

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, June 9, 1959.

The House met at 11 a.m. pursuant to proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor (Air Vice-Marshal Sir Robert George).

The Clerk (Mr. G. D. Combe) read the proclamation summoning Parliament.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

At 11.4 a.m., in compliance with summons, the House proceeded to the Legislative Council, where a Commission was read appointing the Hon. Sir Mellis Napier (Chief Justice) and the Hon. Charles Lempriere Abbott (a Judge of the Supreme Court) to be Commissioners for the opening of Parliament.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

The House being again in its own Chamber, at 11.12 a.m. His Honor Mr. Justice Abbott attended and produced a Commission from His Excellency the Governor appointing him to be a Commissioner to administer to the House of Assembly the Oath of Allegiance or the Affirmation in lieu thereof required by the Constitution Act. The Commission was read by the Clerk, who then produced writs for the election of thirty-nine members of the House of Assembly.

The Oath of Allegiance required by law was administered to and subscribed by all members except Mr. Dunstan, who was absent.

The Commissioner retired.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I remind honourable members that it will be necessary next to appoint a Speaker and I nominate Mr. Teusner for that position.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I second the nomination.

Mr. TEUSNER (Angas)—In compliance with Standing Orders and in accordance with the best traditions of Parliament, I submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination, Mr. Teusner was declared duly elected.

Mr. Teusner was escorted to the dais by the mover and seconder of his nomination.

THE SPEAKER (Hon. B. H. Teusner)—Before taking my place in the Chair I desire to express my sincere thanks to the mover, the seconder, and all other honourable members for the high honour that has been con-

ferred upon me. I trust that the confidence that members have reposed in me will never prove to have been misplaced. Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable necessity for the smooth functioning of the Parliamentary institution, and I want to make it clear that, without fear or favour, I will at all times endeavour to observe strict impartiality. May I say also that as the constitutional custodian of the rights and privileges of honourable members I shall endeavour to safeguard and protect them to the utmost. The keynote of the actions and deliberations of this Chamber should be the recognition and maintenance of the dignity and prestige of the Chamber, but members must realize that that cannot be achieved by me alone. It can be achieved only with the whole-hearted co-operation of all members. Mindful of the enviable reputation the Parliament of this State has gained for dignity and decorum in its proceedings, I have no doubt that members will at all times strive to maintain the very high standard of the past.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—May I, on behalf of members, convey their congratulations to you, Sir, on your appointment to the high office of Speaker. Those of us who were privileged to serve in the last Parliament have a vivid recollection of the high sense of duty that you attached to the position of Speaker, and the manner in which you carried out your duties was approved by all members. As you have already said, the duties of the Speaker are not only to enable the House to function but to see that all sections can express their views. In any virile community there must be always a wide expression of views and the fact that you have always shown strict impartiality, and have enabled all members to put forward their views, is, I am sure, one of the reasons why your election today was unanimous and so well received by all members. It will be the desire of the Government to always support your rulings and to facilitate your work as Speaker in every possible manner. Members will endeavour to obey the Standing Orders and to enable you to carry out your important functions with dignity and for the success of the community as a whole.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I join with the Premier in his congratulations to you, Sir, on having again been elected to the high and very responsible position which you held with such dignity and impartiality in the last Parliament. During the considerable

time I have been associated with this House we have had many excellent presiding officers, and your efforts have been *par excellence*. Whilst you continue to rule in accordance with Standing Orders the Opposition will have no conflict with your rulings, and I feel confident that you will always so rule. Sometimes I think that some Standing Orders might well be changed, but that is a matter for action at another time. On behalf of the Opposition I congratulate you, Sir.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—I, too, congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment. It is a position which many aspire to but few attain. Your appointment to this high office is a heritage from the last Parliament, the members of which found your rulings always fair and impartial. You have carried on the tradition of former Speakers. This Parliament is little different in representation from the last one and as the people have spoken that way it is fitting that the same Speaker should occupy the Chair. I look forward to the debates in this House with interest for they will take place under a Speaker who is impartial, has a good knowledge of Standing Orders, and conducts proceedings with dignity and decorum. I feel that the Parliament of this State will continue to be renowned not only throughout the Commonwealth but wherever the Parliamentary system of government exists and to be carried on with the same dignity as heretofore.

THE SPEAKER—I gratefully acknowledge the eulogistic references made by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Ridley. May I again assure members that I shall earnestly strive to discharge conscientiously the duties appertaining to my high office. We have several new members in our midst, and I should like them in particular to know that at all times I shall be ready and willing to assist them with any matters of procedure that may trouble their minds, and I am certain that that service will also be forthcoming from the Clerks at the table.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I inform honourable members that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to have the Speaker presented to him at 12.25 p.m.

[Sitting suspended from 11.50 a.m. to 12.25 p.m.]

The SPEAKER—It is now my intention to proceed to Government House and present myself to His Excellency the Governor, and I invite members to accompany me.

At 12.26 p.m., attended by a deputation of members, the Speaker proceeded to Government House.

On the House re-assembling at 12.42 p.m.,

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that, accompanied by a deputation of members, I proceeded to Government House for the purpose of presenting myself to His Excellency the Governor. I informed His Excellency that, in pursuance of the powers conferred on the House by section 34 of the Constitution Act, the House of Assembly had this day proceeded to the election of Speaker and had done me the honour to elect me to that high office. In compliance with the other provisions of the same section, I presented myself to His Excellency as the Speaker and in the name and on behalf of the House laid claims to members' undoubted rights and privileges, and prayed that the most favourable construction might be put on all their proceedings; whereupon His Excellency expressed satisfaction at the choice of a Speaker, and assured me of his confirmation of all constitutional rights and privileges of the House of Assembly.

[Sitting suspended from 12.44 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.]

SUMMONS TO COUNCIL CHAMBER.

A summons was received from His Excellency the Governor desiring the attendance of the House in the Legislative Council Chamber, whither the Speaker and honourable members proceeded.

The House having returned to its own Chamber, the Speaker resumed the Chair at 3.2 p.m., and read prayers.

DEATH OF MR. C. L. DAVIS.

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

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Mr. C. L. Davis, former member for Port Pirie, and places on record its appreciation of his public services; and that, as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased member, the sitting of the House be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Most of the members of this new Parliament were privileged to be members of the last Parliament, of which Mr. Davis was a member. He won a deep place in their affections through his courtesy, his public service to the

State and his attention to matters brought before Parliament. He was extremely popular with all members and an extremely good district member. If he was interested in a matter he fought for it to the utmost of his ability. He won the respect of all members. I am sure I speak for all members in expressing great appreciation of his services and deep regret at his untimely death. Our sympathy goes out to the surviving members of his family. He was a noted citizen of Port Pirie and played an active part in the industrial affairs of that town. For many years he was in charge of the administration of the municipality of Port Pirie. I am sure all members join with me in expressing sympathy to his widow and in moving the suspension of the sitting for a period as a mark of respect to his memory.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I second the motion and endorse the Premier's remarks. Probably I was privileged to know the late Mr. Davis for a longer period than other members. For more than 40 years he and I were mates in the Labor movement and I had the opportunity of observing his work on the industrial field in the early days and in the political and municipal fields in later years. He was a kindly gentleman, with that trace of humour which is such a benign influence in the various councils on which men like Mr. Davis have to sit, and humanitarian principles imbued his actions throughout his life. I feel very deeply the passing of Charlie Davis and I join with the Premier and the House in expressing condolence to his widow, his son and other relatives.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie)—As the new member for Port Pirie I feel that I should say that Mr. Davis, both as member for the district and in his civic position, placed Port Pirie first and foremost when advocating ideals he believed were for its betterment. Port Pirie can ill afford to lose such a sterling citizen. As his successor in this House it is my intention to emulate the qualities he possessed and to give of my best while I occupy this important position. On behalf of the people of Port Pirie, and on my own behalf, I offer my sincere sympathy to his widow, his son and relatives.

The motion was carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 3.15 p.m. till 3.45 p.m.]

NEXT DAY OF SITTING.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, June 10, at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That Mr. Dunnage be Chairman of Committees of the whole House during the present Parliament.

Motion carried.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The SPEAKER—I have to report that, in compliance with the summons from His Excellency the Governor, the House attended in the Legislative Council Chamber where His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which I have obtained a copy, which I now lay upon the table.

Ordered to be printed.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 1).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House of Assembly to make provision by Bill for defraying the salaries and other expenses of the several departments and public services of the Government of South Australia during the year ending June 30, 1960.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained the suspension of Standing Orders 43 and 44, moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—The moving of this motion gives members an opportunity to place before the Government matters of public importance. I refer to Government contracts, particularly for the construction of schools. Before tenders are called for any project the Public Works Committee must inquire into it. Tenders are then called, and as no single contractor has all the necessary labour to do the job, he must have the assistance of subcontractors. I have been informed that it is necessary for the contractor who is selected to submit a list of sub-contractors to the Architect-in-Chief.

Believing that every person is worthy of his hire, I believe that the solution in the building of schools is to use the system of day

labour. If the Architect-in-Chief's Department is not properly organized to deal with these projects the sub-contractors should no longer be sub-contractors, but contractors direct to the department. If they were direct contractors there would be no need for me to say anything about this matter. I have been so perturbed about the position that on April 14 I wrote to the Minister of Works, stating:—

I desire to inform you that I am very concerned with a certain company's financial position in relation to the work they have performed as a sub-contractor to a particular firm of contractors who are contractors to the Architect-in-Chief's Department for a series of contracts entered into. The enclosures indicate that the contractors have allowed their arrears on claims submitted to amount from £1,173 as at 31st August, 1958 to £9,463 as at 1st April, 1959.

Probably this company now owes £15,000 for work performed and not paid for. My letter continues:—

Undoubtedly you will appreciate that it is not possible for this certain company to ascertain from the Architect-in-Chief's Department the amounts paid on work completed by them.

There is no need for me to read further, but there is need to place before the House a letter dated April 20 that I received from the Minister of Works. The Minister referred me to the third paragraph of my letter, and stated:—

It will be appreciated that the department is not entitled to discuss the contractor's business with the sub-contractor. However, with particular reference to your paragraph 3, I can say that, together with other sub-contractors, one sub-contractor has been advised that the department is prepared to disclose at any time the percentage of the sub-contractor's work for which the department has paid the contractor.

That is the overall position—any sub-contractor, on making representations to the Architect-in-Chief's Department, is entitled to be told the percentage of his work for which the department has paid the contractor. The letter continues:—

I think you will appreciate that there is little that the department can do in a dispute as to payments between the contractor and his sub-contractors because it cannot have a full knowledge of all the facts relating to contract arrangements between them and the nature of any possible disagreements between them and of other matters to do with their relationship.

I do not know whether there is a relationship between contractor and sub-contractor that makes it necessary to go to a court for redress. It is not much good the Minister, or any member of the Government, saying that he

is unable to assist. In most cases sub-contractors are specialists in their work, but labour has to be engaged to assist them. There is no guarantee that they will be paid. In the past whenever a contractor has engaged sub-contractors it has been an arrangement of honour, and it has always been recognized that they would be paid. In this case, on the Minister's intimation, the sub-contractor is not recognized. The principle of a man being worthy of his hire is not being observed. Let us examine the position further. Is the Architect-in-Chief reasonable on valuations to both contractor and sub-contractor? In this case the sub-contractor presented a claim for £4,010 to the contractor at the end of February. The Architect-in-Chief paid the contractor £3,552 for the work, and in turn he paid the sub-contractor. In March the same procedure was adopted.

However, at the end of March the Architect-in-Chief said it should be only £2,676, which meant that the sub-contractor's estimates had exceeded the Architect-in-Chief's estimates by £1,784. Further, the sub-contractor had made a total claim of £4,460 to the end of March. The Architect-in-Chief approved a total of £3,562 to the end of February. This had been paid to the sub-contractor through the contractor after certain retention moneys had been held by the Architect-in-Chief. However, at the end of March the Architect-in-Chief's valuation of the work done was £2,676, which meant that they either over-estimated their own valuations of the work or were prepared to see the sub-contractor embarrassed. The department succeeded in reducing its own valuation by £886 a month later, after the sub-contractor had done additional work costing £450. If the Minister requires it, I will tell him the particular job I have in mind. Under the present set-up in the Architect-in-Chief's Department the sub-contractor would have to discuss this matter with the contractor, who, in turn, would require in writing a full list of materials, etc. He must await the pleasure of the contractor in order to interview the Architect-in-Chief. This is Government administration.

Mr. Lawn—Would it not be a good idea to appoint the committee that the member for Light suggested three years ago to inquire into Government administration?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I do not hold the Architect-in-Chief or any of his officers responsible for Government policy. They are not concerned, as indicated in the letter to me from the Minister of Works. Because of this type

of administration, it is becoming the practice to freeze debts created by a contractor and in many instances by sub-contractors. Recently we read press reports about a contractor who had not been in this country very long but had received many Government contracts. Soon after, he went into voluntary liquidation. I could give members chapter and verse about the case I have in mind. An amount of £25,000 could be concerned in it, and if there were an investigation throughout the city that figure could be multiplied many times. It means that genuine contractors will be afraid to handle Government work. Under this Government's bad administration many builders fear that they will not get paid. I realize that some sub-contractors have sound financial resources, particularly those responsible for the prefabrication of the exposed aggregate used in some Government school buildings. I know also that many firms who specialize in floor laying are well off financially, but they cannot carry on forever without being paid. Some merchants who supply plumbing requirements have not been paid either. Those contractors responsible for not paying their debts are not incurring any interest charges, but the merchants and sub-contractors have to pay interest on overdraft accounts because the Government is not supervising contracts properly.

I do not wish to attack any Minister, but I shall now refer to the difficulties confronted by the Minister of Education in facing his responsibilities. He has to see that the children receive a good standard of education. On the advice of his officers he decides where new schools are needed. He then reports to the Government, which refers projects for new schools to the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report. If the committee reports favourably on the construction of a school Cabinet then determines whether to go ahead with the project. The whole work is then placed in the hands of the Minister of Works, who calls tenders and has the necessary contracts drawn up. The Minister of Education has no supervision over the letting of the contracts or the supervision of the work. A few minutes ago I said that a certain contractor received much publicity in the press because he was given the contract to build many Government buildings, particularly schools, but a few weeks later it was reported in the press that he had gone into voluntary liquidation. Many sub-contractors and merchants have to pay interest on overdrafts, and I understand that some employees are not receiving their

weekly wages. In the Minister of Education's own district it was proposed to open a new primary school at Seacliff in January last, but it is still uncompleted. Lack of adequate supervision has retarded the completion of the Salisbury high school and the Unley boys' high school. It seems to me that the Government is doing little to help its Minister of Education in carrying out his responsibilities. It is certainly not helping many merchants and suppliers of building materials as a result of this freezing of debts.

Mr. Quirke—Who freezes them?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—They are frozen under an agreement between the Government and certain merchants. I do not want to incriminate anyone, but I will if I am forced to.

Mr. Shannon—Is there any criminal intent in this matter?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I do not want to mention the names of any people who are not in a position to defend themselves, but I assure the honourable member that I do not suspect any criminal intent. However, I think I have opened this matter sufficiently for the Government to take some notice of my remarks and push ahead with its contracts. Earlier I said that day labour should supersede other building methods so that the principle that every person is worthy of his hire will be observed. If day labour cannot be used work should be carried out under a contract between the Architect-in-Chief's Department and a particular contractor, and I stress that under contracts for laying foundations and the erection of buildings in solid construction only one contractor should be engaged. I should not like to see a repetition of what occurred at the Marion High School, where a contractor had to engage men to reduce the height of the foundations owing to certain mistakes he made.

Because of bad administration many school buildings are not being completed. I believe that the registration of builders would be a major step in getting essential work carried out. We have various types of contractors, one being the home building contractor.

Another type is engaged in the construction of school buildings and other important public buildings. I believe that the Companies Act should be reviewed, giving power to ascertain the financial standing of some building contractors. As the cost of most school buildings exceeds £100,000 I believe that the Government should reduce the retention money at present held, namely, 5 per cent.

I do not desire that procuration orders be issued against contractors and would not suggest it. After each progress payment is received a contractor must supply to the Architect-in-Chief a financial statement showing the work done and the materials supplied by sub-contractors. A further provision is that the Architect-in-Chief pays arrears to sub-contractors when progress payments become due. I am afraid that, if some of the suggestions I have put forward are not immediately adopted, further school building jobs will be held up. That is not a threat, but I know that is the position. Sub-contractors are very important people.

Mr. Bockelberg—What about the chap who drives a lorry and loads bricks? Would he not be important, too?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes. Unless a sub-contractor has fairly good security and knows that he will be paid, a bricklayer or carpenter engaged by him may not be paid his wages. Every person engaged in the trade is worthy of his hire.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I shall refer to Harbours Board administration, which I consider is a matter of urgency. I have no desire to criticize the present board commissioners, but consider there are not sufficient of them. For many years in South Australia there has been only three commissioners controlling the functions of the board, whereas in other States and in certain overseas countries the practice is generally to have at least five commissioners. Our commissioners have done a yeoman job over the years. Sometimes one may go overseas to gain further knowledge, with which practice I agree, or a commissioner may be laid aside with sickness, and under the regulations two commissioners can carry on the important administration of the board. In the last 12 years the Government has appointed men to the board who have not always had the desired knowledge of marine matters. I do not reflect on their integrity or business ideals.

The present board comprises Mr. H. C. Meyer, Mr. Crawford (chairman) and Mr. Verco. Mr. Meyer is an outstanding gentleman who knows Harbors Board administration and has known the ideals of the board for many years, and I consider him the ideal administrator. He has played an important part in the progress of the board. The chairman (Mr. Crawford) has business ability and has done a mighty job. The third commissioner, Mr. Verco, who was appointed last January, is associated with South Australian commerce and no

doubt is a wonderful business man, but from my knowledge I should consider he would be sadly lacking in Harbors Board administration. When I first entered this House in 1946 I asked the then Minister of Works, the Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh, why Mr. C. B. Anderson had been appointed a commissioner. He had just retired as Railways Commissioner. I was told it had always been the Government's policy to appoint men who were considered most suited to fill such positions. Mr. Anderson, Sir Malcolm added, was appointed because of his special ability as an administrator and because of his expert knowledge of the handling of goods and transport, combined with his admirable personal qualities. I subscribe to most of that. However, railway administration has no relationship to Harbors Board administration. We should do everything possible to have experts appointed to this board, as is done in the other States. The Victorian Act provides:—

The Governor in Council may appoint six fit and proper persons to be the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners and may appoint one of such persons to be the chairman of such commissioners and may as any vacancy occurs in the office of chairman or commissioner appoint some fit and proper person to fill such vacancy.

One of such commissioners shall be an owner of ships registered at Melbourne or in some British port and trading at the port of Melbourne.

Therefore, he would be representing the ship owners. The Act further provides:—

One other of such commissioners shall be a person engaged in the business of an exporter by sea from the State of Victoria of grain, wool, butter, fruit or other Victorian produce.

One other of such commissioners shall be a person engaged in the business of importer by sea of goods into the State of Victoria.

One other of such commissioners shall be identified with primary production in Victoria. Another important member of the trust is a person appointed to represent the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia. He has a voice in voting equal with the other five members.

Mr. Quirke—He is the acting chairman.

Mr. TAPPING—Yes. Recently the Public Works Committee members met the Melbourne Harbors Trust and I think they would all agree that the waterside workers' representative is an ideal commissioner. He has held that position for eight years and is well respected by shipowners and all people concerned with harbors matters in Victoria. A fair cross-section of the industry is represented on the Victorian board, with the result that there is unification of purpose.

Mr. O'Halloran—Is that a Government instrumentality?

Mr. TAPPING—Yes, by Act of Parliament.

Mr. O'Halloran—Isn't it an outside trust?

Mr. TAPPING—No, the Governor, in Council, appoints the commissioners. Victoria has the ideal harbors administration. The New South Wales Maritime Service Board comprises five commissioners. If one or two are absent the administration still functions effectively.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Is one of those commissioners a representative of the waterside workers' organization?

Mr. TAPPING—Most probably. Two commissioners at least must be identified with the industry. In Fremantle, which is a much smaller port than Port Adelaide, five commissioners control the harbors administration. According to an American publication *Harbor Light*, five commissioners administer the important port of Long Beach, California. In view of the large annual expenditure and because of the 50-year plan for the development of Port Adelaide I suggest the Government increase the size of the South Australian board. Within the next few weeks Mr. Meyer is going overseas to increase his already vast knowledge of harbors administration, but as he is retiring in March, 1961, the Government should consider finding a suitable replacement for him. In its 1958 report the Harbors Board reported that its expenditure exceeded £3,292,000 and that it had spent £446,846 on acquiring land on LeFevre Peninsula. This amount has been expended during the last six or seven years but the land is lying idle. That is not being progressive and the Government should do something about it.

An added argument for the appointment of two additional commissioners is the fact that our ports are so scattered. The board controls 32 State-owned ports and 47 terminal and fishing jetties extending from Thevenard on the West Coast to Kingston, Robe and Beachport in the South-East and including Port Augusta and Port Pirie in the north. It has a mammoth task to keep abreast of the times. Port Adelaide is gradually being brought up to date but the board's activities would be expedited if a greater cross-section of interest were represented on its administration. I appeal to the Government to give this matter urgent consideration.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I listened attentively to the member for Edwardstown, Mr. Frank Walsh, because he referred to a serious matter. Either the Government is not paying

contractors who in turn are not paying sub-contractors or the Government is paying contractors who are failing to honour their obligations and are not paying sub-contractors. During the last Parliament the member for Light suggested that the Government appoint Parliamentary select committees to ascertain the cause of hundreds of complaints arising outside Parliament concerning the Public Service and its administration generally. He said that if members on this side had enough fortitude—and Mr. Walsh has revealed that—to join with select committees to investigate the work done for the money paid we might get somewhere. If he was sincere he should favour action to investigate the matter raised by Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Jennings—Do you think he will be allowed?

Mr. LAWN—I warned him when he made that statement that he would not be allowed to speak so freely again. New members will learn that as time progresses. I do not think Mr. Hambour would suggest, now that we have a specific complaint, that a select committee investigate it. Members do not want to appoint committees wholesale, but this complaint is worthy of investigation, because it has revealed some maladministration. I believe Parliament would be better satisfied if work were undertaken by Government departments instead of its being farmed out, as is done with the Housing Trust and the Tramway Trust. When work is farmed out in that fashion Parliament has no control over it. I congratulate the member for Edwardstown on having raised this matter. I am sure members of the Government will agree that nothing undermines a Government and creates lack of confidence more than that Government's not being able to honour its obligations. We have been told that Governments have to pay their way and pay back what they have borrowed, even if it means paying back overseas bondholders three times more than the sum borrowed. We were told that we had to create confidence to get jobs. We cannot have these things the member for Edwardstown has mentioned going on, otherwise there would be a lack of confidence and things would snowball. It may be said that nobody wants to accept Government works, but I do not know that that would be so bad, because I believe Government departments should do the jobs themselves.

Ever since the Government decided to charge patients at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, many members of this House, including myself, have

drawn attention to a promise the Premier gave this House which has not been honoured and for which he must accept the responsibility: that pensioners would not be charged at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. When the Premier announced that a charge would be made the Opposition objected and the Premier then promised that pensioners would be exempt, but pensioners are being charged the same as any other person; they receive their daily account for 28s. or 35s., which seem to be the two standard charges. Only by complaining to the Hospitals Department and advising that they are pensioners can they have the accounts adjusted.

Only this year I received a letter from a woman constituent of mine in the City of Adelaide informing me of such a happening. When I called to see her I found that last year she had been in the Royal Adelaide Hospital for about four months and had received an account for 28s. a day. She did not pay the account and apparently she received a notice in February this year saying that if it were not paid by the end of February she would be prosecuted. She paid the account on February 28, and within a day or two she wrote to me, whereupon I advised the Hospitals Department that she was a pensioner. As a result of that intervention this lady received a refund of £13.

I maintain that the Government should not charge pensioners in the first instance. The Government is obviously taking the money if it can do so. If pensioners do not know they can complain to a member of Parliament or that they can go to the department and put their case, and are prepared to pay the fee charged (especially if they receive a threatening letter), the Government is then taking money from pensioners, something the Premier assured this House would not happen.

Mr. Jennings—The greater percentage of pensioners would not have the initiative to query it.

Mr. LAWN—As the member for Enfield has said, only a small proportion of our people realize that there are such avenues for overcoming many of their difficulties. Many people, for instance, do not approach me with their housing problems until they have received an eviction order. They come to me because someone at the last moment has said to them, "Have you seen your member of Parliament?" They have obviously never given it a thought until then. The woman I mentioned earlier contacted me only because she had discussed

the matter at the last moment with her brother who had called to see her; she had shown him the letter she had received from the department, and as a result of her brother's intervention she wrote to me the same evening.

That woman can only get about if she hires a taxi or if some friend calls for her in a motor car to take her out. When I contacted the Hospitals Department on her behalf an officer there suggested that she go and see the department and explain the position. I mentioned her disability to the officer, and he said, "Oh, that is quite all right; just ask her to drop us a line and ask for our inquiry officer to call and see her." I know the department has an inquiry officer, and I know his name. That inquiry officer, like all of us, has his periods of sickness, and he happened to be away for a day or two because of sickness; he probably had many other people to call on when he returned to duty and, because a couple of weeks elapsed, this woman rang the department to find out why the inquiry officer had not called on her.

I do not think there was really any urgency, but she wanted the matter cleared up. When she rang the department she was advised that there was no such inquiry officer, and as a result she engaged a taxi and called at the department. I know that the inquiry officer was away sick at the time, and yet when the lady rang she was advised that no such officer existed and that she had to go to the department. All this happened over an account that should not have been sent in the first place.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—One or two matters mentioned by the member for Edwardstown should, I think, be brought to the attention of Parliament. I had no knowledge that the honourable member was going to raise the matter of Government contracts this afternoon. I had already taken the matter up with the Minister, and if, in fact, the Government's attention had been drawn to some anomalies in tendering and in the Government's work programme I would have thought that I would be provided with a satisfactory answer. These anomalies have crept into the system probably because small people with rather big ideas are undertaking Government contracts in full. It has been the practice of Governments since long before I became a member of this House to call public tenders, and the system has much to commend it. I cannot agree with the member for Edwardstown and the member for Adelaide that it should be abandoned and that the Government should undertake the

work with day labour, but the Government should investigate some anomalies that have crept into the system.

Tenders are let to big contractors who sometimes have insufficient finance to undertake them completely, and they sub-contract some of the work. Subsequently, these contractors tender for other jobs, and it eventually becomes a matter of big finance. I have been told that some contractors are using progress payments made on one contract to satisfy sub-contractors on another project. Like the member for Edwardstown, I am concerned about this because the sub-contractor has no protection whatever.

Let us consider the legal aspect first. The Minister would probably say that the department is not concerned whether or not the contractor is sub-contracting, and that it is between the two to have the matter resolved. That is satisfactory when things go well, but they are not going well now. Too many small people are tendering for Government contracts without having sufficient finance to carry them out; they sub-contract, and later some of them go into voluntary liquidation. When this happens the poor sub-contractor does not get paid and he cannot pay the people supplying him with goods, or his workmen. It has become like a dog chasing its tail.

I have suggested to the Minister of Works an investigation into this matter, and said that when tenders are called for by the department for building a school or hospital, some officer of the department should investigate the circumstances of the prospective contractor to see if he is in a position to carry out his contract successfully. I have also suggested that it be written into tenders that the sub-contractor is to have some protection so that he will benefit from the progress payments made to the contractor for the particular job.

Manufacturers who supply materials to sub-contractors give credit for a month, which is the usual and accepted practice. A sub-contractor goes to a hardware merchant, for example, and says that he has obtained a sub-contract and wants to be supplied with certain materials, he starts the job, engages workmen and then applies to the original contractor for payment. Sometimes he does not get it, the contractor stating that he has not had a draw, and that the sub-contractor must wait another week or fortnight. The manufacturer then claims payment for the goods he has supplied, but cannot get it because the sub-contractor has not been paid.

Mr. Quirke—Do sub-contractors have an agreement with the contractor, or is the work taken on just by word of mouth?

Mr. STOTT—Sometimes they have an agreement, sometimes they have not. Into this matter has crept a loose system which does not give sufficient protection to those concerned, from the sub-contractor right down to the worker. A special clause should be written into specifications that progress payments are to be used only for sub-contract work performed under the contract for which they are made; this would give sub-contractors some protection.

The member for Edwardstown wisely did not mention any names, and I shall not do so either, but it has come to my knowledge that one big contractor is trying to build up a complete monopoly in relation to Government contracts. He has, in effect, frozen payments to some sub-contractors unless they give a guarantee that they will sub-contract to him in the future on other contracts. If we allow that sort of thing to creep in he will have a complete monopoly, and have sub-contractors where he wants them. The Minister should instruct his department to investigate whether what I have said is correct. The contractor I mentioned has frozen some of the payments to the sub-contractors, which of course is entirely wrong.

Another matter to which the Minister's attention should be drawn is that four or five years ago in a contract concerning, I think, the Medical Science School it was written into the original specifications that the sink should be earthenware. Some complaint was made about the sink not being modern and up-to-date, and it was suggested that it be replaced by a stainless steel sink. Eventually approval was given (by whom I know not, but obviously by an officer of some department) for the substitution of the more expensive stainless steel sink, at an extra cost of about £400. The sub-contractor purchased the stainless steel sink, put it in and has not been paid from that day to this—at least, he had not been paid three weeks ago. Consequently, he has been held up, though he has been able to carry this money pending payment. It has gone on for nearly four years. Such things need tightening up.

The tender-contract system has much in its favour because it brings about healthy competition among contractors. If one firm is allowed to get a monopoly then obviously the tender system defeats itself. It was introduced

to protect Government money by healthy competition among contractors keeping prices down and cutting costs to a minimum.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I know that because Parliament has been in recess for some time many matters could be brought up on a motion to go into Committee of Supply, but the time available today is relatively limited. Therefore, I appreciate honourable members' forbearance. Other opportunities for speaking will present themselves in the near future.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has raised the question of the Government protecting sub-contractors, and the member for Ridley (Mr. Stott) has suggested that the Government take special action to protect them. First, let me correct what appears to be a misconception of the problem, which I can state briefly on information supplied to the Minister by the Architect-in-Chief. At the moment the department has working for it some 250 contractors, small or large, with some 1,300 contracts, which involve some 5,000 sub-contracts; so the honourable member for Ridley was not correct when he said that one or two people had, or were getting, a monopoly of Government contracts. Today, when tenders are called for a Government building of some importance the average schedule of contractors tendering is from 15 to 18. The contracts, of course, are let with due regard to the price and general conditions obtaining.

Secondly, the Government, like everyone else, cannot give or insist on preferential payments to one class of creditors in a case of financial stringency or bankruptcy. The Bankruptcy Act provides that every creditor has to receive the same consideration. The Government cannot disregard the Bankruptcy Act and give some creditor preferential treatment over another. On consideration, honourable members may realize that grave difficulties would be involved in trying to do so, with results that honourable members themselves would not approve of. For example, to take a common case suggested by the honourable member for Ridley, suppose we said a sub-contractor should receive a preferential payment. The contractor himself usually does the largest part of the work and he sub-contracts special services at which the sub-contractor is proficient. Are we prepared to say that he should pay the sub-contractor while leaving his own employees, who are working on the job, without payment? If the Government disregarded the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act its position could not be

sustained in any court of law, and it would be involved in a discreditable transaction.

The Government has continually made, and still continues to make, prompt payments to its contractors. It assists contractors to the utmost to carry out jobs successfully. I repeat the figures so that honourable members may appreciate the magnitude of the contract system in operation: out of 250 contractors, involving 1,300 contracts and 5,000 sub-contractors, the position is that two are in liquidation and one is in financial difficulty; and I think the Minister is taking special action with prompt payments to try to keep him on his present contract.

The building industry in Australia has passed through a very difficult transitional period and this difficulty is one that arises out of that fact. Immediately after the war there was a great shortage of contractors offering and for a long time the tender prices for our schools and public buildings were above our estimates. As conditions changed, tendering became competitive and almost invariably for the last two years, tender prices have been considerably below our estimate. The lowest tender is not blindly accepted but full investigation is made to ascertain whether the tenderer can carry out the work satisfactorily and whether previous work performed by him for the department has been satisfactory. We do not know and cannot know, his financial position, and occasionally contractors fail. The Government is not in a position to make preferential payments to sub-contractors.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Did I ask for it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No, but the honourable member asked the Government to act to protect them. How can the Government protect people that it does not know? It cannot always know the sub-contractors when it accepts the original contract.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I could give you chapter and verse where contracts have been accepted and the sub-contractors are named.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In some instances that is so. Many big buildings are being erected in Adelaide at present. Let us consider the Advertiser building, which is, no doubt, being erected by a contractor who has contracted for its complete erection. On completion he will be paid. He has arranged with sub-contractors whose duty it is to ascertain that the sub-contract is financially stable. It is the duty of anyone entering into a deal in any undertaking to see that he does not enter into a commitment with a person who cannot carry it out.

Mr. Frank Walsh—What about the practice in Government departments? You know debts are frozen, but the department is still letting contracts to the same people.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The position is not unusual at present. The biggest contract that ever went wrong with the Government was the contract for the erection of the 1,000 homes. A well established contractor undertook to build those homes at a price but he went bankrupt and ultimately the Government had to take over, through the State Bank, and complete the job. That contractor had done much work for the department.

Mr. Frank Walsh—But not building.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—He had done an immense amount of work. The honourable member knows very well that occasionally a contract will go wrong. I would not have a bar of all Government work being done by day work, if that is what the honourable member wants, because experience in other States has shown that where a Government does all its work by day work, without any check on efficiency and without having some of its work done by contract, it does not gain the advantage of either system. We do a certain amount by day work because it is profitable so to do, but to turn the whole of the work over to day work is a physical impossibility. What sort of staff would we need to undertake 5,000 sub-contracts? What sort of Public Service would we have, and how costly would it be? What would be gained by it?

As far as these cases are concerned, the Government will do its utmost to try to straighten matters out within the terms of the Acts that apply and to help the contractor by seeing that the contract is completed satisfactorily.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Are you prepared to assist the sub-contractor?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We have no contract with the sub-contractor.

Mr. Frank Walsh—You have a contract with the contractor and you already have a list of his sub-contracts.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, but we have no contracts with the sub-contractors.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Are you willing to ask the contractor to submit a financial statement to the Architect-in-Chief after each job?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That is a matter between the contractor and the

sub-contractor, not between the Government and the sub-contractor. If the Government were to make itself responsible for the liabilities of everyone it would get into a hopeless position.

The second matter I desire to speak on is one of considerable importance and relates to our harbours authority. This was raised by the honourable member for Semaphore, who suggested that the harbours authority, which has a board of three, should be extended to a board of five. He claimed that two extra commissioners should be appointed, and to support this he quoted legislation in other States. We have had many requests for the appointment to the Harbors Board of somebody directly associated with shipping.

The Government has considered this question and, although advantages are to be gained from such an appointment, taking everything into consideration, it has not acted upon those suggestions for it feels that the interests of the shipping companies and of the Harbors Board are not always the same. It would be possible for a shipping company and the board to have conflicting interests, and that is the reason why we have not appointed to the board a direct representative of shipping companies. The last appointment was a commerce representative rather than a transport officer, because there had been a continuous request for one to be appointed. An increase in the size of the board is a matter of policy and it will be taken to Cabinet. When a decision has been made the honourable member will be advised. At present I can see both advantages and disadvantages in the suggestion.

Mr. Lawn referred to charges at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and mentioned pensioners particularly, but any person financially embarrassed should be treated the same as pensioners. Frequently the financial position of the person is not known when the charge is fixed. Departmental officers have devised a scheme to give effect to what I have said in this House previously, and it was that the charge would not inflict a hardship. Auditors have commented that some people are escaping the payment of fees when they should not escape. It is not easy to get a foolproof scheme. The Government has no desire to impose hardship in the fees charged people treated at the hospital.

Mr. Lawn—Could not an almoner be appointed to consider the financial position of a person before a charge is made?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That would impose an obligation on us to ascertain

the financial position of every person going to the hospital. It would be easier for the patient to establish that he could not pay than for the almoner to establish that he could. It would be more costly for the almoner to do this work than for the patient to give the information.

Mr. O'Halloran—Could you not arrange for free treatment to be given to pensioners on presentation of their cards and charge others on their merits?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member had listened to Mr. Lawn he would know that the hospital did not know that the person concerned was a pensioner.

Mr. Lawn—Mr. O'Halloran wants the Government to see that the person concerned is a pensioner.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will examine that matter. In these days many people are very little better off financially than pensioners. The Government will not exempt pensioners and at the same time refuse to exempt people who are in a similar financial position.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1960, a further sum of £9,000,000 be granted: provided that no payments for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ended June 30, 1959, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service or by any regulation or by any award, order or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee of Ways and Means and adopted by the House.

Bill introduced by the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is in the usual form adopted for Bills of this nature, and the amount of supply requested is £9,000,000. This is an increase of £2,000,000 on the first supply granted last year, but with increasing costs, £7,000,000 is insufficient to enable the Treasurer to meet all the payments

which come along in the first eight weeks of the financial year. Last year several large payments had to be held up until the passing of Supply Bill No. 2, and it is not desirable that this sort of action should be necessary. It is estimated that the amount of £9,000,000 will be sufficient to carry on the public services of the State until about the end of August. A further Supply Bill will then be presented to Parliament to provide for the public services until the Estimates are dealt with. Clause 3 provides for the payment of any increases in salaries or wages which may be authorized by any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe salaries or wages.

Mr. Quirke—Is the £9,000,000 prescribed by this Bill a record amount?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is for a first Supply Bill. For many years the amount was £5,000,000, and then it became necessary to increase it to £7,000,000. I believe it stood at that figure for five or six years, but last year it was found that £7,000,000 was not sufficient for the first two months of the financial year 1958-59.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—Clause 3 provides for the payment of any increases in salaries or wages which may be authorized by any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe salaries or wages. Last week the Commonwealth Conciliation Commission increased the Federal basic wage by 15s. a week for males and, I think, by 11s. 3d. for females. Under our industrial legislation the living wage in South Australia, as determined by the Industrial Court, is tied to the Federal basic wage on a certificate from the President of the court, and increases granted by the Federal body then automatically apply to workers in South Australia employed under the aegis of the State court. Have the necessary steps been taken, or will they be taken, to see that the increases recently granted to workers under Commonwealth awards will be granted to those employed under State awards in South Australia?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The honourable member's statement that the State living wage was tied to the Commonwealth basic wage is not strictly correct. About 10 years ago legislation was passed enabling a certificate to be issued for the State living wage to be determined on the same basis as the Federal basic wage for Adelaide, and that has been the position ever since. It is sometimes said that the State living wage is tied, but that is not quite

correct, for any union at any time can apply to the court for the determination of a living wage. Cabinet considered and approved this matter on Monday and I believe that this week's *Government Gazette* will contain the necessary order. I understand that there will also be included in the *Gazette* a determination covering a considerable number of public servants and providing for salary increases.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Payments not to exceed last year's Estimates except in certain respects."

Mr. FRED WALSH—The Treasurer said that any union could apply for an increase in the basic wage, but I remind him that any such application must be by the Trades and Labor Council, the Employers Federation or the Chamber of Manufactures. I should like to know whether the order in the *Government Gazette* will provide for the increase in the basic wage to come into force on the first pay period after June 11, the same as the Federal wage increase.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—As far as I know they will operate simultaneously. I will check up on the position and advise the honourable member tomorrow if there is any difference.

Clause 3 passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House of Assembly to make appropriation of the sums set forth in the accompanying Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure by the Government during the year ending June 30, 1959, for the purposes stated herein.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained the suspension of Standing Orders 43 and 44, moved—

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a further supply being granted to Her Majesty.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—To enable the Government to meet payments unforseen at the time the Budget was dealt with in the House last year it is necessary

that the various items set out on the Supplementary Estimates, and totalling £646,715, should be approved by Parliament. I will give members an explanation of the amounts set down in the Estimates.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: £30,750.—This amount is required to provide for payment of increased salaries and allowances to the Police Force which were agreed to by the Government after the Revenue Estimates were dealt with by the House last year.

SHERIFF AND GAOLS AND PRISONS DEPARTMENT: £12.—Parliamentary authority for this payment is necessary as the amount proposed is in the nature of an *ex gratia* payment as compensation to an employee for property destroyed by a prisoner.

CHIEF SECRETARY: £332.—Members will recall that some little time ago an employee of the Railways Department went to the assistance of a police officer who was in difficulties with a man violently resisting arrest. In the course of the struggle the railway employee was injured. During the period of his incapacity the Government paid his wages, reimbursed him the cost of medical expenses and travelling expenses incurred in coming to the city for medical treatment, and in addition made an *ex gratia* pay of £50 in recognition of his having assisted the police.

MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINISTER OF REPARATION: MISCELLANEOUS, £3,800.—This amount is being provided for the purchase of a piece of land at Mount Lofty for the purposes of extending the activities of the Botanic Garden.

MINISTER OF WORKS: ENGINEERING & WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT, £64,700.—Most of this amount will be required to meet the cost of pumping water from the River Murray at Mannum through the pipeline to cope with the requirements of the water distribution in city and metropolitan area. Owing to the very dry period in the autumn and early winter it was necessary to pump more water from the Murray than was anticipated when the Estimates were before the House last year. An amount of £700 is also provided as an *ex gratia* payment to an ex-employee as monetary equivalent of long service leave. I understand that the person concerned did not apply for the leave until he had left the Service and leave cannot be granted to someone not in the service. The position will be rectified by this special vote.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, £383,000.—An amount of £150,000 is required to meet the salaries of schoolteachers whom the department has been able to engage during the year in excess of the established engagements at the time of preparation of the Estimates last year.

An amount of £165,500 is required to meet higher boarding and book allowances approved by the Government for students attending primary, boys and girls technical schools, and high schools. The sum of £48,000 will provide for increased allowances for the same purposes to students at private schools and £5,000 has been added to the amount already provided for scholarships to enable the number of Intermediate bursaries and Intermediate technical scholarships to be doubled and increased boarding allowances to be paid to scholarship holders. An *ex gratia* payment of £750 has been made to a member of a school committee who was injured whilst carrying out voluntary work associated with the committee.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION: MISCELLANEOUS, £58,896.—This amount will be paid to the University of Adelaide as an additional general purposes grant for the year 1958-59. This amount and the other grants provided for during the year will attract the full Commonwealth Universities grant for this year.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FORESTS: PRODUCE DEPARTMENT, £48,825.—Additional amounts are required to meet costs of wages and other expenses incurred at the Port Lincoln freezing works where considerably more sheep and lambs were slaughtered this year than was anticipated at the time of the framing of the Estimates.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FORESTS: MISCELLANEOUS, £56,400.—During the bush fires which were experienced in the South-East and along the south coast of the State early this year Government departments were involved in expenses not associated with their departmental activities, and in addition the Government financed rail freights and wharfage on gifts of fodder and clothing sent to the people who had suffered in the fires. An amount of £6,400 is required to reimburse payments already made in this connection. The Government also decided to contribute £50,000 to the Lord Mayor's Bush Fire Relief Fund and this amount has been paid over from the Treasurer's cash pending Parliamentary authority for payment. The Commonwealth Government has agreed to subsidize the fund to the same extent as the State Government.

Members will see that most of the lines could not have been anticipated when the Estimates were framed. They are not controversial. I move the adoption of the first line.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:—

Elizabeth East and Clapham Primary Schools.

Elizabeth Girls Technical High School and New Port Adelaide Girls Technical High School (final).

Fulham Gardens, Netley, Warradale, Christies Beach, Elizabeth Park and Mitchell Park Primary Schools.

Gilles Plains Boys Technical High School and Gilles Plains Girls Technical High School.

Marion Road Trunk Water Main.

Millicent Water Supply.

Nangwarry Power Station.

New LeFevre Boys Technical High School (final).

New Norwood High School (progress).

New Water Mains (Port Pirie).

Port Lincoln Oil Berth.

Ordered that reports not already printed be printed.

LAND SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT.

The SPEAKER laid on the table a report by the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement, on the acquisition of land in the Hundred of Smith (South-East).

Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL (No. 1).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House of Assembly to make provision by Bill for the appropriation of such amounts of the revenue and other moneys of the State as were required for the following purposes, viz.:—

- (a) The repayment with interest of the sum of £1,550,000 and of any other sums to be borrowed pursuant to the Public Purposes Loan Bill (No. 1), 1959.
- (b) To make payments from the Loan Fund of repaid loan money and surplus revenue for purposes mentioned in the Public Purposes Loan Bill (No. 1), 1959.
- (c) Any other purposes mentioned in the Public Purposes Loan Bill (No. 1), 1959.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to authorize the Treasurer to borrow and expend moneys for public works and purposes and to enact other provisions incidental thereto.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Loan Estimates for 1958-59 provided £1,000,000 for the purpose of making advances to home purchasers through the State Bank pursuant to the provisions of the Advances for Homes Act. This Act was amended in the last session of Parliament to increase the maximum advance permissible under the Act from £2,250 to £3,500 with a 15 per cent deposit, and £3,000 with a 5 per cent deposit. The amendments to the Act were assented to by His Excellency the Governor and came into operation on December 1, 1958.

Since that date 2,180 applications have been lodged with the bank by persons desirous of taking advantage of the more liberal advances provided by Parliament. Prior to the passing of these amendments applications for advances under the Act were received by the bank at an average rate of approximately 26 per week, and over the period December 1, 1958 to date this weekly average has increased to 78. Of the 2,000-odd applications received by the State Bank 1,911 have been approved—1,325 under the Advances for Homes Act, and 586 under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The bank still has just over 700 applications which it is investigating as fast as possible. Loans are only made for the erection or purchase of new houses, no re-financing of homes being undertaken for some time as the funds available are all required to provide for new homes.

From July 1, 1958 to date over £1,500,000 has been advanced by the bank under the Advances for Homes Act. It is estimated that advances made for the year will total at least £1,700,000 against a provision in the Loan Estimates of £1,000,000. It is also estimated that at June 30, 1959, the State Bank will have undertaken commitments on loans approved pursuant to the Advances for Homes Act but

not fully advanced at that date amounting to over £1,300,000 compared with a normal commitment in past years of approximately £300,000 to £400,000. It is therefore desirable that Parliament should appropriate the moneys required to meet these abnormal commitments. The total of £1,550,000 is therefore required to enable the bank—

- (a) to meet advances totalling £700,000 over the Loan Estimates provision; and
- (b) to be provided with funds to meet its above normal end of the year commitments. Provision of this amount will ensure that all funds provided for next year will be available for additional new homes.

Members will see that it is desirable that we clean our sheet before we start the new year, so that all money that may be provided by the Loan Council for housing next year will again be available under the provisions of the Act.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.*]

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I believe that the amendments to the Act which increased the maximum permissible advance have not only materially assisted the building industry, which was slowing down at the end of last year, but have also enabled many people who could not previously finance a home to now obtain the funds required to build or purchase a new home for their families. To provide the funds necessary to enable the Bank to carry on with the advances required until June 30 this Bill empowers the Treasurer to arrange for the borrowing of £1,550,000. This amount will be used in the following ways:—

- (a) £700,000 for advances during the financial year ending on June 30, 1959, will increase the Loan Estimates provision of £1,000,000 to £1,700,000.
- (b) £850,000 will be paid by the Treasurer to the State Bank to be held by the Bank and applied by it in payment of commitments on loans approved pursuant to the Advances for Homes Act but not fully advanced as at June 30, 1959.

During 1958-1959 the Government is finding, for the purpose of making advances to home owners through the State Bank and through building societies, over £4,000,000. These advances are being made under the provisions of the Advances for Homes Act and the Home Builders' Fund provided for under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.

Clause 6 of the Bill gives the Treasurer power to borrow a sum of £90,000 which has been advanced by the Treasurer pursuant to

the Public Finance Act for the purchase of school buses by the Education Department. The authorizing of this amount by Parliament will enable the cash reserves of the Treasurer to be reimbursed the amount already advanced for the purpose indicated. Clause 7 provides the appropriation necessary to make the payments authorized by this Bill. I commend the Bill for consideration by members; I do not think they will find anything controversial in its provisions.

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

QUESTIONS.

UNIFORM GAUGE AGREEMENT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question relates to the proposal to convert the railway line from Cockburn to Port Pirie and to the negotiations that have been proceeding for some time with the Commonwealth to have this work carried out under the Uniform Gauge Agreement of some years ago. I am particularly concerned to know (1) if the scheme has been approved by the Commonwealth and, if so, when work is likely to commence on the first sections of the line; and (2) whether the survey that has been mentioned in an effort to procure easier grades on some sections has been completed, or completed on any sections. In fact, can the Premier give me any information on this important matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—For some years work has been progressing in the South-East under an agreement, entered into with the Commonwealth Government and ratified by this Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament, which dealt with the proposal for the unification of all lines in South Australia except those on Eyre Peninsula. Work in the South-East is virtually completed, and the Government has, therefore, requested the Commonwealth Government to proceed now with the standardization of the Peterborough division.

Under the agreement already ratified by Parliament, we stated that, providing the Commonwealth Government was prepared to sign the project orders for that work, the priority of the lines to be broadened could be as desired by the Commonwealth. Negotiations have taken place in that respect, and also on the standardization of the western side of the broad gauge (from Port Pirie to Adelaide) so that the standard gauge would come right into Adelaide Station.

The Railways Commissioner has prepared estimates of this work. Speaking from memory, I think the total expenditure involved in the work is £27,000,000, which includes rollingstock. We have requested the Commonwealth Government to provide an amount upon the Commonwealth Estimates this year so that the work can continue and the men who are at present engaged in the South-East can be transferred to the northern part of the State. The Government has also been having discussions with Mr. Cahill, the Premier of New South Wales, about the standardization of the railway line from Cockburn into Broken Hill so that a through line to Sydney would be established. As far as negotiations with New South Wales are concerned, I do not anticipate any difficulty in getting the Premier of New South Wales to agree to take complementary action about the Cockburn line.

Some difficulty has arisen over the negotiations with the Commonwealth. In the first place, there has been a tendency on the part of the Commonwealth to desire not to proceed with the work this year because our surveys of certain sections are not yet complete. There has also been a tendency to ask that the line between Port Pirie and Cockburn be treated in isolation from the rest of the Peterborough division. Honourable members will appreciate that that raises an important question for South Australia because we are already plagued with two gauges and, if the Port Pirie-Cockburn line were standardized without the lines abutting it, we should have three gauges instead of two, which would make the operation of the Peterborough division costly and inefficient. That problem is being dealt with at present. Under the agreement entered into with the Commonwealth and ratified by the Commonwealth Parliament, the principle was clearly established that the whole of the South Australian railways lines would be unified, and that we should then have a modern system linked up with both the transcontinental line and the line in New South Wales with no breaks of gauge.

The Leader of the Opposition asked about surveys. It was requested of the Commonwealth Government that the work should commence adjoining the boundary of New South Wales and, for a long stretch there, the new line would be virtually on the site of the present line. There would be no deviations at all. I understand that the Railways Commissioner is examining two deviations in connection with the Port Pirie line in the hope of getting a better prevailing grade. So far as

I know they do not mean the displacement of rail connections with any of the important places at present along the line. I will get from the Railways Commissioner a copy of the proposed deviations so that the honourable member will know what is under consideration at present.

SECOND ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—In the last few months there have appeared in the press on several occasions reports of remarks by persons advocating the establishment of a second University in South Australia. During the Address in Reply debate in 1958 I raised the matter of a second university and respectfully suggested that the Government should consider it. The need for a second university becomes greater every year and if something is not done about it very soon there will be an emergency at the university level of education. Can the Premier say whether the Government has considered the establishment of a second university and, if so, what are the Government's plans?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as we can estimate the number of students likely to be available for university education does not create an immediate need for a second university. Figures examined by the Government show that the accommodation in contemplated buildings will take the existing university along satisfactorily to possibly 1967. The question is important because it is raised in connection with the preparation of a master plan for the city of Adelaide. The Town Planner has referred to it. The Minister of Education is also interested and the University Council is anxious to have a long term policy determined. Under the circumstances a conference will be held shortly of representatives of the University, the Education Department, the School of Mines and the Treasury. The actual date has been fixed but I am unable to tell the honourable member tonight. The conference will consider the best method of providing for University education after about 1965 or 1967. I have inquired about the establishment of second universities in Sydney and in Melbourne. Before another is established here it will be necessary to have a thorough understanding between the two institutions so that they will work in harmony and there will be no conflict of interest. It could easily happen that one university desiring the services of a professor would not look further afield than across the road to the sister university and that would not assist the overall

position. One institution could easily embarrass the other. At the conference I have mentioned there will be four representatives of the University, four of the Education Department, four of the School of Mines and two of the Treasury, and I have no doubt that a solution to the problem will be found. In due course I will advise the honourable member what has transpired.

PRICES OF SMALLGOODS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—My question is related to the increase in the basic wage, as reported in the press last Friday. I understand that on the Friday friz was 1d. a lb. dearer than on the Thursday and that the price of a certain type of frankfurt was increased by 4d. a lb. Can the Premier say whether these increases were in any way associated with the rise in the basic wage, or were they legitimate increases? Could the Prices Commissioner investigate the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no information before me in regard to these commodities because at present they are not controlled. I will ask the Prices Commissioner to investigate the matter and will let the honourable member have a reply in due course.

WILMINGTON RAIL SERVICE.

Mr. HEASLIP—For several years I have spoken about the need for an improved rail service between Adelaide and Wilmington, but nothing has eventuated. A recent press report stated:—

The Minister of Railways (Mr. Jude) said yesterday that Cabinet had approved the purchase of 10 more diesel-electric locomotives from A. E. Goodwin Limited of Sydney at a total cost of £900,000. The 900 h.p. locomotives would probably be used on the lighter country lines, he said, and the first would probably be delivered within six months.

Can the Premier indicate the latest position regarding an improved Wilmington service? For years we have had to put up with one of the worst services in the State.

Mr. Quirke—No.

Mr. HEASLIP—At one time the service between Spalding and Riverton was the worst, but the position has been altered because a road coach has taken the place of the rail service. The Wilmington service is now the worst in the State.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Speaking from memory, the Wilmington line is one of those included in the specific proposal for standardization that I outlined to the Leader of the Opposition. When dealt with,

the service will have modern rolling stock. The 10 locomotives mentioned by the Minister were light diesel-electric locomotives and they were to be used for improving some of the country services not up to standard. I will get a specific report for the honourable member about the Wilmington service and let him have it before the end of the week.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. QUIRKE—The War Service Land Settlement Agreement with the Commonwealth Government will cease to operate at the end of this month, and many eligible men are disappointed at what they consider to be a betrayal by the Commonwealth Government. They have been applicants for settlement for up to 12 years. They have kept their end up by working in the industry, and now find there is no hope of settlement for them. Has the South Australian Government any plans to see that those people do not remain disappointed permanently? Will it take up the gage that has been so ruthlessly thrown away by the Commonwealth Government, and allow them some measure of settlement?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As the honourable member said, the War Service Land Settlement Agreement has been terminated by the Commonwealth Government as regards new projects as from the end of June. We have an undertaking with the Commonwealth that projects already approved will be completed, and settlement will be provided in these cases. At present we are getting a few more single-unit projects, and we are forwarding these to the Commonwealth expeditiously so that they may be considered within the time limits laid down. I assure the honourable member that it has always been the Government's policy (and this has always been followed by the Land Board) to give preference to returned soldiers for land settlement when it can be done fairly. The Government is at present considering additional land that may be suitable for settlement, and it will give all financial assistance possible for further land settlement. I can give the honourable member no further information until the Lands Department and the Land Board have been able to get a clearer picture of how much more land can be made available and developed. District councils will be asked whether they can assist by forwarding certain information that may be required by the Lands Department, and future policy will be discussed again later this year when all necessary information has been obtained.

ILLEGAL USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I understand it is the general practice to prosecute offenders on a charge of illegally using a motor vehicle when they take someone else's car, and I ask why these offenders are not prosecuted for stealing? If the law does not provide for prosecuting these people for stealing, will the Government consider amending it? Is it a fact that the Police Department has asked victims of thefts to pay the cost of bringing offenders back to South Australia from another State for prosecution?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government frequently defrays the cost of bringing offenders back from another State in connection with certain offences. At times we have considered that the cost would not be justified, and we have not brought offenders back, but if the offence is fairly serious the Government pays the cost.

Mr. Hambour—Have any victims been asked to pay the cost?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In some instances they have, such as when it is a question of an offence against a particular person, but each case is dealt with on its merits. It could be extremely costly and burdensome to the Police Department if it had to send escorts all over the country to bring back offenders on cases that did not justify the cost.

Mr. HAMBOUR—With regard to joy riding in motor cars, can the Treasurer say whether the authorities will consider prosecuting for stealing a vehicle instead of for illegal use? If the law does not allow that type of prosecution, will the Government amend the law so that such a prosecution can be launched? Secondly, is it considered right that the victim should be asked to pay the cost of bringing the offender back to this State to be prosecuted for stealing a motor car?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—A complaint of this nature is laid under the Police Offenders Act. I am not a lawyer, but I understand that the difference is that where a person takes a vehicle for permanent use it constitutes a theft, but if he merely borrows the vehicle it is illegal use. Where a person takes a vehicle for joy riding and does not propose to take permanent possession, it would be difficult to obtain a conviction for stealing. Regarding the second matter, each case will be dealt with on its merits. I would not like to undertake that we will, under all circumstances, send police officers anywhere to bring people back in connection with these matters. In some

instances hire-purchase agreements are involved; in some of those cases a sale may have been made foolishly, and I do not think the State should be involved in the very heavy expense of police officers going around trying to pick up culprits who may be in distant parts of the Commonwealth.

NIGHT CLUB CHARGES.

Mr. LAWN—Last night's *News* reported that two or three men were prosecuted in the Police Court for refusing to pay to a night cafe a charge which they claimed was out of all reason, though they were prepared to pay what they considered a reasonable sum.

The SPEAKER—Order! I do not think the honourable member can ask a question on this subject because the case is still *sub judice*.

Mr. Stott—It is not before the court.

The SPEAKER—I was under the impression it was still *sub judice*, but I accept the honourable member's assurance that it has been disposed of.

Mr. LAWN—I understand the case has been dismissed. However, I am not concerned with any question that the Magistrate may determine, but with another matter. These men objected to paying the amount demanded because they felt that if they paid that sum other people would be treated similarly, and overcharged. According to the *News*, during the hearing of the case the Police Magistrate said it appeared that night club cafe prices warranted investigation. Will the Premier submit the particulars of this case to the Prices Commissioner and ask him to investigate the case and the charges made by other night cafes, and see whether any action should be taken?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I saw the report in the *News*. The dispute arose over the payment of a charge of £2 12s. 6d. for meals provided for three clients, and after considerable discussion it was settled by the Magistrate ordering them to pay £2 6s. 6d. He knocked off 6s., which was a penalty charge for Saturday night service. The Government does not intend to take up the Prices Commissioner's time in fixing charges for night clubs, for he has much more important work requiring his attention. If people want to know what the charges are they can ascertain them before they ask for service, and they can then decide whether they want it or not.

TARPEENA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. HARDING—Recently I inspected the electricity main from Mount Gambier to Nangwarry. The work is proceeding to schedule,

and I understand that the main will be ready to carry power by the end of the month. This line does not follow the bitumen road from Mount Gambier to Nangwarry, but by-passes Tarpeena. Will electric power and light be available to Tarpeena, particularly to the hall and school?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will get a report from the Electricity Trust tomorrow and advise the honourable member. I cannot imagine that there would be any purpose in permanently excluding Tarpeena from a supply.

COOBER PEDY INFLUENZA OUTBREAK.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I am not blaming anyone for the delay in advising the Aborigines Protection Board of the outbreak of influenza at Coober Pedy among aborigines, who are peculiarly susceptible to European diseases. In this case they are some distance from adequate medical aid. Will the Minister of Works take steps to ensure that in future any serious illnesses from which they may suffer are immediately advised by wireless through Ceduna, rather than by any other method?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am at a loss to understand the question because actually Coober Pedy is in touch with the Flying Doctor base at Ceduna by wireless. I spoke by telephone from my office through Ceduna to the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board while he and the doctor were at Coober Pedy. That was at 5 p.m., which is the regular scheduled hour for the Flying Doctor network through Ceduna. In addition, although Coober Pedy is not an aboriginal reserve, there are at Coober Pedy at present two nursing sisters maintained by the Aborigines Board to cater for the needs of aborigines who congregate at both the opal settlements. I believe that in this case it was notified on the Friday that there was an outbreak of influenza with some complications.

Mr. Loveday—Was the first notification by wireless?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I do not know. Means are available for radio communication. I am sure that had the people at Coober Pedy felt there was any necessity to do so, they would have used the radio. The doctor at Ceduna was heavily committed in her own district at the time and had a superhuman job to cope with numerous calls. We took prompt action to get supplies to Coober Pedy, receiving the utmost co-operation from the

Long Range people at Woomera, who despatched a truck immediately with oxygen. A truck loaded by the Mines Department left the same night and Dr. Woodruff kindly consented to go to the field with Mr. Bartlett, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board, by chartered plane, the following morning. If there was any delay in reporting the matter, which I cannot imagine, it would have been due to expecting that the outbreak was not serious in the early stages.

WATER SUPPLIES FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. SHANNON—I understand that the Premier has been negotiating with the New South Wales Government for the exchange of water from the River Murray, to which South Australia is entitled, for water from the River Darling in order that a large area of valuable land north of the river running from Morgan to Renmark might be opened up. Can the Premier say how far these negotiations have gone and whether there is any likelihood of a satisfactory solution to South Australia?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—For some years it has been the policy of the New South Wales Government to develop storages on the River Darling to supply to South Australia from that source the New South Wales quota of Murray water. In years to come I am nearly sure that the whole of the water which New South Wales, under the River Murray agreement, must supply to South Australia will come from the Darling. The Darling normally provides about one-third of the total flow of the Murray catchment, but as the water comes down under flood conditions and in abnormally dry periods it has not been possible for New South Wales to use it to supply South Australia's share. Under the circumstances New South Wales has developed a very large storage system in order to supply South Australia with water from that source. There would be advantages to South Australia if it could take its supply direct, as it would come from an elevation 700ft. higher than from the present supply from the Murray. That would enable South Australia to reticulate by gravitation without using expensive pumping plants. A considerable length of canal would be involved in bringing the water to South Australia. Conferences with New South Wales have been entirely satisfactory and the Premier has given very close attention to the proposals. They will go before his Cabinet in the next fortnight and we should then receive definite word whether New South Wales is prepared

to agree or not. I believe there are advantages to New South Wales and its reception of the proposal up to the present leads me to believe that it will accept.

TAILEM BEND-KEITH WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. BYWATERS—Some three years ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister of Works from Cookes Plains asking for a water reticulation scheme for that area. This was subsequently linked up with the scheme to serve districts as far afield as Keith. I understand there have been a number of investigations. The last I heard of the project was that it had been proposed to submit the scheme to the Public Works Standing Committee for report. Can the Minister say how far the proposal has been developed and whether there is any likelihood of its being placed before the Public Works Standing Committee in the near future?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Various smaller schemes adjacent to Tailem Bend have been awaiting further consideration pending a decision on the major scheme, which will serve a big area. Since his election the member for Albert has plagued my life almost hourly with questions on this topic. He has spoken to me about it twice today. The project is very involved, but much investigational work has already been done. The Department of Agriculture has been asked to examine the potential of the area to be served as a guide to the justification for a scheme. There are considerable difficulties because of the contours of the land. Pumping is costly and, as the honourable member knows, the water will be pumped initially from the river but it appears as though more than one stage of pumping will be required to cater for the whole district. Considerably more investigation has to be undertaken before a firm proposition can be submitted for further consideration by the Public Works Committee but that will be done as soon as possible.

PROGRESS AND TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES.

Mr. CLARK—Along with other members I was pleased to hear that progress and travelling allowances would be paid to fourth year students in secondary schools, but my enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when I learned that this allowance was subject to the contingency that children passed their Intermediate at the end of the third year. I do not advocate that all children should obtain allowances but remind the Minister that many children pass six or seven subjects, with several credits, but fail in English and are thus not

eligible for certificates. Will the Minister consider making progress and travelling allowances available to such children?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to consider the matter.

RENTAL HOUSES IN COUNTRY TOWNS.

Mr. HALL—An agricultural implement manufacturing firm in a town in my electorate has an opportunity to expand production, but to do so must engage more skilled employees. These will be forthcoming only if housing is available, but the firm is under the impression that it will be difficult to persuade the Housing Trust to build in that town. Can the Premier say whether it is the Government's policy to aid local industry by building rental homes in country towns?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. I can assure the honourable member that on numerous occasions rental houses have been provided in country towns for that purpose. If he will let me know the number of houses required I will refer the matter to the Housing Trust to see if their construction can be included in next year's allotment of country houses.

ACCIDENTS AT RIVER CROSSINGS.

Mr. STOTT—Several accidents have happened with punts at various crossings on the River Murray. Several months ago an accident occurred at Wellington and it was fortunate that a school bus was not involved. Since then there has been a further disaster at Kingston. The present trend in transport is to big semi-trailers carrying heavy loads and I suggest it is time we reorientated our thinking regarding river crossings. The two major disasters to which I have referred highlight the necessity for such a course of action. Can the Premier indicate whether an inquiry is to be held into the cause of the Kingston disaster and, if so, who will conduct that inquiry, and can he indicate whether the Government, in view of modern transport trends, will consider removing the control of punts from local councils with the object of instituting a means of river crossing consistent with modern ideas?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—A complete inquiry has been ordered into the sinking of the Kingston punt. Some inquiries have been made and it appears that the punt, which is designed to carry a maximum load of 48 tons, was carrying no less than 82 tons on this occasion. It was so overloaded that great difficulty was experienced in getting it to float from the bank and when it reached the opposite

bank it was so deep in the water that it could not be beached and was stranded in the stream. I understand it was then proposed to attempt to drive it ashore by taking a running jump at it, as it were, but in the course of so doing the cable broke and the punt tipped over. It was fortunate that there was not a grave loss of life. There was no real need, and certainly no justification, for those particular vehicles to be on the punt at all because a fully mechanized highway, involving no river crossing, has been constructed north of the river. Mr. Johnston, S.M., will inquire into what steps should be taken to protect Government property from misuse. The matter will be thoroughly investigated and necessary action will be taken. I believe the Government will have the complete support of Parliament in any action that is necessary.

COLLECTING AGENCIES FOR ELECTRICITY TRUST.

Mr. RYAN—Can the Premier say whether the Bank of Adelaide at Port Adelaide has been authorized as the collecting agent of the Electricity Trust of South Australia and, if so, how much is received quarterly from payment of consumer accounts and how much is paid to this branch of the bank for services rendered?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—When the State took over the Adelaide Electric Supply Company that company had an arrangement with the Bank of Adelaide for the collection of accounts at its branches. That procedure has been continued and, in some instances, broadened. Where the Bank of Adelaide has no branch, branches of other banks have been called in to undertake this work. The arrangement is obviously to the advantage of the consumer because it enables him to pay locally; it saves him bringing the money or making arrangements for the transmission of the money to a central office. It is also to the advantage of the trust, because the cost of collection is very much less through the agencies than if it had to establish its own premises for that purpose. It is not the policy of the trust to disclose the amount it pays for this service because in different places and under different circumstances different amounts are being provided. The trust obtains this service competitively; like the State Government, it calls for competitive tenders, and it is not its policy to advertise the prices. I assure the honourable member that I know all the circumstances surrounding the collection of these moneys. The arrangement is to the

advantage of both the consumer and the Electricity Trust, and I personally hope that this type of service to the community will continue.

SALES TAX ON PASSENGER BUSES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Last session I asked the Treasurer whether he would inquire from the Federal Government whether it would be willing to discontinue the practice of charging sales tax on passenger buses that were to be used on passenger services licensed by the Tramways Trust to provide a service to the public in this State. Can the Premier say whether he had made those inquiries?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member asked that question I have completely overlooked it and I apologize to him. I will take that matter up with the Federal Treasurer soon.

TAILEM BEND HOSPITAL.

Mr. NANKIVELL—The Tailem Bend Hospital Board has been allocated £10,000 on this year's Estimates to assist in building a new hospital. Can the Treasurer say whether that sum will still be available in the coming financial year if the money is not paid out before June 30?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The usual procedure is that moneys voted on the Estimates do, in fact, lapse at June 30, but in the case of a hospital such as the Tailem Bend Hospital, if the money has not been used the normal procedure is for the Government, upon the request of the Hospital Board, to reinstate the amount on the succeeding Estimates, and I have not the slightest doubt that such a request will receive attention.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY CHAMBER LIGHTING.

Mr. QUIRKE—After many years of persistent attendance at the wailing wall, I am pleased to see that this Chamber is now well lit. I do not think anybody appreciated the beauties of this Chamber until it was lit as we now see it. A canvass of members shows that most of them find the lighting adequate; there have been one or two dissentient voices, but it may be that those people need new spectacles. Can the Minister of Works say whether the scheme is now complete? Will he convey the thanks that are due to the people who designed the system and so very effectively carried it out?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am very pleased to hear the honourable member's comments on the lighting of the Chamber. This

matter has caused considerable concern to the department and to myself. The scheme has been installed thus far for the purpose of trying it out and ascertaining members' reactions to it. I think that the light intensity of the Chamber now, as measured by the meter used for that purpose, is a little less than the intensity of the previous lighting. I also think, speaking from memory, that the present consumption of electricity with the fluorescent lighting as we have it is about 6 kilowatts, whereas the old system required about 7½ kilowatts, so we are getting a very much better type of lighting with less consumption. I thought that we should sit under these lights for this week to see how members felt about them; then if any further minor alterations were required they could be made at a later date. One or two suggestions have been made. One is that we put lower candle power globes in the old lights and use them also, and another suggestion is that we may be able to fit circular fluorescent fittings into the base of the present chandeliers. I invite members to make any comments they may wish at the end of this week, and we can then make such final adjustments as may be necessary. I think that we can say that Mr. Doig, electrical engineer at the Architect-in-Chief's Department, has done a very good job. The lighting of the ceiling is particularly good, and we can now see what a very fine ceiling it is.

LIBRARY FOR WHYALLA.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Will the Treasurer say whether a decision has been made following representations made by a committee that waited on him recently concerning a subsidy for a free library for Whyalla?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the case to which the honourable member has referred is the proposal for a library in a building occupied by an institute, the Government would be prepared to subsidize under the Libraries Act the cost of that portion of the building used as a library. I think that was the request of the committee.

SHIPPING FACILITIES ON KANGAROO ISLAND.

Mr. STOTT—In this morning's *Advertiser*, under the heading "£200,000 Jetty, Plant for Kangaroo Island" appeared this statement:—

A jetty and a mechanized loading plant costing £200,000, which will enable bulk gypsum to be loaded into deep-sea ships, will be built at American Bay, Kangaroo Island, by the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd.

Some time ago, when the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Company was interested in negotiations of this nature, the Government pointed out that it was impossible for that company to build its own jetties, as jetties and harbours belonged to the Harbours Board and no authority, private company or otherwise, could build a jetty. Why is it now that the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. is allowed to build a jetty on Kangaroo Island, when another company was prevented from doing so some time ago?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There has been no change in policy by the Government. A number of private loading facilities have been established by different firms in South Australia throughout the years. Where an installation is to be used solely for one purpose by one person only, the Government has hesitated to make large sums available because those interested could discontinue shipping from that point. The activity on Kangaroo Island has been developed by the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. It has gone to Ballast Head on Kangaroo Island, which is not a port, and is quite removed from the Harbours Board, and the firm is providing its own facilities for shipping gypsum. Obviously, the Government would hesitate to put £200,000 into an activity that could be discontinued by a change in policy by the company. The Government welcomes this company's proposal to carry out its own work, and I have been told by the member for the district (the Minister of Agriculture) that Kangaroo Island welcomes the activity.

MYPOLONGA WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Minister of Lands anything further to report about the domestic water supply at Mypolonga?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have had two investigations made into two types of reticulation for that area, but both have proved very expensive and not economic. I have now referred the matter to the Engineer-in-Chief for a further estimate to see what can be done.

DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—During the last session of the last Parliament an item was put on the Estimates to provide for the appointment of a Deputy Police Commissioner. From that I took it that the Government intended to appoint an assistant to the Commissioner. Is it the Government's intention to appoint a Deputy Commissioner before June 30 this year?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Chief Secretary, in conjunction with the Police Commissioner, has been investigating this matter, but so far as I know no decision has been reached. I discussed this matter with the Minister last week, but I doubt whether any immediate appointment is to be made. The Government hopes to make an appointment in due course.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether the Deputy Police Commissioner will be appointed from within the ranks of the service, or from outside?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as the Government is concerned, the usual procedure is to appoint a Deputy Commissioner from within the ranks. That would be the desire of the Government in this case.

OVERSEAS VISIT OF VICTORIAN PREMIER.

Mr. JENKINS—During the last week or so considerable publicity has been given to the Victorian Premier's overseas visit. Does the Premier intend to enter into competition with Mr. Bolte by making an overseas visit in order to put the advantages of South Australia before other countries?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have considerable doubts about the value of roving commissioners for attracting industries.

Mr. Lawn—You tried it last year.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If a particular proposal or a number of proposals are specifically being investigated, I believe there is some advantage in such a trip. I know the member for Adelaide is particularly interested in this matter. Only last week I was told by a company in New York that it had decided to come to South Australia, that it had taken up 20 acres of land at Elizabeth, and that it would immediately occupy it to establish premises. In this case, there had been some preliminary discussion and there was a definite mission to be undertaken.

Mr. Lawn—Is it a cigarette factory?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No. The honourable member will see it in due course. In fact, I shall be pleased to take him on an official visit when it is opened. Personal contact is sometimes a very good policy, but I doubt very much whether a general display leads to any successful projects, because a business firm makes its own decision, not on high-powered publicity, but on solid facts. However that may be, we have coming to

South Australia a number of industries that have not occasioned these long and expensive trips abroad to get them.

PARINGA CAUSEWAY.

Mr. KING—Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads obtain a report on whether the Highways Commissioner and the River Murray Waters Commission have decided upon a site for the Paringa Causeway between Renmark and Paringa; and, if so, when the work is likely to be started?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will get a report from my colleague on that matter for the honourable member.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, LOXTON.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Lands tell me how many soldier settlers in the Loxton Soldier Settlement Area have received their valuations? Was it a condition of the valuation that they make a first payment within 30 days of receipt of advice? If so, how many have made a first payment? If there are any who have not made a first payment, what is the reason given?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Thirty-four settlers have received their valuations and in any future valuations they will have 90 days in which to protest, if they wish. None have made any payment at all and those 34 have until June 30 to consider whether or not they will make payments.

DRILLING FOR OIL AT INNAMINCKA.

Mr. STOTT—Recently, the Premier and the Minister of Mines visited Innamincka to see the new oil undertaking by Santos. Last Sunday, the chairman of directors of the company made a significant statement to the effect that Governments (I do not know whether he meant State or Commonwealth Governments) were not making available sufficient grants for the search for oil in Australia, particularly in South Australia. Was there any particular reason for the Premier's visit? Would the Premier consider making any further advances to the company for further exploration in the north-east?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The visit of the Minister of Mines and myself to the area was associated more particularly with transportation matters. In the event of oil being discovered in the north-east portion of the State, it is important that we have means of communications with the area established so

that the economic advantages of that discovery would not be lost through the oil going in some other direction.

On the other hand, I am quite sure that the statement made by Mr. Bonython was not addressed to the State Government. The Commonwealth Government over many years has given financial assistance for mining and oil discovery, and those remarks probably arose from the fact that certain subsidies are offered but are withdrawn if a search is successful. We certainly have no direct financial interest in this investigation except that we would receive royalties were it successful.

CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMITTEE.

Mr. STOTT—The Constitution Revision Committee set up by the Commonwealth Parliament has reported to Parliament. I understand, from press reports and other information, that the Prime Minister was going to discuss this matter (I do not know whether openly or otherwise) with the respective State Premiers to ascertain their reactions to any desirable amendments to the Constitution and to try to get a uniform approach to this question. Has the Premier consulted other Premiers or the Commonwealth Government on that matter? Does he know whether the matter has been dropped by the Commonwealth Cabinet and can he give any information as to what is likely to happen to the report by that committee?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The only discussions in recent years between this State and other States were at the conference held a few weeks ago dealing with the return of the road tax to the States. At that conference a point was raised—I think, by the Premier of Queensland—whether we should be prepared to consider an amendment of the Constitution to enable interstate transport to be taxed by the States. The Prime Minister referred that briefly to the States. The opinions of the States varied. South Australia regards anxiously any provision that would break down section 92 because so much of our commerce today depends upon road transport to take it to its interstate markets. If road transport became a taxing matter for the States, it would be one easy way of preventing our goods from reaching the markets so essential to them. There was no uniformity of opinion: every State had its own view. I think the Prime Minister put it up for discussion mostly out of courtesy to the request of Queensland. Certainly no decision was made.

COURT OF DISPUTED RETURNS.

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

That the House proceed to elect by ballot four persons to be members of the Court of Disputed Returns pursuant to sections 168 and 169 of the Electoral Act, 1929-1955.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, the Hon. B. Pattinson, and Messrs. Dunstan, Loveday, and Millhouse were duly elected.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders—The Speaker, Messrs. King, O'Halloran, and Quirke.

Library—The Speaker, Messrs. Clark, Nankivell, and Ryan.

Printing—Messrs. Bywaters, Hall, Harding, McKee, and Mrs. Steele.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

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

That it be an order of this House that, in view of the creation of the Joint House Committee under the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, a Sessional House Committee be not appointed under Standing Order No. 404.

Motion carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That, pursuant to section 4 of the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, the Speaker and Messrs. Hambour, Lawn, and Frank Walsh be elected members of the Joint House Committee.

Motion carried.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION.

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

That the House request the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment for the present Parliament of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation in accordance with Joint Standing Orders Nos. 19 to 31, and that the representatives of the House on the said Committee be Messrs. Bockelberg, Clark, and Millhouse.

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

That a committee consisting of Messrs. Bockelberg, Hall, and Jenkins, Mrs. Steele, and the mover be appointed to prepare a draft address to His Excellency the Governor in reply to his Speech on opening Parliament, and to report on Wednesday, June 10.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.17 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, June 10, at 2 p.m.