

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, November 11, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS.**BUSH FIRE DANGER.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—As the Minister of Agriculture is not in the Chamber at the moment I address my question to the Minister of Works. Is he aware that with the sudden advent of summer there has been a rapid drying off of growth, particularly in the northern areas, and that shortly there will be a serious fire hazard? Will he ask his colleague to use his powers under the Bush Fires Act and see whether it would not be advisable, at least in the early stages, to impose a total prohibition on the lighting of fires in the open, except with the permission of some proper authority, on days of high fire hazard?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will direct the question to my colleague. I agree with the honourable member that there will be a serious risk of bush fires in the near future. The honourable member suggested a total prohibition, perhaps for the next few weeks, on the lighting of fires in the open, but that has always been considered impracticable on a general scale throughout the summer.

POLLUTION OF RIVER TORRENS.

Mr. COUMBE—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently regarding the pollution of the River Torrens in the vicinity of Walkerville?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Investigations were made into alleged offences by certain people who were allowing sediment to escape into the river. The fear was expressed that this resulted in siltation of the river, and that this affected swimming clubs. Investigations were made by departmental officers and the facts were reported to the Crown Solicitor who, I was informed this morning, is preparing a case for action to be taken.

Mr. LAUCKE—On September 30 I referred to the pollution of the waters of the River Torrens below Highbury arising from a rubbish dump conducted by the Campbelltown Corporation. I sought an inquiry into this matter and on October 22, in a reply, the Premier said:—

The site is, however, considered to be unsuitable because it is near the River Torrens, which is subject to flooding. When floods occur there is always a risk that conditions

may result which make controlled tipping difficult or impossible. There is also a risk of parts of the tip being washed away and refuse exposed or washed into the river. For these reasons the Central Board requested the Local Board of Health for Campbelltown to seek other more suitable sites for the tipping of refuse.

I have received further complaints from my constituents alleging that dumping is continuing and that refuse deposited a week ago was covered only yesterday. The position is most unsatisfactory. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Health request that appropriate action be taken to ensure that the recommendations of the Central Board of Health are complied with?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—This question has been discussed in Cabinet. I will take it up again with the Minister of Health.

COUNTRY ABATTOIRS.

Mr. HARDING—An article in today's newspaper under the heading "Stock Slaughtering and Freezing Works" states:—

Hope of additional treatment works in the country should not be lightly abandoned. It is doubtful whether private exporters have been given enough incentive to set up new plants in this State. As an alternative, Kadina, Wallaroo, and Moonta Corporations are considering the provision of a local abattoirs. Perhaps similar projects could be enlarged with Government help to provide an export outlet.

Can the Minister of Agriculture comment on the suggestion of Government assistance for local abattoirs where they are warranted, or will he give me a considered reply later this week?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The Government's policy is to assist private or local government abattoirs, as in the case of the proposed abattoirs at Kadina, and the Government will be keen to assist any other firm that wants to start an abattoirs in the country. This can be done under the Industries Development Act, under which people submit cases for assistance. Under legislation passed this year considerable assistance has been given to private abattoirs to kill for export, but this legislation only became law a week or two ago. I suggest that the honourable member watch the operations of that Act, which will be of considerable benefit to abattoirs anywhere in the State.

PAYNEHAM BUS SERVICE.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked some time ago about the bus service running along Payneham Road?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The General Manager of the Tramways Trust has furnished me with the following report:—

The comparison between the tram and bus services on the Paradise route is as follows:—

	Week days (base services).			
	Time of Journey.		Service Frequency.	
	Tram. Min.	Bus. Min.	Tram. Min.	Bus. Min.
Paradise to Grenfell Street, City . . .	34	27	30	30
Glynde Road, Hectorville, to Grenfell Street, City	25	20	30	15
Wellington Road, Payneham, to Grenfell Street, City	20	16	15	15

During the peaks these services are considerably augmented. It can be said that the bus services on week days, Saturdays and Sundays are better than the tram services on the score of both running times and frequencies. On the matter of passenger loadings, our returns show that the service is adequately catering for all traffic now offering.

HAY-DIE AND TAKE-ALL.

Mr. LAUCKE—In recent weeks the incidence of hay-die and take-all in wheat crops on the Murray Flats has seriously upset yield expectations. I have received reports of a 50 per cent decrease in expected yields in those areas. One farmer who ordered six bales of cornsacks cancelled four, which means a reduction from 1,800 to 600 bags. Do reports received by the Minister of Agriculture indicate a State-wide prevalence of hay-die and take-all, and can he give a current estimate of the State's wheat crop?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I will get a reply for the honourable member tomorrow.

PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR COOPER PEDY.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Minister of Education anything further to report regarding the practicability of establishing a primary school at Cooper Pedy?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I regret that I have no further information, but I shall get some for the honourable member before Parliament prorogues.

FROZEN FISH IMPORTS.

Mr. JENKINS—Is the Minister of Agriculture aware that in 1956-57, 830,000 lb. of frozen fish were imported into Australia at a cost of £62,000, and 1,078,000 lb. in 1957-58 at a cost of £91,000? Does he realize the

depressing effect this is having on the income of fishermen because of low prices, and will he have the matter examined?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Yes.

THEBARTON WATER PRESSURES.

Mr. LAWN—Last week I received a letter from the Thebarton Council stating that residents of Hughes Street had sent a petition to the Engineering & Water Supply Department protesting about the poor water supply. It pointed out that two fires had occurred in the previous fortnight and that, although the Thebarton Fire Brigade was in attendance shortly after the fires began, they had to wait until the City Brigade arrived to run a hose from Fisher Terrace into Hughes Street. One lady lost all her possessions in the fire. A couple of years ago Sir Malcolm McIntosh, then Minister of Works, promised that this area would be relaid with new pipes. Some of the residents advised the council, which in turn advised me, that there is now only a trickle of water, whereas the previous supply was better. Residents of Cuming Street, the next street to Hughes Street, telephoned me that although they had had a poor supply in the last couple of weeks, on Saturday and Sunday they could not get any water at all. Will the Minister of Works inquire whether the department can do anything to rectify the position?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I made inquiries into the matter and have information which I think will clear up the position. The honourable member said that approval was given about two years ago for work to be done, but I think it was not as long ago as that. It was in April of this year.

Mr. Lawn—Sir Malcolm McIntosh said work was approved a couple of years ago.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My docket does not go back as far as that, which is surprising. Approval was given on April 15, 1958, and a letter was sent to the honourable member by the then Acting Minister of Works, the Honourable C. D. Rowe. The position relating of the main ancillary work was now is that following approval for the commenced, but the men were then taken from the job, which was partly completed, to attend to urgent work on Marion Road, and the Thebarton work was, therefore, held in abeyance. The gang has now returned to the job, the work will be completed forthwith, and I understand the water pressures have already improved, because bypass mains were laid whilst the relaying was being done.

CARRIAGE OF BULK HANDLING BINS.

Mr. HEASLIP—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I asked on October 28 regarding the railway carriage of bulk handling bins and their transport to the farm after being unloaded at the railway siding?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—My colleague the Minister of Railways has informed me as follows:—

The bulk grain bins are carried under three classifications namely,

1. Carried separately—minimum 10cwt. each . . . Class 2.
2. When mounted on a wheeled trailer or motor vehicle . . . Vehicle rates.
3. When attached to or forwarded with implement or machine—same rate as applied to implement or machine . . . Class 1.

Thus, grain bins when carried separately are charged a higher classification than farm machinery, which is, with few exceptions, class 1. The reason for that is that the grain bins are by their nature more bulky. The above classifications are similar to those in force in Victoria and the rates themselves are comparable. Although the honourable member in his question refers to the obtaining of a permit from the Transport Control Board, the chairman of the board suggests that he may be inquiring regarding permits from the Motor Vehicles Department. He mentions this as he can trace no application to the board for road cartage of bulk grain equipment *ex rail*. However, the position respecting a Transport Control Board permit is as follows:—In most country towns and centres there is a resident carrier holding standing approval from the board to transport goods to and from rail. If there is no such carrier available application may be made to the board for a special permit. If the equipment under discussion has been conveyed to the nearest rail point there would be no delay in the granting of a permit by the board. If time did not permit written application, a telephone request would be dealt with immediately. No permit is required from the board if a primary producer is transporting his own equipment in his own vehicle, nor by carriers where roads used have not been declared “controlled routes” under the Road and Railway Transport Act, 1930-1957.

SCALP AND HAIR TREATMENT COMPANY.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Did the Minister of Education see an advertisement in this morning's press by a company calling itself James Cosmetics (Adelaide) Proprietary Limited, relating to the treatment of the scalp and hair? I am informed that, in fact, this company is not operating under a registered business name, but is carrying on the activities of an organization known as Keele Pty. Ltd. I have had many complaints about what is going on. Young men and older men are enticed in by

the advertisements and told that they have come just in the nick of time to save their hair, because they are suffering from a severe disease with a Latin name, which proves on investigation to be nothing but dandruff. They are told that they should immediately sign up for a course of treatment, which on a time payment basis costs about £80, and there is a demand for a down payment of £20. When they discover the situation and ask to be allowed to get out those people refuse to refund the money. To get it back their clients must have the publicity and expense of taking the matter to court. Will the Minister ask his colleague, the Attorney-General, to have the matter investigated urgently to see whether the activities of this firm are within the present law for the purposes of prosecution, and, if they are not, whether it would be advisable to amend the law accordingly?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to do as the honourable member suggests.

NEW ERA PRISON FARM.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Will the Minister of Lands obtain a report from the Chief Secretary on what progress, if any, has been made on the New Era Prison Farm?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

LOXTON SOUTHERN MAIN.

Mr. STOTT—Has the Minister of Lands obtained a report in reply to my question about the bursting of the southern main at Loxton?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have obtained the following report:—

Leaks have occurred in the 51in. diameter southern rising main at Loxton ever since it was first put into operation. The main is 2½ miles long and leaks have been confined to approximately ¼ of a mile. The trouble is caused by rubber rings “blowing.” In addition to some of the pipe ends being “out of round,” there are doubts about the quality and size of some rubber rings. Stoppages for repairs have delayed irrigations and caused inconvenience to settlers. The question of replacing portion of the line was examined by the engineers in 1956 but, in view of the high cost of replacement, the policy of lead-caulking was continued. The position was regarded as reasonable during 1956-57 but an increase in leaks occurred in 1957-58 and, as the position has not improved this season, approval has been given on the recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief for lead-caulking 30 consecutive joints in two sections of the line as an experiment. The effect of this caulking will be kept under close observation. The importance of avoiding serious delays

during the hot weather has at all times been appreciated, and all practical steps are taken to obviate delays.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister said that the department's engineers were replacing the rubber joints with lead caulking. Does he think that will overcome the problem? Does he not think that with the terrific pressure of water through the 56-inch main the pipe will become rigid and burst? Does he know that the southern main burst again last night when there was another irrigation and that the settlers are becoming even more anxious about this matter, especially as summer is almost here?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I am afraid I have not much further information for the honourable member. I know there have been a number of bursts in that area, and that this has caused much inconvenience to the settlers. I have been constantly in touch with the engineers on this matter, with the result that they are about to experiment on a section of the 51-inch main in an effort to overcome the problem. Lead caulking has been proved to be satisfactory in the past, and I point out that it would cost a great deal to replace the whole of the main or any other channel or pipeline in the vicinity. The engineers, in their wisdom or otherwise, say that this experiment may prove satisfactory, and until it has been tried out I cannot give the honourable member any further information.

GAWLER AND ELIZABETH WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In the last few weeks a number of my constituents in parts of Gawler and Elizabeth have complained to me about dirty water. A fortnight ago I attended a political meeting at Elizabeth where one of my constituents brought along a pickle bottle with a sample of dirty water. The water looked all right until the bottle was shaken, when it was found to contain much sediment. Has the Minister of Works any knowledge of this, and if not, will he call for a report?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I have no knowledge of any complaints from that locality, but I will get information thereon. We frequently get reports of discoloured or dirty water. This could arise because of a fresh intake of water into a reservoir or because of the normal departmental operation of flushing out pipes, which loosens some of the material that adheres to them, and when water is released into them again at high velocity, that material is carried

away. Pipes must be flushed and cleaned from time to time. It is the desire of the department to supply good quality, clean water at all times, and if these things occur there is usually some good reason. I will endeavour to obtain specific information for the honourable member.

ROAD TRANSPORT OF LAMBS.

Mr. QUIRKE—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question of Tuesday last relating to the refusal by the Transport Control Board to grant a permit to transport young lambs by road to Minlaton?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Minister of Railways has furnished me with the following report:—

The Chairman of the Transport Control Board has advised that the livestock referred to by the honourable member involved the requested movement of 1,110 Merino wether lambs from the Burra area to Maitland. As Burra and Paskeville (*en route*) were points connected with broad gauge railway service the board considered that duplication of service by the granting of a road permit was not warranted for this section of the journey. The board's decision was reached after ascertaining that the lambs could be loaded on rail at Burra by midday on a Friday and reach Paskeville before 9 a.m. on the next day (Saturday).

The board was informed that the lambs were dropped in May and therefore would be five or six months old. Many thousands of lambs of this age and younger are handled annually by the Railways Department. In considering applications for road movement of livestock the board takes into consideration the availability of railway service, the type of livestock, and any other factors submitted by the applicant. It should be appreciated, however, that hardly two cases are identical, and it is impracticable for the board to arrange inspection of all livestock. The board does not subscribe to the proposal that all lambs should be accorded road transport.

PIANOFORTE TUITION BY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I understand from reports that a number of departmental teachers in isolated country areas are capable of teaching piano playing, but there is an impression that they are prohibited by the Education Department from teaching the piano and accepting payment for it. Is this impression correct, and if so, will the Minister of Education take steps to have this embargo removed?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—There is no complete prohibition or embargo. Any teacher desiring to engage in outside activities can apply to the Director of Education for permission, giving full particulars, and each application is treated on its merits. For some time

the applications were made to the Public Service Commissioner in the same way as for public servants, but he suggested they be sent to the Director of Education. I am sure any applications of the nature mentioned would receive favourable consideration.

FORESTRY EMPLOYEES' HOMES.

Mr. RALSTON—Many employees of the Woods and Forests Department have given all their working years so far to the industry, and will probably continue to do so throughout their working life. Will the Minister of Agriculture consider granting them the right to purchase the homes they at present occupy and rent from the department?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Since I have been in control of this department I have been aware that it has been extraordinarily considerate towards its employees; I have had repeated evidence of this. This request has not been brought to my notice, but I will examine it and give the honourable member a considered reply as soon as possible.

INTERSTATE BETTING SERVICE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—From reports I have received I believe the present interstate betting service at local racecourses is most satisfactory, although some people question whether there should be so many readings. The people attending the racecourses appreciate the excellent race descriptions given by Mr. Bill Collins, who is at present in America to make a recording of an important race there. In view of the fact that the Betting Control Board is responsible for supplying a service on interstate racing, will the Minister of Lands ask the Premier to obtain a report from the board on its reasons for not supplying this information, how long it intends to delegate to the South Australian Bookmakers League the responsibility of supplying this service, and whether it will reimburse the league the cost of the services?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will convey the questions to the Premier.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT BLOCK VALUATIONS.

Mr. HARDING—Has the Minister of Lands any further information concerning the valuation of war service land settlement blocks?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Last week I informed the honourable member that a number of valuations had been received.

Twenty-five were received and the settlers concerned have been advised of the valuations for freeholding.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. LAWN—For the convenience of members, can the Minister of Lands, as acting Leader of the House, intimate whether members can take if for granted that the cessation of this session will synchronize with the Federal elections next Saturday week?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I regret that I am not able to give that information.

RELEASE OF LIFE PRISONERS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I asked on October 28 concerning the release from prison of Ronald Sharpe?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following report from the Sheriff and Comptroller of Prisons:—

During 1955 prisoner Ronald Albert Sharpe was transferred to Gladstone Prison from Yatala Labor Prison. Prior to this transfer and for a period of several years he resented any form of discipline or instruction. He was not prepared to accept guidance. Sharpe is a lad that has a bad temper and is very easily led. He was not interested in any form of rehabilitation or education. Since his transfer to Gladstone he has improved and the keeper reports that his conduct is now exemplary. He has recently taken up correspondence courses through the Adelaide Technical Correspondence School in poultry farming and shorthand and his teacher reports that he is making excellent progress. I am of the opinion that he is now responding.

Work has commenced on the training centre at Cadell and buildings will be erected early 1959. Immediately the dormitory block is completed prisoners will be moved to this area. Sharpe will be transferred from Gladstone to Cadell, where he will live with others under open conditions. He will be trained and given the opportunity to develop a sense of personal responsibility. I am of the opinion that his release should not be considered until such time as he has had a period of training at the training centre at Cadell. If his conduct and industry is then satisfactory I will recommend that he be released on licence under supervision and control of a probation officer of this department.

STRATHALBYN RESERVOIR.

Mr. JENKINS—I understand the Minister of Works has a reply to the question I asked last week concerning the augmentation of the Strathalbyn reservoir from bores.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Yes. The Engineering and Water Supply Department

sought information from the Mines Department as to the geological possibilities of obtaining a good underground supply to augment the Strathalbyn town supply. The information available from the Mines Department is insufficient upon which to base any certain predictions. Therefore, a further detailed examination will have to be made before it is considered worth risking a bore of major proportions. That information is being sought, and in the meantime the department is negotiating with owners of other bores in the vicinity with a view to arranging with them—and I think arrangements can be made—similar arrangements for this summer to those that were made in the previous year, if that becomes necessary. At present there is ample water in the reservoir and no problem is imminent, and I think the honourable member can be assured that a satisfactory supply will be maintained.

SOUTH ROAD TRAFFIC.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have received a letter about traffic on the South Road, written on behalf of officers and members of the Edwardstown Baptist Church stating that about 250 children attend the Sunday school on Sunday mornings. The church officials asked the National Safety Council for assistance to overcome traffic problems. Warning flags are placed at various points on South Road on Sundays near churches on or close to the road. Can the Minister of Works offer any further assistance so as to give greater protection to children desiring to cross the road in order to attend church services?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will get a report for the honourable member.

ALMOND INDUSTRY.

Mr. LAUCKE—The continued importation of almond kernels from Mediterranean countries is jeopardizing growers' prospects of receiving a reasonable price for their crop. Their returns for the last crop were greatly reduced because Mediterranean kernels are being landed at 4s. 11½d. a pound (duty paid), which is about 2s. a pound under local cost of production. About £10,000 worth of kernels was imported in each of the months March, April, May and June, and I understand the Tariff Board is inquiring into the amount of duty applicable to imported almonds. Has the Minister of Agriculture any information on the

progress of the inquiry, as reasonable protection for the almond industry is urgent?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I am aware that this has been a problem for some time, but it is a matter entirely within the purview of the Commonwealth Parliament. I know that almond growers have made representations to the Tariff Board, and they were furnished with much information from the Department of Agriculture, but the outcome of the board's inquiry has not yet been made known. I will try to get information for the honourable member on the progress of the inquiry.

SOLDIER SETTLERS' LIVING ALLOWANCE.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Lands will recall that the question of the living allowance to soldier settlers at Loxton was raised previously. The recommendation of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, under the Stabilization scheme, was £976 a year as an allowance for owner-operators. Does the Minister think that is a reasonable and adequate allowance? The sum of £1,040 is allowed under the Wheat Industry Stabilization Act for an owner-operator, and the dairy industry allowance is £976. Has the Minister any further information in reply to the representations made to him on this matter by Loxton soldier settlers?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Mr. Colquhoun discussed this matter with me last week, and I will bring down a report for the honourable member tomorrow.

THEVENARD JETTY.

Mr. BOCKELBERG (on notice)—

1. What is the depth of water at the Thevenard jetty?
2. What is the depth of water in the channel at present?
3. What would be the full depth when dredged?
4. Is the nature of the bottom rock or sand?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The General Manager of the Harbors Board reports:—

1. 26 feet low water.
2. Official depth 22 feet 6 inches low water. The greater part has 24 feet low water or more, but the marked channel near No. 2 beacon has 22 feet 6 inches low water. There is a narrow passage containing 24 feet low water north of this beacon, which is being used at present.
3. 24 feet low water if channel restored to former depth.

4. Rock at 24 feet low water between Nos. 5 and 6 beacons. The bottom of the remainder of the channel is composed of sand and rock. For the information of the honourable member, I would add that ways and means for remedying this deficiency in the channel are presently having consideration.

NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICES, PORT AUGUSTA.

Mr. RICHES (on notice)—

1. Have tenders been called yet for the erection of new offices for the Engineering and Water Supply Department at Port Augusta?

2. If not, when is it proposed to call tenders?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The replies are:—

1. No.

2. The plans and estimates have been prepared and in view of the high estimated cost, the Engineer-in-Chief considers that the question of remodelling the old building should be examined by the Architect-in-Chief with the object of achieving the desired result at a lower cost. Sufficient space is available in the old building, and, therefore, it is a matter of improving the standard of this accommodation and the appearance of the building in the most economical way.

BARLEY TRANSPORT COSTS.

Mr. STOTT (on notice)—

1. Has barley been transported for the Australian Barley Board from places on Yorke Peninsula to Wallaroo?

2. What is the cost per bushel of road transport from the respective depots on Yorke Peninsula to Wallaroo?

3. What would be the relative costs per bushel of shipping barley in bulk from Ard-

rossan and in bags transported by road and shipped from Wallaroo?

4. What were the total savings and savings per bushel by the board in loading ships in bulk at Ardrossan as against shipping barley in bags from that port?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The chairman of the Australian Barley Board reports:—

1. Yes.

	Per bushel.
2. Ardrossan	6.2305d.
Minlaton	8.0566d.
Mount Rat	6.875d.
Pine Point	7.0898d.
Point Turton	10.5273d.
Port Victoria	6.2305d.
Price	5.6934d.
Urania	5.6934d.

3. Barley has not been shipped in bulk from Ardrossan since March, 1956. The estimated current cost of shipping barley in bulk from Ardrossan is 5.965d. per bushel. The estimated current cost of shipping barley in bags, transported by road, and shipped from Wallaroo is 3.977d. per bushel.

4. It is not practicable to ship barley in bags in overseas vessels from Ardrossan, therefore savings (if any), cannot be calculated.

MOUNT GAMBIER WATER RATES.

Mr. RALSTON (on notice)—In each of the Mount Gambier and Blue Lake water districts what was—

(a) The total assessment value of properties for each of the financial years from 1953-54 to 1958-59?

(b) The total revenue received or estimated to be received from water rates for the same periods?

(c) The total revenue received from excess water for each of the financial years from 1953-54 to 1957-58?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The replies are:—

(a) Mount Gambier water district (rated on annual values):—

Year.	Assessed annual value.	Rates.	Excess.	Total.	Remarks.
	£	£	£	£	
1953-54	192,125	19,412	1,542	20,954	
1954-55	206,977	21,093	1,886	22,979	
1955-56	310,337	31,131	2,706	33,837	General re-assessment.
1956-57	333,259	33,564	2,970	36,534	Price of water increased from 1/7/56 from 1s. 8d. rebate, 1s. excess to 2s. rebate and 1s. 9d. excess, which is reflected in the 1957-58 excess charges.
1957-58	420,979	42,442	4,217	46,659	General re-assessment. From 1/7/57, minimum charges increased from 3s. to £1 and to £3, if supplied.
1958-59	466,412	46,926	4,500	51,426	

(Estimated.)

PLEASE NOTE.—The excess charged in the years mentioned would, for the most part, be used in the year preceding the year of charge.

(b) and (c) Blue Lake water district (rated on unimproved land values):—

Year.	Rates on acreage.		Total. £	Remarks.
	area. £	Excess. £		
1953-54	670	1,920	2,590	
1954-55	1,747	1,606	3,353	From 1/7/54 general increase in acreage rate from 4d. (minimum) and 7d. (maximum) per acre, to 8d. and 21d. respectively.
1955-56	1,747	2,184	3,931	
1956-57	1,762	2,591	4,353	From 1/7/56, new land tax increased valuations, did not have any effect on the rates in Blue Lake as they were previously all over an unimproved value of £4 per acre. From 1/7/56, price of water increased from 1s. 8d. rebate and 1s. excess to 2s. and 1s. 9d. respectively, is reflected in the 1957-58 excess charge.
1957-58	2,147	3,883	6,030	From 1/7/57, minimum charges increased from 3s. to £1 and to £3 if supplied.
1958-59	2,156	4,070	6,226	

PLEASE NOTE.—The excess charged in the years mentioned would, for the most part, be used in the year preceding the year of charge.

RAIL CARRIAGE OF WOOL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. Is the Minister of Works aware that the percentage of wool produced in South Australia carried by the railways has decreased from about 90 per cent to about 60 per cent during the last twenty years?

2. What is the explanation of this alarming decrease?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The replies are:—

1. Yes.

2. The use of the ancillary motor vehicle units by producers and the competition from interstate road hauliers.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. Were freight rates on wool carried by the South Australian railways from certain South-Eastern sidings to Port Adelaide or Mile End reduced recently?

2. If so, what sidings are affected?

3. Have the reduced rates been published?

4. If not, will they be published?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The railways commissioner reports:—

1. Yes.

2. All South Australian stations, commencing at Keith and south and south-east thereof—in all 35 stations.

3. Yes, the reduced rates were published in *Weekly Notice* 43/58.

4. The new rates will be published in the next issue of the *Government Gazette*.

RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS.

Mr. John Clarke for Mr. BYWATERS (on notice)—

1. What is the policy of the Railways Commissioner with regard to seniority relating to promotions?

2. How is the question of seniority viewed by the Appeals Board?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Railways Commissioner reports:—

1. The policy of the Railways Commissioner with regard to seniority related to promotions is in accordance with the respective industrial awards. Under the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemens Award, promotions shall be on the basis of seniority provided that the senior man is fully qualified and suitable to act. Under the awards of the Australasian Transport Officers Federation and the Australian Railways Union respectively, promotion shall be governed by relative ability, suitability, record, experience, and seniority.

2. The Appeal Board, which hears appeals against appointments made under the Australasian Transport Officers Federation Award, also views seniority in accordance with the provisions governing promotion as laid down in that award.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's amendment to delete "exceeds" from paragraph I of new subsection (4) in clause 3 and to insert "does not exceed."

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—This is purely a drafting amendment, making the meaning clearer. I move that it be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

WRONGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with an amendment.

MENTAL DEFECTIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION FUND BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1619.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is a formidable Bill in appearance, and, of course, deals with what could easily become a serious matter for Australia, as the Minister mentioned in his second reading speech. If we have an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in this country that is not dealt with expeditiously and effectively the consequences will be serious indeed. I notice that the Bill is the result of a conference held in Hobart in December, 1954. I fancy I have heard some reference in recent months to Hobart conferences, but apparently this conference was just as effective and produced decisions just as sensible as the other Hobart conference referred to repeatedly by members opposite. I am just as proud to support the decisions of this conference as I was to move the famous resolution at another Hobart conference.

There are a few gaps in the Minister's explanation of this Bill. I have no fault to find with its general structure, which is based to some extent on the structure of an Act called, I think, the Stock Diseases Act, which was passed some time ago. Some of the action that can be taken under this Bill, which I hope it will never be necessary to take, is similar to the action that can be taken under the other legislation. In his second reading speech the Minister said that a Bill substantially similar to this was passed in Victoria in 1957. He might have told us the position in the other States; whether they have passed similar legislation, whether they intend to do so, or whether there has been any hold up in expediting the matter. As a matter of fact there has been a lack of expedition in dealing with this matter in this State, as it is four years since the conference was held. However, perhaps the Minister will give further information on this later.

The fund is to be created by contributions based on a schedule that the Minister was good enough to submit, showing that the Commonwealth is to provide 50 per cent of the cost of any eradication measures, the balance to be borne by the States, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, on

what appears to be a reasonably equitable basis. Clause 7 states:—

7. There shall be paid to the credit of the Fund—

- (a) all sums of money payable to the State of South Australia by the Commonwealth and the States in accordance with an agreement entered into by the Commonwealth Government and all State Governments for the control and eradication of foot and mouth disease;
- (b) the proceeds of the sale of stores and equipment sold under the provisions of this Act or regulations made under this Act;
- (c) all moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of this Act.

I do not know whether we have appropriated any money for the purpose of this legislation; I cannot see any reference to an appropriation in the Bill. However, I assume this will be taken care of.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—It will be taken care of in the event of an outbreak.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I see. I assume there is special power to make money available for a purpose such as this, and probably this is a better way to provide finance than voting certain sums to be earmarked for this purpose alone. I have no objection to it. Clause 15 provides for the winding up of the fund, and I presume the same things would apply there. I take it that that clause means that if there is an outbreak and money has to be provided and spent to deal with it, any balance in the fund after the outbreak has been effectively dealt with will be distributed among the contributors on the basis on which it was contributed. Here again I offer no objection because it appears to be probably a better method of providing money than carrying money in the fund which may not be required for many years. The main purpose of the Bill is to provide that, should an outbreak of this dread stock disease take place, we shall be in a position to deal with it, and I therefore wholeheartedly support the second reading.

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

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

In Committee.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1624.)

Clause 3—“Provision as to holding over,” which the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford had moved to amend by deleting the words “within one month” from paragraph I of subsection (1) of new section 60a.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In addition to the amendment I have moved I intend to move the following amendments:—

In new section 60a (1) II, to delete the word "Within" and to insert "After."

To insert the following new paragraph III:—

During any time during which the tenant remains in possession of the dwellinghouse as aforesaid, the rent payable by the lessee shall be the amount provided to be paid by the lease or such other amount as is agreed in writing by the lessor and the lessee; and the provisions of this Act relating to the control of rents shall not apply with respect to any such rent and the acceptance of any such rent by the lessor shall not be deemed to create another lease.

I think these amendments will meet the difficulties foreseen by the members for Norwood and Mitcham, and will clarify the position.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Since I last spoke on this clause I have had an opportunity to examine the careful report prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman. Apparently Mr. Dunstan's amendment, of which I approved subject to some further amendments of my own, could have unexpected and unforeseen results. It could, in some circumstances, bring new houses under the Act and, in the draftsman's words, could "raise a cloud of legal doubts." I regret that because of the report I am not able to continue to support Mr. Dunstan's amendment, particularly as, with my slight amendments, it would have resulted in more freedom from control. The debate on this matter underlines how complicated and tangled this legislation has become. It is amended annually and it is almost impossible to ascertain precisely what the law is, which, I suggest, is another reason why this legislation should be permitted to lapse. I am opposed to it, but I am sure members realize that my intervention on this occasion was entirely altruistic: I was trying to help both sides. My main objection was the time limit of one month, which it is proposed to remove. I support the foreshadowed amendments.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am happy to accept the Premier's foreshadowed amendments and will not persist with my amendment. With very great respect to the Parliamentary Draftsman, there are some parts of his report with which I do not agree. However the Premier's amendments will cope with all the difficulties and there is practically no difference between the results they will achieve and the results that would have arisen from my amendment.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford's amendment to delete "within one month" from paragraph I of section (1) of new section 60a carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved:—

In new section 60a (1) II, to delete "Within" and to insert "After."

Amendment carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move to insert new paragraph III, which I have already read to the Committee.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BENEFIT ASSOCIATIONS BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 14. Page 1198.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—When I last spoke I sought leave to continue my remarks in order to consider an amendment to provide that those associations which provided time-payment funerals and the like did not misrepresent the benefits they proposed to give the public. I have an appropriate amendment on the files which I will move in Committee. I have outlined my views on this legislation. I believe the people in the community—particularly the older ones—should be protected from the depredations of time-payment funeral companies. I support the second reading.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I support the Bill.

The SPEAKER—Hasn't the member for Light already spoken?

Mr. HAMBOUR—No.

The SPEAKER—I am informed by the Clerk that the member for Light has already spoken.

Mr. HAMBOUR—By interjection.

The SPEAKER—According to *Hansard* the honourable member spoke to the Bill on October 14.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Exclusions from the Act."

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I move:—

After paragraph (d) to insert the following paragraph:—(d1) any approved insurer under Part IIA of the Road Traffic Act, 1934-1957.

This amendment was prompted by a letter received by the Attorney-General from Mr. Brazel, Q.C., on behalf of the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association. It was submitted to the Parliamentary Draftsman, Sir Edgar Bean, who has reported as follows:—

The letter submits that some insurance companies engaged in fire and accident business may come within the scope of the Bill. The

Bill applies to associations which provide benefits such as hospital and medical benefits, and it is pointed out that by the terms of motor and accident insurance policies the insurer becomes liable in certain events for the cost of medical or hospital attention received by the policy holder in the event of accident or sickness. Thus they may fall within the definition of "association" in the Bill. Mr. Brazel suggests that any company which is an approved insurer within the meaning of the Road Traffic Act should automatically be exempted from the Bill. This is a reasonable suggestion. There is no desire on the part of the Government to apply this Bill to ordinary insurance companies of sound financial position.

It is a reasonable assumption that companies approved by the Treasurer as insurers under the Road Traffic Act are reputable bodies in a sound financial position. There is, therefore, no need to apply this Bill to them and an amendment to exclude them is accordingly submitted. When the Bill was being drafted it was contemplated that exemptions of this kind would be required and provision was made for granting exemptions by proclamation. It will, however, be a more satisfactory solution of the present problem to deal with the exemptions by the Bill itself.

I think this is a reasonable amendment, and I commend it to the Committee.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4 passed.

Clause 5—"Duty to furnish returns."

Mr. HAMBOUR—Subclause (2) is the most important part of the Bill. It gives the Public Actuary power to investigate the affairs of any medical benefits association. This morning I received another letter about the activities of the company that the member for Gawler and I referred to in the House last week, and I think there will be many more complaints about it in the near future. The letter states:—

We are not complaining about our treatment from the company during the last year, but we most strongly object to paying a year's subscription and receiving a circular letter telling us that the company can no longer operate. It can be registered with the Commonwealth Government and advises us to transfer our business promptly to the National Health Services of South Australia for a further £16 or £18 per annum.

Earlier this session I referred to two people at Kapunda who were unjustly dealt with by another company which subsequently handed over its business to a further company, which has gone insolvent. Action should be taken immediately this legislation is passed, particularly under this clause, because many people are being made to contribute to a fund with no hope of receiving any benefits.

Clause passed.

Clauses 6 to 15 passed.

New clause 4a—"Restriction on certain business."

Mr. HAMBOUR—I move to insert the following new clause:

4a. (1) An association shall not carry on medical benefit business or hospital benefit business unless

- (a) it is carrying on that business at the time of the passing of this Act; or
- (b) it is registered as a medical organization or a hospital benefits organization under the Commonwealth Act entitled the National Health Act, 1953-1957 or the regulations thereunder.

(2) In this section—

"hospital benefit business" means the business of making and carrying out contracts under which an association in consideration of the payment of contributions undertakes to make payments to contributors or others in respect of any hospital treatment in relation to which benefit is payable under the laws of the Commonwealth:

"medical benefit business" means the business of making and carrying out contracts under which an association in consideration of the payment of contributions undertakes to make payments to contributors or others in respect of any medical services in relation to which benefit is payable under the laws of the Commonwealth.

(3) The Minister may at his discretion grant an exemption from this section to any association which has made a deposit with the Treasurer of the Commonwealth under the Insurance Act, 1932-1937, of the Commonwealth.

Clause 5 deals with existing medical benefits associations or companies, and the Public Actuary will have power to investigate their affairs if necessary. My amendment deals with any company proposing to set up in this business in the future. It provides that unless it is registered under the Commonwealth Act it cannot carry on business without the permission of the Minister. I have included subclause (3) because certain reputable insurance companies may wish to enter this field. At present it is easy for companies to enter this business and take money from the public without any intention of meeting claims, so we should tighten up the legislation. A fortnight ago a medical benefits company in Victoria, to avoid meeting claims, transferred its money to another company by way of loan. The Bill, with this amendment, should adequately protect the public against people going around the country and taking money under false pretences. I am sorry that no action has been taken against companies that have no intention

of meeting claims. If the company I have mentioned previously has misappropriated any funds the Government should take action against it.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I believe the amendment improves the Bill and I am prepared to accept it on behalf of the Government. In reply to questions by Mr. John Clark and Mr. Hambour last week I said that the Attorney-General had caused an investigation to be made into the activities of the company they mentioned. My colleague has forwarded the relevant papers to the Crown Solicitor for advice on whether the company has committed any offence and what action should be taken against it.

New clause 4a inserted.

New clause 12a—“Restriction on method of soliciting contributions.”

Mr. DUNSTAN—I move to insert the following new clause:—

12a. (1) A benefit association or a director or employee of a benefit association shall not deliver to any person or publish in any way any written matter soliciting contributions to such association or advertising the benefits to be obtained from the association except in a form approved by the Public Actuary.

(2) Before approving the form of such matter the Public Actuary shall be satisfied that it accurately and clearly sets forth the benefits to be obtained by such contributions, and that the matter contains no words which could be calculated to mislead the public as to the benefits to be obtained.

This new clause is designed to see that organizations operating under the Act do not hold out to the public anything which is likely to mislead them. It states that they must submit to the Public Actuary any matter they intend to distribute to the public. The Public Actuary will then be able to decide whether the matter accurately sets forth the benefits receivable by contributors. Mr. Hambour's amendment does not cover organizations such as funeral benefits associations, and the activities of some of these have caused me to move this new clause.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The new clause will further strengthen the Bill and I am prepared to accept it.

New clause 12a inserted.

Title passed. Bill read a third time and passed.

PULP AND PAPER MILLS AGREEMENT BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the Pulp and Paper Mills Agreement Bill.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clause 1—“Short title.”

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The Select Committee took evidence on this project from interested Government undertakings and wrote to the Millicent District Council, and Mr. Corcoran, one of the members of the Committee, spoke to councils in his district about the matter. The Committee was of opinion that the industry would be of immense value to the State, and Mr. Bednall, Conservator of Forests, referred to the advantages that would accrue to the State forests. The Committee unanimously recommended that the Bill be passed without amendment.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 7), title and schedule passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1620.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—This Bill is complementary to legislation already passed this session. Once it was necessary to obtain approval before houses were demolished, but we seem to have got beyond that stage. Some of the houses would still be suitable for habitation. Under the Bill the housing authority may erect on any land of the authority any shop, workshop, factory, hall or building of any kind, and this will be in addition to the building of houses by it. I support the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—Inherent dangers are associated with this Bill. I have no serious objection to the Housing Trust assisting in the building of a factory for a country industry under lease so long as the industry can finance its own project. If there is an opening for an industry in a country town people can usually be found to establish it so long as the State provides the necessary capital. In some instances the necessary plant can be obtained readily, but markets are not always available. If a country industry were established in competition with a similar industry in the metropolitan area its only market would be the local one. Mostly in these days industries can be established successfully if they can find an outlet for their surplus production. For instance, we are exporting motor

cars from South Australia, but if that were not so the requirements of the local market would soon be met and the industry would gradually close down. The Bill does not provide the best approach to the problem of decentralization. I feel that under it we shall have white elephants in parts of the State. We have had one at Wallaroo, although it was not the fault of the State: the building was erected during the war to make power alcohol from surplus grain.

Mr. O'Halloran—South Australia did fairly well out of it.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not think that that is the correct and fair approach to the matter. Admittedly the State got out of it fairly advantageously but in the first place the South Australian taxpayers had to find some of the money for the building and machinery. That sort of thing can happen again where enthusiastic people want to establish country industries. For instance, potato growers in my area could suggest a dehydration plant in the locality for processing potatoes, but we would have to be wary because they are now forming a co-operative. When it became profitable to supply them to housewives, growers would not allow many to be processed; they would do so only when there was a glut. I would not like to be charged with the responsibility of refusing people who asked for a factory. I suggest we should make haste slowly so as not to have a number of white elephants on our hands. There has been a flour mill at Bridgewater ever since I have lived there, but this is now being used as a bulk store by one of our local whisky makers. It does not provide much work for residents of the district. Many country industries have had to close because they could not make both ends meet. They have not improved the general aspect of the town; rather their closing has given it a bad name. Companies that seek easy money may finally leave us with a blot on our escutcheon rather than a good mark.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I would not have spoken but that the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) endeavoured not only to sidetrack the debate, but completely to derail it. His speech might have been appropriate to a Bill passed last week, but it had no reference to this Bill, which only clarifies a legal doubt that existed as to certain provisions of the principal Act. The Act, which was passed in 1941 or 1942, provided for the clearance of slum areas. It did not specifically mention the Housing Trust, but this body has since been made the authority under the legis-

lation to bring about the clearance of slum areas. Under section 43 sufficient power resided in the trust to build shops or even factories if it so desired, but I do not think it was ever contemplated that factories would be built.

Mr. Shannon—But the word "factory" was used.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Precisely, but I think that was only a general term to cover any contingency that might arise. This Bill is not an amendment to Housing Trust legislation but to the Act passed to effect clearance of slum areas, not only in the metropolitan area, but in any town in the State. I have noticed recent reports in the press from correspondents in certain country towns that local boards of health are becoming active at last. They have been inactive only because of circumstances beyond their control.

Mr. Quirke—In the same way as the boards of health in the city.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Precisely. Circumstances have prevented them and this Act from being effective, but soon we may be able to give effect to this legislation. Other parts of the world, and other States of Australia, have been able to act under similar legislation. In New South Wales, despite a shortage of materials, a great deal more has been done towards slum clearance than in South Australia. The last time I was in Sydney I was astounded to find that large blocks of slum dwellings in the older industrial areas that had existed for perhaps 100 years had been razed to the ground, and flats provided by the Labor Government of that State to enable parents to bring up their children in good conditions. The New South Wales Housing Commission, the building agent under legislation similar to ours, has power to build shops. The whole idea is that sub-standard houses will be demolished and turned into decent housing groups, which require some facilities. The whole purpose of our legislation is to guarantee that the power we always thought existed does, in fact, exist, so clause 2 enacts the following new subsection (4) to section 16:—

With the consent of the Governor, the housing authority may erect on any land of the housing authority any shop, workshop, factory, hall or building of any kind which in the opinion of the housing authority will beneficially provide for the requirements of persons inhabiting houses erected by the housing authority. The housing authority may, for such term and upon such conditions as it thinks fit, let any such shop, workshop, factory,

hall or building together with any land occupied therewith or may sell the same upon such conditions as the housing authority thinks fit.

I admit that is a broad definition, but it is only made broad to deal with a particular contingency that may arise. The specific purpose is that when slum areas are demolished and new areas are created the body that created them will have power to erect shops and halls. I include halls because recreational facilities are necessary in those areas, although many suburbs and country towns lack them. If some public money were spent to provide places where young folk could meet and enjoy themselves in a healthy atmosphere they would not drift into a sub-standard state of mentality, and we would not need bigger and better gaols to deal with them. This is admirable legislation, and I support it wholeheartedly.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"General powers of housing authority."

Mr. SHANNON—If the Leader had not misinterpreted, I think unintentionally, what I said in the second reading debate, I would not have risen again. I think that on reflection he will see that this is a wide power; he said it is necessarily wide. I did not offer any objections, nor I do I offer one now, to the removal of slum houses to provide better accommodation; my only objection is that the authority charged with this responsibility has the right to build factories for letting. I do not mind building factories for sale, but if the people who want to start an industry have not sufficient money to pay for a factory, they have no right to have one. The word "factory" could be deleted without any harm to the legislation. I remind the Leader that if money is spent on factories there will be less for housing.

Clause passed.

Remaining clause (3) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATE BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1620.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I am in full agreement with the proposal to make it possible for the State Bank to acquire larger capital. Over a period of

years the bank has played a major part in the continuance and development of production in many areas. In some of the newer areas, which have been developed this century—particularly Eyre Peninsula and the River Murray—the bank has played a major part not necessarily as a banking institution, but as the administrator on behalf of the Government of a number of Acts which have been designed to help settlers. It administers the Advances to Settlers Act, the Loans for Fencing and Waterpiping Act and the loans to producers legislation. Through the State Bank concessions were granted in the early days of settlement which were not only to the settlers' benefit but to the State's advantage.

The bank has played a major part in solving our developing housing programme. After all, the Housing Trust, which has done so much, is of recent origin, whereas the State Bank was providing houses more than 40 years ago for deserving people. It reveals how, in times of necessity even the most conservative of Governments, supported by men who claim to be the defenders of the sacred rights of private property and apostles of private enterprise, turn to semi-government socialistic activity to get things done. The Premier provided very little information in his second reading speech and I have not been able to glean much more information from the Auditor-General's report. Section 8 of the Act provides that the capital of the bank shall be a sum not exceeding £5,000,000 raised by the sale and issue of debentures. One would imagine that debentures would be issued and sold to members of the public as a form of investment similar to what periodically happens with the Electricity Trust. Whenever the trust issues debentures there is an over-subscription illustrating the great confidence the investing public has in a socialistic venture. We should have more information on the manner in which State Bank debentures have been issued. I have not seen or heard of any issue. If I had money I would be happy to invest in such debentures because they would be a sound investment. I think the possibility is that the Government has been financing the bank—because sums have been made available as advances to the bank in the Loan Estimates—and that the debentures have been the bank's methods of acknowledging the amounts provided by the Treasury.

Part V of the Act, which includes section 39, makes elaborate provision for the sale and issue of debentures, but I cannot find any reference to debentures in the bank's balance-sheet. Have any debentures in the sense

intended been issued and are any current now? The balance-sheet discloses an apparently high level of liquidity, as indicated by balances at the Commonwealth Bank and money on short call, not to mention Commonwealth inscribed stock held. I would like to be informed whether the bank could not make greater advances than it is making without bringing liquidity of its financial position to the danger point.

If I am right in my assumption regarding the issue of debentures, what is the purpose of increasing the maximum that may be raised in this way from £5,000,000 to £10,000,000? Are we to understand that the bank is to have a capital of £10,000,000 plus whatever the Government has advanced in the past plus whatever the Government may advance in the future? I ask these questions because the position is not clear. I realize that the bank is doing good work and that with the growing volume of business the more capital it has the better work it will be able to do for the people and for primary producers particularly.

Section 8 of the Act now provides for a maximum debenture issue of £5,000,000—increased from £4,000,000 in 1941—but section 39 has always fixed a maximum of £3,000,000. That is another point on which I am not clear. In 1941 when the amount of £3,000,000 was increased to £4,000,000 was it an oversight that section 39 was not correspondingly amended or was there some particular reason why that was not done?

The reference to the “present State Bank” in section 8 (1) (b) would now seem to be an anomaly. If section 8 is to be amended to provide that advances made and to be made by the Government shall form part of the capital of the bank, it would appear that section 9 should also be amended. That section appears to provide for temporary advances for specific purposes. Section 9 states:—

(1) The Treasurer may, out of money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, make advances to the bank for the purpose of enabling it to defray any of the expenses incidental to the establishment of the bank, the opening of offices thereof for business and the raising of sufficient capital for carrying on business.

(2) Any moneys advanced in pursuance of this section shall be repaid to the Treasurer by the bank together with interest at such rate per centum per annum as is fixed by the Treasurer from time to time.

That would have been a perfectly proper solution to apply to the initial advances made by the Treasurer, but it seems to me that it is being continued. I may be wrong in my

assumption, but the position should be clarified. I think it is wise that the bank's capital should be increased and I support the second reading.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—I, too, have much pleasure in supporting this Bill which provides for an increase in the State Bank's capital. The bank is one of the most valuable of the State's instrumentalities. Its interests and activities are numerous and varied and it administers for the State Government the Advances for Homes Act, Advances to Settlers Act, Loans for Producers Act and Loans for Fencing and Waterpiping Act, and on behalf of the Commonwealth Government loans for re-establishment and employment and also allowances for re-establishment and employment. The bank has played a major part in the State's development so far and I have no doubt it is destined to play a more important part in the future. I think its greater value will be due to its being a pure bank, not having subsidiary hire-purchase interests like many of its contemporaries. It is a bank that will assume more importance in assisting industry, both primary and secondary, under the banking system as we have known it for many years—the overdraft current account system.

When we look at the State generally we find that finance has been made available from the State Bank in areas where other institutions have not gone. This money has been provided with the intention of developing the State. On the West Coast, in the depression times, the State Bank did magnificent work, and today has an important connection there. The West Coast was opened up in no small measure by the State Bank's activities. Much of the prosperity of the River Murray districts had its origin in the money made available to settlers by the State Bank, which has also helped the fishing industry. When considering applications for advances it acts with the good of the State in mind, and I am sure that its assistance to the fishing industry will enable it to expand even more in the future.

Clients get a better deal from the State Bank because it is controlled locally and can therefore make decisions promptly. Some time ago we feared that banking would be nationalized, but the Commonwealth Government would have had no jurisdiction over the State Bank. My present fear is that with the passing of time and the greater use by the public of hire-purchase facilities we shall find less money being made available by banks

to primary and secondary industries. I support the Bill, which enables the State Bank to increase its debenture capital from £5,000,000 to £10,000,000, because I believe the bank will play an even more important role in the development of South Australia.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I support the Bill, and agree with most of the remarks of the member for Barossa. Recently, the House dealt with the vexed question of finance for people without security, and it is now common practice for them to resort to hire-purchase finance at exorbitant interest rates. I believe some portion of the additional capital of the State Bank should be devoted to security-free loans. The Midland Bank of England started this practice.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you mean personal loans?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Yes, and I think the State Bank should make these loans to newly married couples for the purchase of equipment and personal requirements. I do not suggest that it should advance money for the purchase of frivolous items, but it could help to regulate the rates of interest charged by hire-purchase companies. All the legislation in the world will not adequately deal with that difficult question, but competition will, and I should like the State Bank to follow the practice of the Commonwealth Bank in this field.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The subject of personal loans has been examined by the State Bank, which sent two officers to other States to investigate systems there. They reported favourably on this matter to the State Bank Board, which has informed me it is prepared to make personal loans up to a limit of £500. This has not yet been announced publicly for two reasons. Firstly, I believe we must examine this matter closely, especially as regards priorities for loans. Obviously, the State Bank and the Savings Bank have not sufficient money to grant personal loans of £500 to every applicant that comes along.

Mr. Jenkins—Would it be better to limit the loans to £250?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We shall have to consider the upper limit. If it were higher than £500 the benefits would go to fewer people, and possibly not to those most deserving. I have not had an opportunity to discuss this matter with the chairman or any members of the State Bank Board, but I think that first priority should go to young people getting married and desiring to pur-

chase furniture for their homes. Perhaps the second priority should go to primary producers who desire to purchase equipment for working their properties.

Mr. Quirke—Will personal loans be advanced from Loan money?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The State Bank is prepared to make personal loans as a matter of ordinary banking business, and it will inquire into the means of applicants to see whether they can make repayments. The rate of interest suggested was a flat rate of 5 per cent. There is always an element of risk attached to personal loans, for a man may lose his employment for some reason.

Mr. Quirke—The rate of interest will be about 6 per cent lower than that charged by hire-purchase companies.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The State Bank's terms will undoubtedly be better than hire-purchase terms. The scheme will also enable a person to have a freer selection when making purchases. The honourable member's suggestion has been considered, although no announcement has been made in connection with it; the bank has made a very close investigation over a number of weeks, and is now prepared to go ahead. When a system of priorities is approved by the Government, I would think an early announcement would be made in connection with the matter.

The amount the bank will have available will obviously be limited. At the outset it will not be able to meet all applications, therefore a limit will be set upon the amounts available and on the type of purchase it will encourage. I believe it will encourage loans to young couples to provide furniture, for these people have just started out in life and probably been involved in the purchase of a house. I think it will also encourage loans to primary producers for the purchase of equipment necessary for the effective working of their properties. I feel that those will be the two highest priorities.

Mr. Jenkins—Such as milking machines, or something like that?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I thank honourable members for their suggestions. I assure them that the matter has been considered, and I believe that some material success can be achieved in connection with it.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—'Capital.'

Mr. STOTT—This clause is the main part of the Bill. I was very interested to hear the

remarks of the Treasurer in closing the second reading debate. The provision of personal loans is a departure from the usual banking facilities of the State Bank, and I strongly support that principle. It is an excellent idea for the State Bank to embark upon this new field, for the provision of personal loans to young couples and to primary producers will fill a long felt want. For far too long producers and other people have been hampered by the lack of credit facilities to go ahead in their proper business activities, and I commend the Government and the State Bank for embarking on this field.

I should like the Government and the State Bank to consider the 5 per cent flat rate of interest. The Premier said, in effect, that members would agree that a certain amount of risk to a lending institution was involved in making personal loans, and therefore it was justified in charging a higher interest rate. I disagree with that contention. If we analyse that proposition we find that the man who is a good risk is paying a higher interest rate to cover the risk of the person who cannot pay. That is not proper. I believe that the State Bank should not penalize the man who can pay in order to offset the risk of the man who cannot, and that is what this flat rate of interest of 5 per cent is designed to do. In practice an individual will be granted a personal loan if the bank's officers are satisfied, after the fullest investigation, that he is able to repay; if the bank is not satisfied that a person can repay it will not lend the money. The person who is a good risk has to pay 5 per cent flat interest which will equal just on 10 per cent ordinary simple interest, but the bank will not be taking any risk at all. I am absolutely opposed to this principle of high interest rates which is creeping into legislation and, unfortunately, becoming accepted. It has always been wrong in any community and always will be. I protest against the 5 per cent flat interest rate charged on personal loans.

Mr. Hambour—That is not in the Bill.

Mr. STOTT—But the Treasurer said it was so, and I am replying to his explanation. I am not opposing the legislation. I commend the departure from the usual banking procedure, which has been needed for a long time, but when we embark on a new field of banking we should get our fundamentals correct. Young people need finance for furniture, homes and so on; it is an essential requirement, and we should not sanction this continuing increase in interest rates. We have seen too much of

that under hire-purchase. We should not write the same principles into personal loans and then afterwards say, "Well, Parliament has approved, without any protest at all, of the principle of a flat rate of 5 per cent being charged." I am opposed to that principle, and I hope the State Bank will take notice of my opposition.

Mr. RICHES—We were somewhat surprised, and agreeably so, at the announcement of the Treasurer regarding the decision to grant personal loans, particularly as this matter had been so eloquently advocated in great detail earlier this session by the Leader of the Opposition, and as far as we were able to judge those on the Government benches did not give any encouragement or intimate that they would seriously consider it.

Mr. Hambour—I advocated it all the way.

Mr. RICHES—The Premier in closing the debate on the second reading made the first pronouncement of Government policy. He has given us only sketchy details but in the interests of the public generally there should be a more complete statement at the earliest opportunity. The public have been looking for this type of legislation for some time. We rejoice that the Government has been able to follow the lead given elsewhere and the Bill will confer benefits on many people. I agree that the demand on the bank will be extremely heavy and unless the Government makes more money available than is at present envisaged the bank will be surprised at the number of applications made for assistance.

The Premier said that an order of priority would be determined and that probably No. 1 priority would be young married couples. I hope the bank will go beyond that because many housewives are buying much-needed household equipment that cannot be classed as luxuries and paying very high rates for financial assistance. Over 30 people have come to me much incensed at the activities of some salesmen, and on my advice are contacting the Attorney-General on the matter of misrepresentation. I do not know of one case where a young married couple is concerned; the cases concern people of more advanced years. It was unusual for the Premier to make the announcement in this place and although I am glad he did so I ask that he make a more complete statement so that people will know what to expect.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am surprised at the honourable member's suggestion that this is not the place to make

an announcement or to give information. I think it is the best place to do it. The Government gave the information to honourable members and I thought they would appreciate it. I cannot understand Mr. Riches' attitude. When an announcement is made in this place it is a statement on an official basis and all people of the State are made aware of it. As soon as the priorities are worked out—and it will not take long—the bank will go on with the scheme, which the Government welcomes. The amount of money available will, of course, not meet all the demands. It is essential that the people who most need the benefit should get it. Some young married couples, particularly if they have to find money for a house, are hard pressed to get furniture. I think they should have the No. 1 priority, and members generally will agree. I would not want the money to be spent on gadgets.

Mr. Stott—Television sets.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Unless we have the priorities clearly defined,

as soon as television sets are available there will be applications for money to be spent on them. Farm equipment should have the No. 2 priority, because it is of value to primary production.

Mr. Jennings—No money will be left for that priority.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The No. 1 priority may absorb all the money now available, and perhaps we could suggest to the bank that 10 per cent or 20 per cent of the money be retained for No. 2 priority goods. In the near future a statement will be available for honourable members setting out what the bank can do in this matter. One of the purposes of the Bill is to increase its capital to enable it to carry out these additional functions.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.01 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, November 12, at 2 p.m.