefactors and

then you will have to send someone out to pick him up too. A principle is involved in this.

Mr. Jenkins—It is usually advertised in the press.

Mr. SHANNON—That is so, but the honest man doesn't have to read the paper to know he has to register his dog. These cases only arise when a man forgets to slip in on the right day. He intends to register his dog and is not one of the problem children we are dealing with. The man we should penalize is the man who never registers his dog. I can well imagine how I would feel if I were fined this increased amount because I was a few days late.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I think the member for Onkaparinga goes to extremes. There is some inconvenience involved because the council clerk likes to have this business tidied up by June 30 and a fine of two shillings is not sufficient to make them fall into line. I think a reasonable compromise would be to make the amount 5s. What the member for Onkaparinga proposes is no more than what would be levied on a club member for late payment of subscriptions. Does he suggest that the payment for a dog licence should be treated on the same level as payment for club fees? The owner of the dog knows he should pay the registration fee and I think 5s. is reasonable and that 2s. is much too low and if that payment is adopted we might just as well leave it as it stands at present.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I urge the Committee not to accept the amendment. I do not think I have ever heard the member for Onkaparinga so much off the beam as he is today. He has overlooked a very important fact because this is a cost which is inflicted on councils and this Bill will enable them to bill some of the cost which they incur through having to chase the overdue fee. I ask the Committee to consider what effect this would have on a council, which would probably have to go to the people for more money for means to enforce payment, because a penalty of 2s. would not be compelling enough to ensure payment when it is due. The Act is fairly generous inasmuch as it allows 31 days before payment is enforced, and I am confident that sufficient notice is given when fees are due. I urge the Committee to give the local governing bodies a chance by passing the clause as it stands.

Mr. SHANNON—Acting on the principle that half a loaf is better than none, and with the approval of the Committee, I ask

leave to withdraw my amendment and move in lieu thereof:—

In subclause (c) to strike out "10. 0" and insert in lieu thereof "5. 0."

Mr. QUIRKE—I second the amendment. The proposal to strike out "1. 0" and insert in lieu thereof "10. 0" represents an increase of 1,000 per cent. If a person is late in paying his water rates which may be anything up to £100 the statutory additional payment enforced is 10 per cent. I think the amount of 10s. far too drastic and believe the 500 per cent now proposed in the amendment is ample, although on the original amount even that is too much. When considering the imposition of a penalty like this I have in mind the teams of highly trained working dogs to be found on the northern station properties. An increase in the registration fee from 5s. to 10s. would be a severe imposition on those people who least deserve it because their dogs are registered. If a £10 registration fee were to be imposed we would still not get the thousands of mongrels that infest the country and destroy people's sheep. I think we would get less, but if it were enforced the demand for shot guns and cartridges would increase and would provide the obvious remedy. If the Committee agrees to a penalty of 5s. I am prepared to support the honourable member for Onkaparinga.

The Hon. Sir MALCOLM McINTOSH—In view of what seems to be the opinion of the House, and for the reasons given by those who have spoken on this clause, I do not oppose the amended amendment.

Mr. LAUCKE—I support the amended amendment. I think that the amount of 5s. would be much fairer than 10s., and it is a satisfactory compromise. It will meet the requirements of councils and act as a deterrent to those who may be inclined to neglect renewing the registration of dogs.

Mr. CORCORAN—I support the amendment as amended. I do not believe in encouraging people to delay paying fees that fall due, though in some circumstances a delay may not be their fault. The real offender is the man who does not register his dogs at all, but if it can be established that dogs were on his premises during a certain period he must accept ownership and can be taken to court and penalized. I have no sympathy for the man who evades the law. The amendment is reasonable and should ensure that people will register their dogs by the specified time. All councils should keep their register of dogs up to date. Then, if it is known

that a man has five dogs but has registered only two, he can be prosecuted.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

AGRICULTURAL SEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill makes three amendments of the Police Offences Act. The most important of them arises from a proposal for conducting blood tests in every case where a person is arrested on a charge of driving under the influence of liquor, and I will deal with this one first.

The Crown Solicitor (whose officers conduct practically all prosecutions for driving under the influence of liquor) has recently recommended that blood tests should be taken as a general practice. Power to do this already exists in section 81 of the Police Offences Act. The making of the tests, however, involves some practical difficulties, particularly in the metropolitan area. Under the existing law when a person is arrested without warrant on a charge of committing an offence he must be taken to the nearest police station, i.e., the station nearest to the place of arrest. Any medical examination of the arrested person must be conducted while he is in custody at the station. But it is not practicable to have arrangements for taking blood samples at every police station. The work needs considerable care and equipment and must be carried out by a medical officer. The solution of the problem, so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, is to bring all persons arrested within this area to the City Watch House. This would facilitate the taking of blood samples and also the general medical examination of the arrested persons by the police medical officer. As things are at present, the services of the police medical officer are often required at several police

stations in the metropolitan area in one evening and frequently at more than one station at the same time. In order to get over these difficulties, the Bill provides that where a person is arrested at a place not more than 15 miles from the G.P.O. at Adelaide upon suspicion of having driven under the influence of liquor he may be taken either to the nearest police station or to the City Watch House. His rights to be admitted to bail and brought promptly before a court will not be affected. This matter is dealt with in clause 5 of the Bill.

Clause 3 deals with the offence of being unlawfully on premises. This offence at present consists of being on premises or structures falling within certain defined classes, either for an unlawful purpose or without lawful excuse. It is an offence with a long history and in the past it has never applied to unfenced areas of land. However, in recent years many houses have been built on unfenced blocks and the police have found it necessary that they should have power to deal with persons who enter the yards or gardens of these houses for criminal or improper purposes. For this reason it is proposed in this Bill to extend the offence of being unlawfully on premises so that it will apply to any area of land, whether enclosed or fenced or not, which forms the yard, garden or curtilage of any building.

Clause 4 deals with the regulation of traffic. Under the Police Offences Act the Commissioner of Police has power to give directions for regulating traffic and maintaining order on directions for regulating traffic and maintaining order on special occasions when streets and public places are unusually crowded. Section 59 of the Act also provides that the Commissioner may delegate this power to any inspector of police. As there are now senior officers of police who do not hold the rank of inspector, that is to say, the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendents, it is proposed by this Bill to empower the Commissioner of Police to delegate his powers under section 59 of the Act to any member of the force whose rank is not lower than that of inspector.

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

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1274.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—On the assurance of the Government, which has acted on the recommendation of the Public Actuary in this matter, that the pro-

posed increases in police pensions will bring those pensions into line with the level intended to be achieved in the 1954 amendments, I have no objection to the proposed increases on general grounds. Police pension schemes are, of necessity, different—actuarially and otherwise—from other superannuation schemes, such as, for example, the Public Service Superannuation scheme, and consequently it is not possible to compare contributions, benefits, etc. The important consideration is that, having regard to the conditions of the police service—the dangers which may be involved, the necessarily shorter period of normal service compared with other services and other matters—a just scheme of retiring pensions should be provided.

There are two particular matters which I should like to mention. The Government's decision to create new classes of police pensioner, involving differentiation in accordance with rank at retirement, has given rise to an apparent anomaly between existing pensions and the pensions which will be payable in future to those below the rank of sergeant. In an effort to do the fair thing by those who have already retired, the Government proposes to pay them the average pension (£442), which is higher than the pension (£420) to be paid in future to those below the rank of sergeant. However, I point out that it is also proposed to increase the cash payment which is made to a police officer on retirement from £1,250 to £1,500. That will, to some extent compensate the officer retiring after the passing of this Bill for the apparent discrepancy between his pension and the pension of officers who have already retired. I do not object to the proposed creation of new grades, particularly for women police, nor to enabling the Commissioner to provide classifications for officers who are not classified in the terms of the Bill.

I think it is perfectly just that the standard of pension in relation to the value of money should be maintained at the 1954 level. I was pleased to hear the Minister of Lands give notice this afternoon of a Bill to amend our Parliamentary superannuation scheme because that has not been amended since 1953 and, as regards the real value of money, is further out of alignment than is this Act. I anticipate members will have to make a fairly substantial additional contribution in order to qualify for the additional pension provided and members will be prepared to do that just as police officers are prepared to make an additional contribution of about 12½ per cent to receive the increased pensions proposed in this Bill.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—I support the second reading. Last year when a similar Bill was before the House I suggested that it did not go far enough because it excluded non-commissioned officers. A few retired police sergeants are living at Murray Bridge and they have spoken to me about an increase in super-annuation. They paid on a contributory basis for several years and believe that with the increase in the costs of living and the devaluation of money they have been penalized by not receiving any increase. I believe this Bill complies with the wishes of the Association and it provides for approximately £1 a week increase. Although that does not seem to me to be sufficient it is a step in the right direction.

I am happy that women police are now to be recognized with the rank of sergeant. Previously they were regarded as "other ranks." This Bill will permit them to participate to a greater extent in the fund. A tribute should be paid to the work these women do. They are not to the fore in the public eye but they perform valuable services behind the scenes. They devote their lives to the service of humanity and deal with subjects about which the public seldom knows very much. Their work is far from pleasant and they assist materially in combating crime.

The Bill has been adequately explained by the Minister and the Leader has further clarified it. I suggest, however, that other super-annuation schemes should be examined in the near future. Commonwealth pensions have recently been increased and we should consider increasing the benefits to those people who contributed for units some time ago before their retirement and who now, because of the increased cost of living, are finding it difficult to make ends meet.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I am glad that the Government has seen fit to introduce this measure to increase the pensions payable to former members of the Police Force and I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading. In my professional capacity I probably come into contact more frequently with members of the police force than many other people and as a result have learned to admire greatly their work. Their duties extend throughout all spheres of life and while there are of course exceptions in the police force, as in any large body of men, on the whole they do a splendid job. It is only proper that when their term of service is completed they should be able to live in some degree of comfort. The same remarks apply to members of the women police who do

an excellent job. We must be ever-vigilant to ensure that the monetary value of the pension payable is in line with prevailing conditions and at a time when there is a continuing, even if slow, inflation in currency it is necessary to review these matters as we are now doing. I do not hesitate to support the Bill as the Public Actuary has certified that the increases are just and reasonable.

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

MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1275.)

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the Bill, which represents a progressive move to preserve life that is so important to the community. It provides for wireless facilities on intrastate steamers and safety devices on fishing vessels. Wireless facilities on interstate steamers are controlled under the Navigation Act. Over the years there has been a considerable loss of life on steamers around the Australian coast and this has proved to be the hazard facing those who must go down to the sea in ships. From 1947 to 1955, 118 seamen lost their lives on steamers around the Australian coast, the greatest tragedy being in 1952 when a steamer of 197 tons gross had a mishap occasioning the loss of 16 lives. Most of the losses have occurred in connection with small tonnage steamers, therefore the type of steamer provided for under the Bill is that between 150 and 300 tons, such as the s.s. *Yandra*, which sails between Port Adelaide and West Coast ports. Steamers trading between States already have radar or wireless installations. I have watched the operation of the wireless set on the *Yandra* and pay a tribute to the efficient way the operator does his job. If the steamer is in trouble a message may be sent to a nearby vessel or port.

I take it that the Bill relates particularly to steamers, but I consider that ketches should be included, for there is a big risk in their operation. They are generally small and over the years a number have been wrecked around the coast, one or two even a few miles from the Outer Harbour. Can the Minister say whether ketches of 150 tons gross tonnage and upwards will come within the scope of the Bill?

The Bill provides for safety devices to be installed on fishing vessels. Some weeks ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister of

Marine and the officers of the Harbors Board. That deputation brought to their notice a tragedy that occurred on Kangaroo Island last May when a fisherman, Mr. Hardy, lost his life while fishing from a vessel in that area. It was proved that the vessel carried no safety devices, not even a lifebelt or dinghy, although the cutter was about 35ft. long. The Minister listened to our case with sympathetic interest and, though I do not say our overtures were the sole reason for this Bill, they may have had something to do with its introduction. Incidentally, both Mr. Hardy's father and grandfather lost their lives whilst fishing from vessels, which illustrates the hazards of the fishing industry.

During the year ended June 30, 1955, 1,439 vessels valued at £510,000 were engaged in fishing off the South Australian coast and 5,037 men were employed in the industry. The fishing industry is progressing, but some people who own vessels take the shortsighted outlook and do not provide safety devices. Most fishermen are not insured. In fact, Mr. Hardy was not insured. Under the Workmen's Compensation Act a fisherman cannot be covered because the Act relates only to accidents and loss of life that take place in territorial waters, which means that no benefit is payable in respect to tragedies outside the five-mile limit. One company, however, has offered to cover these men.

I commend the Government for introducing this Bill. Between 1948 and 1957 10 fishermen lost their lives whilst fishing in our waters. The figures for 1957 are particularly alarming, because four fishermen have already lost their lives this year. The Bill refers to fishing vessels and no doubt in making regulations, the Minister and the board, will not go to extremes and make regulations for vessels of 10ft. or 12ft. length. Proposed new section 67 states:—

In this Division "fishing vessel" means any vessel not propelled solely by oars and used in the taking of fish or oysters for sale and includes trawlers, pearling luggers and whale chasers.

Apparently, regulations are not to be made in respect of very small vessels such as rowing boats, and I trust the regulations will be adequate to cope with any situation that may arise. About half the boats concerned in tragedies over the past 10 years have carried some safety devices, so the provision of such devices is not the complete answer to the hazard in this industry. We owe a duty to the fishermen and to the widows who may be

left behind as the result of tragedies such as those to which I have referred, therefore I support the Bill.

Mr. KING (Chaffey)—I, too, support the Bill, which fills a long-felt need. In my younger days I had much experience on fishing vessels and various expeditions across the Gulf and I have been acutely aware of situations in which one could find oneself under conditions of adversity. It would have been of great advantage then to be able to call for assistance. This Bill, properly implemented, will be a step in the right direction. Proposed new section 67a, which applies to wireless installations states:—

This Division shall apply to—

- (a) every coast-trade ship; and
- (b) every ship which carries passengers for hire on a voyage beginning and ending at the same port in South Australia.

Can the Minister say whether this division will apply to passenger ships trading for hire on the River Murray? There are ports at Goolwa and other places and these may still be officially classified as ports, because the River Murray ports are controlled by the Harbors Board. Passenger vessels carrying between 20 and 40 passengers ply for hire on the river. Some even go interstate. These vessels may be required by this legislation to carry wireless equipment, although I do not think at present they carry the equipment specified in the Bill. Further, I doubt whether the trade would be sufficiently attractive to justify the employment of a wireless operator on these vessels. Perhaps two-way transceivers, similar to those used on outback stations to call up the Flying Doctor Service, could be installed, and this principle could also apply to some smaller craft about eight or 10 tons in weight that are used by fishermen. In cases like that I do not think it would be necessary for those people to have certified wireless operators, but they would be capable of operating the type of equipment which would be useful, but not costly or expensive nor call for an expensive operator. The other division is XB, which refers to fishing vessels which are defined as being not propelled solely by oars. The question as to whether this applies to vessels used in Murray waters again arises. Some of this water near the entrance to the Murray is salt and the other right at the top is fresh. The provision does not provide for any exemption for fishing vessels. What would be the position of Murray fishermen who are caught up in the net of the Bill

who may be deprived of their livelihood because of the inability of the Minister to exempt them from the provisions of the Bill? Generally, I think this is a wise Act. At present we have many people with fishing vessels on the Murray who use outboards and inboard motors, and unless the Bill is altered they will fall within the definition of the Act. I support the Bill.

Mr. STEPHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 23. Page 1278.)

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I oppose the second reading of this Bill. I do so as I have said on previous occasions, both on economic and moral grounds, and I hope to be able to give those grounds to members. May I say at the outset that I hope members on both sides will not hesitate to answer the arguments which I put, and I say this in all sincerity. I will be very pleased if members on either side of the House can show that my arguments are wrong because that will show that price control is not as bad as I sincerely believe it to be. I give that invitation to all members before I begin. Broadly, I believe that price control is undesirable because it interferes with the law of supply and demand and that without control prices will reach a satisfactory level through the working of that law. As a Liberal I am opposed on principle to controls unless they can be justified, and I do not believe that they can be in this connection. These controls simply distort the market in this State for the goods which are under control and for others, because at one and the same time price control increases demand because prices are kept down and decreases supply because there is not the encouragement to manufacturers to supply goods. That being so, in itself it tends to add to the inflationary trend. Quite apart from that it merely diverts goods under control to goods not under control, and that means the market is distorted. Finally, there is another matter of broad principle. I do not know if members have forgotten the principle of buyer's resistance; we should not protect and molly-coddle everybody and keep prices down artificially. That should be done by people using their own discrimination and not buying if prices are too high. That applies when there is competition, and people should exercise that buyer's resistance by not buying goods which

they think are too costly. That applies if there is competition and I hope I can show that there is competition. Price control is no longer necessary because there is an adequate supply of goods. Again, this legislation penalizes one section of the community, and I think this can be agreed. Quite frankly, the object of the Government in continuing these controls is to keep the cost of living down and it is being kept down at the expense of those who are subjected to these controls, namely, the merchants and the manufacturers. I do not believe it a fair thing that the object of keeping the cost of living down in this State should be achieved at their expense. I shall not say any more on the principles of the thing. I have set out my beliefs and I stick to them. On this occasion the Government went to a good deal of trouble in preparing the second reading speech on this measure as was shown by the very long speech which contained many points, but there is only one operative clause in the Bill. I would like to go through the points raised in the second reading speech and if possible answer them, and I hope honourable members will challenge me if they can. We are told that the Government believes control is still necessary in the interests of economic development; that is the main reason given this year for the continuation of price control—economic development. I point out that this is an entirely new reason. We have been treated over the years to a variety of reasons for the continuation of price control and perhaps I should mention a few of them. The existing Act was first passed in 1948 and on that occasion, in introducing the Bill, the Premier said.—

The question immediately arises whether we are in a position to abandon price and rent controls or whether it is necessary to carry on controls, and, if so, what form they should take. I say unhesitatingly that it is necessary for controls to be maintained over rents and prices under existing conditions. I dissociate myself from any suggestion that I am subscribing to the point of view that you can cure economic ills by price or rent controls. Price control will not cure an economic evil and if there is some wrong adjustment in the economy of any country price control in itself will never correct that.

I will not give all the reasons advanced for price control since then, but they have been different each year. In 1956 it was because it was necessary to keep in check the trade associations which had grown up. That was the apology given for price control then. In 1957 we find that it is in the interests of the economic development of this State. In 1958

perhaps we may get another reason which would run something like this:—

Who is . . . so devoid of human feeling as not to see that immoderate prices are widespread in the markets of our cities and that the passion for gain is lessened neither by plentiful supplies nor by fruitful years?—so that . . . evil men reckon it their loss if abundance comes. There are men whose aim it is to restrain general prosperity . . . to seek usurious and ruinous returns . . . avarice rages throughout the world.

That could be the text of the Premier's second reading speech next year. In fact, it is the text of the Edict of Prices which was put out so long ago as 301 A.D. by Diocletian. I refer to that only to show that the reasons advanced for price control are the same in 1957 as in 301 A.D. and the same as they were a very long time before that. This is what the American author of *Caesar and Christ*, Will Durant, says about the Edict of Prices issued in 301 A.D.:—

The edict was until our time the most famous example of an attempt to replace economic laws by governmental decrees. Its failure was rapid and complete. Tradesmen concealed their commodities, scarcities became more acute than before. Diocletian himself was accused of conniving at a rise in prices, riots occurred, and the Edict had to be relaxed to restore production and distribution.

That passage occurs under the heading of "The Socialism of Diocletian." In case some members may feel that this is not a fair and unbiased comment on the Edict of Prices, I have another one here. This is what another writer, an Englishman, Stobart, says in *The Grandeur That Was Rome*:—

The whole Roman world was being slowly strangled with good intentions. The bureaucracy had grown so highly organized and efficient, so nicely ordered through its various grades of official life that everybody walked in leading strings to the music of official proclamations. Paternalism regulated everything with its watchful and benignant eye. The triumph of the system may be seen in the famous Edict of Prices issued by Diocletian in A.D. 301. Here we find scheduled a maximum price for every possible commodity of trade and a maximum wage for every kind of service. Death is the penalty for any trader who asks, or any purchaser who pays, a higher price. No difference of locality or season is permitted. Trade is forbidden to fluctuate under penalty of death. This delightful scheme, which was engraved on stone in every market in Europe, was evidently the product of a highly efficient Board of Trade, which had sat late of nights over the study of statistics and political economy. Benevolent officials of this type swarmed all over the Empire, spying and reporting on one another as well as on the general public.

This is what happened on another occasion when price control was tried but failed, and I have quoted it only to show that the results of our action in interfering in such matters today will be exactly the same as then. The results of this legislation will be no better or more effective in the long run and just as harmful.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you think it will lead to a riot, and, if so, will you lead that riot?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I would not lead a riot, but it could lead to a riot if pressed sufficiently far. Each year we have been presented with a new reason for continuing price control. We must now accept that this Government's policy is permanently to retain this legislation in our Statutes. Can we find that it is necessary to retain price control in the interests of our economic development? The Minister also said:—

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.

If that is the case I cannot understand why so many industrialists protest against this legislation. Having said that we are experiencing the greatest period of development in our history the Minister continues:—

These factors all tend to cause inflation, and not much can be done to counteract it except through the medium of Government action.

The implication is that this legislation will curb inflation. That is totally wrong. One has only to consider that during the time of the greatest inflation in this country—from 1949 to 1952—price control operated in every State, but it did not curb inflation, nor will it ever do so because all that a prices department can do when inflation is rampant is to sanction inevitable increases in prices. It can do nothing to keep prices down; experience in all States proves that. The Minister referred to the conditions which have prevailed in New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania where price control has been abandoned. I point out that different Parties are in power in those States. There are Labor Governments in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania and a Liberal Government in Victoria. The conclusion the Minister drew from a comparison with those States was that the cost of living had risen more rapidly there than here. I point out that if the consequences of lifting control have been so dire, and prices have risen to such an alarming extent in those States, why have they not reimposed control? Why are they prepared to continue without controls if the

results are so disastrous? There has been no suggestion that any of them intend reimposing control.

Due to a happy conjunction of circumstances, in the last few months a Liberal and Country Party Government has been returned in Queensland—the State which is always referred to as our sister State in this regard. Despite the evidence of the dire results of lifting control the Queensland Government is at this moment preparing to abandon control. Price control is to be abandoned progressively in Queensland. Surely this will reveal that even though we have been told of the dire consequences of lifting control, those consequences are not nearly so bad to an impartial observer as the Government would have us believe. The dire consequences are all conjecture.

The crux of this matter is the Government's assertion that price control helps keep down the cost of living. We are told that the C series index is the thing we must watch at all times. There has been much misconception about the C series index. Many regard it as the indicator of the basic wage structure in this country, but I refer members to the 1954 Labor Report No. 43 in which the nature and purpose of the C series index is set out as follows:—

The list therefore is not (as is sometimes erroneously supposed) a basic wage regimen nor yet is it a full list of component items in a standard of living. It does not imply that any particular goods or any selected grades or quantities of these goods should enter into determination of a basic or living wage. The lists used are simply selected items combined in certain proportions for the purpose of measuring price variations. The items are representative of the fields covered, and the proportions approximate to those in average consumption so far as can be ascertained. The list of items in the C Series Retail Price Index is representative of a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households as current in pre-war years.

Mr. Hambour—What is used as the basis for fixing rent?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—A five-roomed house built pre-war. This is merely an index to measure price variations and does not measure purely and simply the size of the basic wage. By keeping down the C series items artificially by price control we are not keeping down the true costs of living at all. The workers, in fact, are being penalized.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you suggest we are keeping prices down by price control?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—If we are not, that acknowledges my whole argument. I believe an attempt is being made to keep prices down, but I disagree with the whole idea of doing so. In the long run price control cannot possibly succeed. By controlling items in the C series index we are not keeping down the cost of living but are simply tricking people into believing we are doing that because we are keeping down the index which is not in itself a reflection of the cost of living. Several times during his second reading speech the Minister used such expressions as:—

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.

I protest vigorously against that. We are told that from all the information available to the Government such and such may be inferred, but members are not given the information so as to be able to make up their minds whether price control is beneficial. We are obliged all the time to accept the Government's evaluation of the position. The privilege of this House is being ignored. It should be our privilege to have the information available so that we can make up our minds, but apparently we are to be denied that information and must really rely on the Government's opinion. Every time the Premier has been challenged to give information he has said he cannot do so. We cannot go behind the Government on this matter, which is a bad thing for the prestige of Parliament.

The final reason why I think the Government's attitude, as outlined in the second reading explanation, is tough, is the appeal by the Minister to the Gallup poll, when he says:—

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 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.

I do not know whether the Government intends to submit future measures to a Gallup poll to see what the people think about them.

Mr. John Clark—They would not last long if they did.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I could not agree more with the honourable member if he means that a Government should do what it thinks is right and not merely what the people want. The Government should make up its own mind.

Mr. Corcoran—Tell your Premier that.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am doing my best to tell him now, for he can convince the people what is right. When one reads a statement such as that one cannot help remembering two significant Presidential elections. In the 1940's Governor Thomas Dewey and President Roosevelt opposed each other twice and each of them consulted public opinion polls extensively. Although Governor Dewey would not touch anything that was not favoured by a substantial majority of the American people, President Roosevelt, even if the Gallup poll was entirely against him, championed the proposal and talked the people around. In fact, at both elections it was Roosevelt with his fearless policy, not Dewey with his over-emphasis on Gallup polls, who won the election. In other words one cannot be governed by a Gallup poll and the opinion of people in the street. It is Parliament's job to mould opinion: it is not its job to take the opinion that may be based on goodness knows what information. When we get this sort of thing in a second reading explanation we have reached a very low ebb indeed. The final point made in the speech was one which, had it not been made in a second reading explanation, would have been impudent. The Minister said:—

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.

I do not call arrangements made by wielding a threat of control voluntary arrangements.

Mr. John Clark—You may have something there.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I think I have. How can one say that the arrangements made by the Prices Commissioner telling manufacturers, "If you do not conform you will be re-controlled," are voluntary arrangements yet that is the assertion in the second reading explanation.

Mr. Shannon—Don't our courts rule out agreements made under duress?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes; if our courts could touch this they probably would, yet the Government has the effrontery to say that these arrangements are voluntary and for the benefit of the public. I hope members will answer my arguments on these various points in the second reading explanation. They do not justify the support of members of Parliament.

It seems that so-called price control in this State must be profit control because—and I challenge members to tell me where I am wrong—whenever an application is made by a retailer or wholesaler to the Prices Commissioner for an increase, the immediate answer of the Commissioner is, "Let us have a look at your balance-sheet." In other words, the Commissioner wants to know how much profit the applicant is making. It does not matter whether the trader is efficient or not, or what methods he is using, all the Prices Commissioner can go on are his costs. Because of the very nature of things he cannot make any comparison with goods sold on the free market and he must rely on profit control.

What is the result? The efficient producer is penalized and the inefficient producer or retailer is subsidized because the Commissioner, trying to do the fair thing by them all, must inevitably allow a margin of profit to the inefficient trader. That shows that price control in the long run must be against the interests of this State. Secondly, it is very easy for some concerns that run their own hire-purchase companies to get around price control. All they must do is to increase the terms price on the goods. Hire-purchase is not subject to control in this State so it is easy to charge one cash price and simply increase the terms price far more than would otherwise be done to make up what the retailer feels should be his fair margin. There is no check on that practice, therefore I suggest that the very people the Government is trying to protect by introducing this legislation—those who use hire-purchase—may easily be caught that way.

Mr. John Clark—Do you suggest that business people and manufacturers are guilty of such action?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I do not accuse anyone.

Mr. John Clark—Then it is a hypothetical statement?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes.

Mr. Hambour—There are plenty of actual cases.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—No allowance is made, in fixing prices, for the quality of an article. The result is that, because an average must be fixed for the whole range of qualities, the luxury article of high quality is lower in price than it would normally be and the utility article, which has not the quality, is higher in price. That means that the well-to-do person gets his article cheaper and the man who buys the cheaper article pays more than if prices were not controlled, because the same margin operates.

That can be seen in the vexed question of meat. I cannot help feeling that this Government is in the same position as the Chifley Government was prior to the 1949 election when it could not make up its mind what it would do about petrol rationing. We all know what happened in 1949 when the Labor Government went out of office: petrol rationing was eliminated within a few weeks without any of the dire consequences that had been predicted. There is only one tragic difference in South Australia: if this Government were to go out of office price control would not be abolished, but merely tightened. The mental outlook of the two Governments, however, is the same. This Government cannot bring itself to lift controls, although it is obvious they have outlived their usefulness and are no longer necessary.

The last matter I should like to mention is the cost of price control in this State. The Auditor-General's report reveals how much the Prices Department costs the taxpayer direct, and I was glad to see that in 1956-57 the cost was only £74,000 compared with £78,000 in the previous year. That, however, is not even half the real cost of price control, because it ignores altogether the cost to the merchant and producer of supplying all the details and keeping all the statistics necessary for the Prices Department. The cost of price control is incalculable and must run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds. In itself this is an inflationary pressure because it is all useless and non-productive work, yet we are apparently prepared to ignore that altogether.

I opposed this measure last year and in the course of my second reading speech referred to one idiotic result of price control. I referred particularly to beverages that had as their ingredient milk and to the anomalous position that arose whereby the price of a cup of tea with milk was controlled, whereas a cup of tea without milk was not controlled. I have had at least one slight victory, because I am glad to say that quietly and unobtrusively in January last those two items were deleted from the list of controlled goods and services. So, while I am certain that the Government would not agree with all I have said, I have had some slight effect upon price control. Even so, I am prepared to continue my opposition to this measure, not because, as has been suggested by honourable members opposite, I am favouring the people who are particularly being penalized, but because when one studies the wide interests of the whole community price control is a bad thing and is having an effect quite contrary to the object for which it was introduced. I oppose the second reading.

Mr. HAMBOUR secured the adjournment of the debate.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.03 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 29, at 2 p.m.