

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, June 10, 1959.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPERANNUATION BENEFITS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say what progress, if any, has been made by the committee which he promised this year would be appointed to investigate conditions under the Public Service Superannuation Act, and particularly whether increases in benefits can be provided?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The committee has been appointed and its terms of reference have been given to it. The Public Service Association has also been notified of the terms of reference and the fact that the committee has been appointed. I am not sure how much evidence it has taken or when its report will be available, but I will make inquiries and advise the Leader as soon as possible. The committee has been working for some time, but I do not know how far it has got with its inquiries because I have not had any interim report from it.

HAZELWOOD PARK RESERVE.

Mrs. STEELE—Residents whose properties adjoin Hazelwood Park Reserve are concerned at the possibility of a large breakdown tank being built within the confines of the reserve. I understand that such a reservoir would be necessary to improve the water pressure to residents at lower levels, but I ask the Minister of Works what the Government's intention is in this matter.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member approached me a week or two ago about this matter following on representations made to her by residents in the area. For the 440 level zone to receive improved supplies of water—and I understand that area extends from Burnside to some distance north, so it is a big area—we must bring water down from the higher levels, but the pressures would be too great to feed it into the lower levels unless we had a breakdown tank at some point, and a suitable locality is being sought for it. The department is very concerned about encroaching on the Hazelwood Park Reserve and will not do so if any alternative is possible. We are looking at one or two alternative sites, but I think there are only two other sites with possibilities. They are being examined, but in the meantime it will also be necessary to

examine the ground formation of the area in the park to ascertain whether the ground is suitable, if it is essential to go there, but I assure the honourable member that we have no desire to build a tank at that point. If any other suitable location can be obtained we shall not build the tank in Hazelwood Park.

MOBILE UNIT FOR BLOOD BANK.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Premier obtain a report on the advisability of providing a mobile unit for the purpose of creating an additional blood bank? I believe that if this were practicable many housewives would be prepared to subscribe to the blood bank.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The blood bank is organized by the Red Cross Society, which gets considerable assistance from the Government. I have heard no report that there are not sufficient blood donors available, nor have I heard any report that the blood bank is not operating satisfactorily under the control of the Red Cross Society. If that is so, obviously there would be no good purpose in disturbing what is an advantageous arrangement for both the State and its citizens. However, I will refer the question to the Minister of Health and if the facts I have given are not correct I will advise the honourable member accordingly. I have seen the work of the blood bank and I believe it is effectively and efficiently carried out, and meeting all the requirements of the community.

RIVER TORRENS BEAUTIFICATION.

Mr. COUMBE—The River Torrens, as it passes through Adelaide and Walkerville, contains many beauty spots including Lake Torrens. The Adelaide City Council is at present preparing a number of small lakes at the lower end of the river, adjacent to the railway bridge it is installing a golf-putting course, and near the Albert Bridge it is spending considerable money in beautifying the northern bank. The Walkerville Council desires to improve the banks in its area, and I ask the Minister of Works whether he will investigate the dumping of rubbish on the banks opposite the Walkerville and Campbelltown Council areas upstream. If he thinks fit, will he take action under the River Torrens Protection Act to avoid the pollution of the river and thus preserve many wonderful beauty spots for the benefit of the public?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—This problem seems to crop up from time to time in spite of our best endeavours to prevent it. We have investigated the possibility of legal proceedings against people who dump rubbish

along the banks, but I am not sure whether any have been instituted. The answer to the honourable member's question is that we will see whether we can take further measures to prevent the dumping of unsightly rubbish along the river banks.

SMOKE AND SOOT FALL-OUT.

Mr. HUTCHENS—An article in the *News* of March 16 stated:—

Housewives of Blight Street, North Croydon, are waging a losing war against soot from a nearby earthenware factory. One housewife, Mrs. D. Whittle, a hayfever sufferer, believes the thick black soot fall-out could cause chest complaints. Another, Mrs. E. Dougherty, whose washing was ruined when the kilns were stoked up this morning, said it was impossible to have a clean wash. Local government bodies appear to have no power to assist sufferers from the effects of soot fall-out. In view of industrial development in South Australia and the fact that committees of inquiry in the United Kingdom and in other States of Australia have established that smoke and soot fall-out is injurious to both physical and mental health, for it fosters disease and can cause death, does the Government propose to introduce legislation in line with the Clean Air Act of Victoria?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government has no intention of introducing such legislation at present. Reports received from health authorities indicate that the atmosphere here is remarkably good. Some local nuisance may be created in isolated instances but I think that can be dealt with by means other than by the general application of a cumbersome Act.

SAFETY HELMETS FOR MOTOR CYCLISTS.

Mr. TAPPING—During the last six weeks the National Safety Council of South Australia has sponsored radio broadcasts through commercial stations advocating the wearing of helmets by motor cyclists because in accidents to motor cyclists the injuries sustained are mainly to the head. Will the Premier refer this matter to the State Traffic Committee for consideration and, if deemed necessary, for recommendation for inclusion in the Road Traffic Act?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I presume the question refers to the compulsory use of helmets. This suggestion has been considered in other States but I cannot remember its having been adopted as a compulsory measure. I will examine the matter.

LOWER MITCHAM BUS SERVICE EXTENSION.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yesterday the Minister of Works tabled the report of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council on the extension of the Lower Mitcham Bus Service. It was a majority report and it did not recommend the extension to Springbank Road as had been sought by the Mitcham Council and other interested persons. I am disappointed with that report and concur in the views of Mr. Keynes in his minority report. This is an advisory body only. Can the Premier indicate whether the Government intends to accept the majority report, or the minority report of Mr. Keynes, or what does it intend to do about the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The report was received only a short time ago and, knowing the honourable member's great interest in the matter it was arranged to table it immediately. It has not yet been considered by Cabinet.

SILTING OF RIVER TORRENS.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I have been approached by representatives of the Fulham Gardens and Lockleys Progress Association concerning the silting up of the River Torrens breakout creek near where the outlet crosses Henley Beach Road at Kidman Bridge. The residents are concerned about the possibility of the river overflowing, particularly after heavy rains in winter, the effect of which would be aggravated by high seas at the outlet. Last year the floodwaters rose to within a few feet of the top of the embankment. Any overflowing would be detrimental to property. There is also a prolific growth of reeds in the river bed. I understand the department is already removing silt from the river near the old Fulham Stud Farm. Will the Minister of Works call for a report in respect of the accumulation of silt in the breakout creek and, if necessary, have it and the reeds removed?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Some few months ago I authorized the expenditure of funds on the work that is being done. I am not as familiar with the river as the honourable member, but I will obtain a report from the Engineer in Chief on this specific question to see whether any action can be taken. The removal of silt is a matter of some concern because I think the Government is committed to a long-standing arrangement, disadvantageous to it, in respect of money provided for that purpose.

METROPOLITAN MILK EQUALIZATION COMMITTEE.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Can the Minister of Agriculture indicate by whom members of the Metropolitan Milk Equalization Committee are appointed; the powers of the committee; whether the Government has a representative on it; the personnel; whether the positions are honorary or, if not, how much members are paid and by whom, and the occupations of the members?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I can make a general statement about the committee without answering every question. It is a voluntary committee comprising three representatives of wholesalers and three of dairymen. The chairman is a dairyman. The Government is not represented on the committee and has no part in it. The committee's purpose is to deal with the financial transactions arising from the supply of whole milk to the metropolitan area. After a basic price is determined an additional amount comes in for whole milk and the committee has to arrange to divide the surplus received for whole milk between the various wholesalers, according to their receipts of milk, and the licensed producers of the whole milk after deducting a levy to run the committee. I do not know what the members are paid. That is not my business. If any other information is desired I think I can get it for the honourable member.

PORT PIRIE HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. McKEE—I understand that a scheme for substantial improvements to the Port Pirie Harbour has been referred to the Public Works Standing Committee for inquiry and report. If that is so, will the question of making Port Pirie a first-class port be considered so that vessels may be loaded fully, thus eliminating the present practice of lightering at the anchorage?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—It is correct that the matter of Port Pirie Harbor improvements is before the Public Works Committee, and the terms of reference are wide covering improvements to the wharves and the channel, and the possible provision of improved facilities for handling bulk cargo, including ores and cereals. I understand that the committee has already visited Port Pirie and taken evidence on at least one occasion. I am not sure what the honourable member means by "first class port," because what are considered first class ports do not always conform to any given set of specifications. I think what he is mainly concerned about is whether or not ships

will be able to get in and out of the harbour with reasonable facility when fully laden. I am not able to quote actual figures of the draughts of vessels and so on, but I think I can assure the honourable member that the proposals into which the committee is inquiring will provide freedom of movement for fully laden vessels that would normally use Port Pirie to get in and out of the river by taking reasonable advantage of normal tides.

The honourable member will appreciate that a vessel needs deeper water to get alongside a wharf than is required in the channel, because it must be against a wharf in all tidal conditions but can move in and out of the channel by taking advantage of the tides. It would be completely uneconomic to dredge the Port Pirie channel to the depth necessary to float fully laden vessels in all conditions of tides, but it will be possible, I think, to provide a depth of water that will, by a reasonable use of tides, enable them to get in and out without difficulty.

Mr. RICHES—The authorities at Port Pirie are most anxious that provision be made in the harbour reconstruction plan for the possible installation of plant for the bulk handling of wheat and meat cargoes, and I think some evidence along these lines was tendered to the Public Works Committee when it last visited Port Pirie. However, reports have indicated that there has been a change of plan since then and the local authorities are anxious that they be consulted, because any harbour reconstruction plan will affect local planning. Therefore, they should be advised of the details of any change of plans and, if necessary, be invited to give evidence on proposed changes.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson—What changes have you in mind?

Mr. RICHES—It has never been stated just what the changes are, but I understand that the Smelting Company has submitted suggestions which would bring about a complete change of plans. One set of plans almost involved the removal of the town hall, and I think another set of plans has been submitted which would obviate any alteration to the town hall and still permit the railway lines to be removed from Ellen Street. No-one in Port Pirie seems to know the details of all these plans, and it would be advantageous to the member for Port Pirie, myself, and the members of the Port Pirie Council to have some idea of what is proposed at Port Pirie so that we can assess the situation and see whether provision is being made for bulk handling and other installations later. There is also a

rumour that the plans do not provide for the safeguarding of existing wharves and that some of the shops in my part of the electorate are in danger. Will authorities in Port Pirie be consulted on any alterations in plans?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—So far as I am aware there has been no change of plans which has been instituted by the Government or any Government instrumentality. If any changes are proposed they may have emanated from industries in Port Pirie or from other interested people in Port Pirie. As I outlined to the member for Port Pirie, the plans submitted to the Public Works Committee provided for the handling of bulk cargoes, both ores and grain, and for improvements to the harbour. The last plan I saw, which I think the Public Works Committee is using for the purpose of its inquiry, is one which involves the re-orientation of the railway system and perhaps taking the rails out of Ellen Street, and I think everyone agrees that that is exceedingly desirable if it is possible.

Mr. Riches—Has that plan been sighted at Port Pirie?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—It is the plan the committee is using in its inquiry and everybody has the right to give evidence before the committee. However, in order to give intelligent evidence a person would need to know what the inquiry was about. So far as I am aware no change in the plan has been proposed and no alteration has been made to the committee's terms of reference other than to add a proposal for the bulk handling of grain.

Mr. Quirke—Evidence has been taken in Port Pirie on two occasions.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I thought evidence had been taken there only once, but I accept the correction. I am sure the committee would be pleased to receive evidence from local people and local industries. No one can control rumours, which will spread. The Public Works Committee is the authoritative source and the matter is now out of the Government's hands. Any interested person may seek information from the chairman of the committee.

SHARK FISHING INDUSTRY.

Mr. JENKINS—My question relates to the regulations providing for a close season for gummy sharks during the month of November over the last two or three years in the eastern States and South Australia. I have heard rumours that the eastern States may abolish or vary regulations and I ask the Minister whether it is so and in what way it will affect the shark fishing industry in this State?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—There will not be any variation of the close season on sharks, either in South Australia or Victoria, but I think the trouble to which the honourable member referred arose because Victoria has a large market for sharks in Melbourne, and during the Victorian close season the Government prohibits the sale of shark in that State. As a result many of our fishermen suffer because shark caught in the last few days of the preceding month cannot be disposed of because of the regulation. As a result of a conference held recently between the South Australian Director of Fisheries and the Tasmanian and Victorian authorities, the Victorian authorities have agreed to modify their conditions to permit the sale in Victoria of shark from South Australia under certain conditions. This will provide for those genuine cases that bear the seal of the South Australian authority. This valuable concession will assist our industry.

METROPOLITAN PETROL STATIONS.

Mr. RYAN—Will the Premier say whether the site limitation agreement relating to the building of service stations in the metropolitan area is a legal agreement or still a gentlemen's agreement? As this agreement expires on June 30, 1959, is it the policy of the Government, irrespective of the category into which the agreement comes, to intervene in this matter and have a legal agreement drawn up, especially in view of the wholesale demolition of housing taking place to enable new service stations to be built?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The agreement was entered into among the petrol companies themselves; it was not an agreement with the Government. It has been renewed probably three or four times by the petrol companies, and the Government has been notified on each occasion. The agreement was not forced on the petrol companies by any action of the Government, but was a logical arrangement between them to limit the number of stations.

Mr. Jennings—Didn't the petrol companies give you a written undertaking that they would not increase the number?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I could show the honourable member a copy of the notification of agreement, and a recent schedule made by an officer of my department shows conclusively that the agreement has been carried out in its strictest sense.

Mr. Lawn—Didn't you tell the House there was an undertaking by the petrol companies to you?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—What I told the House was that I had a letter from the companies setting out that they had reached agreement that they would not increase the number of one-brand petrol stations. However, it was not an agreement with the Government, or an agreement in the sense that the Government forced it on the companies, or an agreement individually signed, but was an agreement between the companies themselves. It provided that it would only remain in operation so long as no other companies came into this State to sell petrol, but an additional company is now coming into this State to sell petrol, and that will involve these companies. The agreement will terminate soon, and the headquarters of the companies are negotiating for a new agreement, but it will again be an agreement between themselves. I have no doubt, however, that in courtesy they will advise the Government of the position.

Mr. RICHES—In reply to a question on petrol stations in 1954 the Premier stated:—

The Government is just as concerned as honourable members and the public about this mad policy of building a large number of petrol stations in excess of public demand and at a very great waste of materials and manpower.

Later the same day he said that the matter had been examined by the large oil companies who realized that their action was bound to involve not only them but other people in a substantial loss and that they would not be allowed to recoup the loss from the general public. The Premier felt then that the situation would correct itself. That was four years ago, but the position has not corrected itself. I understand an application has been made for an increase in the price of petrol occasioned by the policy of building more petrol stations than necessary. Is the Premier still of the opinion he expressed four years ago? Can he indicate whether the Government has received an application for an increase in the price of petrol and, if so, will he stand by his former opinion and ensure that it is not granted?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I read in the press that an application was being made for an increase in the price of petrol, but I understand no application has been received by the Prices Commissioner. He did meet a deputation, but no supporting information was given to him. What I said four years ago was reported accurately and reflects the greatest credit on *Hansard*. I am still of the same opinion. When one-brand petrol stations were first introduced after the war the Prices Ministers of the various States considered the

matter. The oil companies submitted information that such stations would result in economies in distributing petrol because instead of a petrol waggon having to unload at 20 different places it need only do so at one or two places. The Prices Ministers met in Brisbane and decided that if there were any economies they should be available to the people spending the money. It has been the rule since then that money spent by petrol companies on one-brand stations cannot be taken into account in determining the price of petrol to the consumer. If the companies spent £10,000,000 on one-brand stations, before any increase is made in the price of petrol, from the money employed in the industry that £10,000,000 is subtracted and the price is determined without having any regard to that expenditure. Therefore the public is certainly not disadvantageously affected by the cost of one-brand stations. I do not believe consumers should pay for one-brand petrol stations and the decisions of Prices Ministers have been to that effect.

PINNAROO RAIL SERVICE.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Railways whether it is the intention of the Railways Department to replace the Pinnaroo-Adelaide train with one of the new diesel railcars, and if so, when?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will do that.

RIVER MURRAY DROWNING TRAGEDIES.

Mr. BYWATERS—On March 4 I received the following letter from the Murray Bridge Corporation:—

The council has been concerned about the recent drowning tragedies in the River Murray and Lake Alexandrina as a result of the capsize of small unstable flat-bottom dinghies.

The council has referred the matter to the Municipal Association for inclusion on the agenda of the quarterly general meeting to be held on the 11th of March. The association has been asked to consider referring the matter to the Government with the object of having legislation introduced for some control over these craft. A copy of the relevant correspondence is enclosed for your information. The council would ask you to speak on the matter, subject to your return to Parliament, in the event of the matter reaching the Assembly for consideration. Perhaps you may prefer to bring the matter up privately in the interests of your district. I would thank you for any assistance you could give in this matter.

I assure members that I am interested in this matter because of the concern expressed by residents of the River Murray and other areas

where these small boats are used. A number of people have spoken to me on this matter. Will the Premier appoint a Government committee of three or four people representing perhaps the Fisheries Department or the department administered by the Minister of Marine to investigate these drowning tragedies, the reason for them, the precautions necessary such as the use of lifebelts, and bring down recommendations or even suggested legislation to protect people who are ignorant of the danger associated with the use of these boats?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not sure whether the Municipal Association supported a recommendation for control, but I will make a check. From the practical point of view it is a matter of great difficulty. Inquiries made overseas have disclosed that numerous problems are associated with the honourable member's suggestions. For example, what would happen if a boat licensed to carry five persons, which would be a safe number under normal conditions, had eight crowded into it? Usually that is how these drowning tragedies occur. The police cannot watch every boat all the time to see that it carries only the number of persons permitted. It is not easy to provide for all contingencies. Usually checks have shown that many accidents are caused through boats normally safe for certain purposes being used for entirely different purposes. I will verify whether the Municipal Association has forwarded any request in this matter. I may be able to give the honourable member more information later.

COUNTRY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Mr. HARDING—Has the Premier obtained a report on an electricity supply for Tarpeena, and will he get a report on whether the Electricity Trust can supply electricity to the town of Kalangadoo, particularly to the private mill?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The question about Tarpeena was asked only last night, and as an investigation is involved the report has not come to hand. The matter of a supply for Kalangadoo was brought under my notice some months ago and has been discussed with the Electricity Trust. One of the problems was the granting of a franchise to another authority, which precluded the trust from going into the area. It means that negotiations for a satisfactory settlement will be necessary before the trust can legally go into the area, even if it were ready to do so tomorrow, but before it can

physically do so it will be necessary to develop its power lines considerably. I will have the reports available for the honourable member as soon as possible.

OIL-BURNING POWER STATION AT WALLAROO.

Mr. HUGHES—There appeared in the *News* of May 12 an article headed "Seawater Power Scheme in Doubt," and portion of it stated:—

One theory is that if the sea water plan proves either uneconomical or impracticable, the Electricity Trust will look at the possibility of an oil-burning station at Wallaroo. This would be possible if oil could be supplied at reasonable prices from the new Halletts Cove refinery.

Has the Premier any comment to make regarding this proposal?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as I know, the Electricity Trust did not at any time envisage the establishment of a power station at Wallaroo to burn imported oil. Of all the costs we have in connection with power generation from fuel, oil is at present the most costly and would be the least attractive from the point of view of the consumer. If oil is found in Australia it will alter the economics, but that is something only time can resolve. The most attractive method at present is to generate electricity by using Leigh Creek coal, and on that the trust is concentrating its activities. As far as I know, there has been no serious consideration of an oil-burning plant as the next unit in South Australia. When the oil refinery was first mooted it was suggested that it might be possible to have power generated at an oil-fired plant adjacent to the refinery, but on examination that did not prove to be economically warranted, and if it is uneconomic to take oil from an adjacent refinery, obviously we could not economically transport oil 80 miles to another plant.

GOVERNMENT TENDER SYSTEM.

Mr. LAUCKE—Last night doubt was expressed by some members as to the desirability of having a contract tender system for certain public works. The system is basic to obtaining value for money and I refer to the work done by Mr. Leverington, of Greenhill Quarries, in removing tramlines and reconstructing roadways. Will the Minister of Works ascertain the cost of this work as done by the contractor as against the cost of similar work if done departmentally?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will consult my colleague on the matter. I am not sure who are the contracting parties.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—It would be with the Tramways Trust.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—If that is so I have access to the figures and will seek the information.

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION RESULTS.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Education knows that in recent years the results of the Intermediate Examinations have been published rather late, and some complaints were made about this because students had to plan their studies ahead. Will the Minister see whether the results of the Intermediate can be published much earlier than hitherto so that parents and students will be able to plan ahead more easily in the future?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The control of the public examinations is not in the hands of the Education Department, but in the hands of the Public Examinations Board, of which Professor Huxley, of the Adelaide University, is chairman. This matter has been investigated in the last two years, and I will have some discussions with the chairman to see whether the results of the next examinations can be published earlier.

THEVENARD HARBOUR INSTALLATIONS.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—I understand that considerable work will be carried out on the Thevenard jetty in connection with bulk handling. Can the Minister of Works indicate the nature of the work and the approximate time of its completion?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The work being done at Thevenard falls within two categories. The Harbors Board has already commenced work on improving, strengthening and renovating the Thevenard wharf in order that it may be capable of carrying the belt galleries that are required for the handling of bulk cargoes of gypsum and grain. So far as bulk installations are concerned, it will be the responsibility of the Government to provide the belt gallery which is necessary on the wharf itself for loading ships and to take up the bulk cargoes from a point at the shore end and deliver them into ships. The plans and designs for that work have all been prepared and tenders are being sought at present for contracts to carry out the work. I think tenders close in the near future, and the time of completion will depend on the tenders that are received.

NORTH-EASTERN SUBURBS TRANSPORT.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question concerns tremendous dissatisfaction in a section of my electorate about the inadequacy of public transport between the Main North-East Road and Payneham Road. The districts concerned are Walkerville, Vale Park, Klemzig and Windsor Gardens. The most northern of those suburbs are new Housing Trust settlements where the population has increased enormously over the last few years, and there is only the bus service on the Main North-East Road and along Payneham Road, so the whole area in between is not served by any form of transport. Will the Minister of Works take up this matter with the Tramways Trust and get a report for me?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I shall be pleased to do that.

SUBSIDIES TO PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS.

Mr. COUMBE—My question concerns the Municipal Tramways Trust, and is somewhat similar to that asked by the member for Enfield, as the boundaries of our districts adjoin. A number of private bus operators licensed by the Trust are operating in the metropolitan area, some of whom, especially those on cross-country or outer-suburban runs, are finding considerable difficulty in making the routes pay. They are providing a much-needed service which is appreciated by the public and which, if operated by the M.T.T., would involve the trust in considerable losses. Will the Minister of Works investigate the general question of providing subsidies to these private bus operators to enable them to continue this service to the public, especially on approved routes on which the trust is not prepared to provide a service?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—As this matter, I think, involves policy, I will take it to Cabinet for consideration.

SALINITY OF RIVER MURRAY WATER.

Mr. KING—After a high river the salinity of River Murray water rises rapidly, almost dramatically in some circumstances, and this has occasioned much worry and some losses to property holders who use Murray water for irrigation. Can the Minister of Works say what steps have been taken to investigate this matter and whether he thinks a remedy can be found?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I understand that the salinity of the water varies. The

honourable member says it varies "dramatically," and he would know more about this matter than I. This is a problem which has given us general concern for some time. I should like to consult my colleagues and the Engineer-in-Chief to see whether further investigation into this problem is warranted and, if so, along what lines an investigation should proceed. Perhaps we should take samples of river water to an extent greater than we have so far done, but I will discuss the matter with the Engineer-in-Chief and Cabinet to see what form the investigations, if any, should take.

GAWLER ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE.

Mr. CLARK—The Minister of Education will remember that I have been particularly anxious to see work begun on the Gawler Adult Education Centre, and he has shared my interest in this project. Last September a large amount was allotted, at least in the early stages, for this centre, and I was pleased to see that line on the Estimates, but I understand there have been difficulties on the site with regard to the disposal of effluent. Gawler has so far been denied sewerage, and I understand the Architect-in-Chief and the Mines Department have investigated the difficulties at Gawler, but so far nothing has been done to overcome them. The Gawler centre is the biggest adult education centre in the State, but it is most inadequately, uncomfortably and unsuitably housed. Will the Minister of Education obtain a report on the reasons for the continued delay in commencing work on the new buildings?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am ready, willing and anxious to proceed with the work but, as the honourable member mentioned, numerous difficulties have been encountered, and I have to receive advice from Mr. Walker, Superintendent of Technical Schools, in particular. I will have the whole matter investigated again and let the honourable member have a reply as soon as possible.

MARREE WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Last year I asked the Minister of Works a question regarding improving the water supply for Marree. I understand considerable investigations have been made. Can he indicate the present position?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Investigations have been made and I will bring up-to-date information for the honourable member tomorrow.

FUTURE SPORTS GROUNDS.

Mr. LAUCKE—I am anxious that at this stage of the development of the metropolitan area steps should be taken to set aside a number of large areas near the perimeter of the present metropolitan area for development as sports parks similar to the Adelaide parklands or the West Beach reserve. Will the Premier enunciate Government policy in respect of ensuring such areas for this generation and for posterity?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Some years ago legislation was enacted whereby under a joint scheme the Government, through the Education Department, provided half the cost of recreation areas. This legislation has been availed of on a number of occasions and many ovals have been established. The Government has also assisted councils in purchasing areas for recreation purposes. The money available is limited and it would not be possible to enter into grandiose schemes. In instances where the Tourist Bureau has reported that an area is important as a possible tourist attraction the Government has met the entire cost and placed the area under the control of either a local authority or the Tourist Bureau. As a matter of general policy the Government is anxious to help local authorities establish reserves and is prepared to make available 50 per cent of the capital cost provided the valuation is in accordance with the Land Board's recommendation.

SATURDAY CLOSING OF BANKS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Last year the Holidays Act was amended to permit banks to work a five-day week under certain conditions. Is there any difficulty in connection with this legislation, and, if not, when can we expect it to be carried into effect?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Unfortunately, difficulties arose from matters that do not directly involve the State. Honourable members will remember that when the Bill was before us we discussed the position of agencies; they are not bank premises, are not conducted by bank officers, and in many country areas have been opened by the Savings Bank even in private houses for the convenience of customers. Many are located in chemists' shops, and agencies of the Commonwealth Bank are located, I think, in every post office in this State.

The legislation envisaged the closing of bank premises, but did not envisage the closing

of agencies. In ordinary banking a bank customer can draw a cheque if he requires some money on a Saturday, but a Savings Bank depositor who banks at an agency has to go to the bank to get money. That position was satisfactory for South Australia, but some trading banks in other States now operate savings bank accounts and they have been very much opposed—I do not think that word is too strong—to agencies remaining open in South Australia and perhaps setting up a pattern for the rest of Australia. That is the problem we have had to overcome.

Mr. Lawn—Hasn't the Savings Bank got agencies?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, and the Government desires that those agencies remain available for the benefit of their customers. It was made quite clear in the House by the member for Norwood when introducing the Bill that he did not desire to disturb Savings Bank agency business. On behalf of bank officers I have been negotiating with trading banks, and I believe the parties are getting closer together. For example, Dr. Coombe of the Commonwealth Bank assured me in discussions I had with him, which he followed up with a letter, that if the Act came into operation he would not use the fact that his agencies would remain open in South Australia to obtain a competitive advantage over other banks, that he would not open new agencies to attract business, but would only do normal agency business. The Act has already been proclaimed, but is not in operation because the banks have not remained open on Friday afternoons. That assurance has been sent to trading banks, and I am awaiting a reply, which I will put before the House when I obtain it. I have it on good authority that some of the trading banks are anxious to implement the legislation, but one or two involved in Savings Bank business in other States are not.

SEWER VENTS IN NEW ROADS.

Mr. DUNNAGE—This morning I received a complaint that the Engineering and Water Supply Department was digging up Goodwood Road, which the Unley Council, in conjunction with the Highways Department, is renewing from Park Terrace to Cross Road at a cost of many thousands of pounds. I went there and found that the council was working on the new road at the subway, and that in front of the Centennial Hall the Engineering and Water Supply Department was digging up the road. At Park Terrace, where the council has finished

the new road, the department is taking up sewer vents and relaying them. I do not say that this work is not necessary, but the vents are being placed 1 inch above the beautiful new bitumen road that has just been laid. Surely there is something radically wrong about this. Has the Minister of Works ever given instructions that this sort of thing should stop? It is not the first time it has happened; the other day there were complaints about similar happenings in other places.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I shall have to restrain myself or I shall probably say too much on this matter. The matter to which the honourable member referred was reported in the press a week or two ago, but when the facts were sorted out a complete reply was available. The facts disclosed did not reflect any discredit, or any lack of town planning or co-operation between the departments and the local government authorities; they disclosed that what my department did was proper practice, and indeed, the only course it could have adopted in the circumstances. It is ridiculous to say that departments should place sewer vents in position on a roadway before it is made, because the moment a roadway is built around vents which protrude upward above the surface of the road, either the people making the road cannot make it without going around the vents with their rollers, or they go over the top and break them. The logical thing to do is to put them there with the least possible disturbance after the road is made. It is not a major operation that disturbs big lengths or portions of roads, and it is the only way the work can be done.

I welcome the opportunity to straighten this matter out a little, not because it worries me, for Ministers and politicians generally are used to criticism of this sort, but because I want to defend the people in my department. They have a lot of sense in these matters and it is not fair to criticize them when they are not able to reply, so I speak rather strongly. The Engineer-in-Chief and I have had repeated discussions about these problems, and it is his sincere desire and that of his officers to ensure firstly that we do not waste money, and secondly that we do not inconvenience anyone.

I will pay attention to the specific complaint that the vents on the road at the Centennial Hall are being placed 1 in. above the roadway, and have the Engineer-in-Chief or the Engineer for Sewerage comment on it and report to the honourable member. However, I point out that, so far as possible,

complete co-operation exists between Government departments. We have arranged for departments to consult one another on these matters, and endeavour to consult local governing bodies at every turn to see that we do not inconvenience them. I could go on and say that sometimes co-operation is lacking from other people towards the department, but there is no point in developing that story.

PENSIONERS RECREATION HALL.

Mr. McKEE—Following on a recent approach to the Minister of Lands, a block of land at Port Pirie was made available to the Old Age Pensioners League to enable them to erect a recreation hall, and on behalf of the people of Port Pirie I thank the Minister for his efforts. It is our intention to raise the necessary building funds by holding various functions and by public subscription, and on behalf of the people I request the Premier to consider helping these people by a subsidy. Is he prepared to do this?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This is not a new question; the Government is frequently requested to grant subsidies for recreation areas, but it has been obliged on account of financial stringency to accept the position that it cannot subsidize purely local recreational facilities, with one exception—we have undertaken to subsidize the construction of approved swimming pools up to £1,500 in any one year, on a 50-50 basis.

RENTAL OF DWELLINGS.

Mr. LAWN—Under section 5 of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, the Government in December, 1952, and in May, 1953, exempted certain properties from the provisions of that Act. Subclause (a) of the 1952 proclamation refers to "any dwelling house in which Adelaide Workmen's Homes Incorporated is the lessor." I understand that the homes owned by Adelaide Homes Incorporated were originally pegged at £1 a week. Since they have been released from control the rent has gone up to between £2 11s. and £2 15s. a week. Rents of similar houses in the locality have been pegged at £1 a week and allowing for the 40 per cent increase granted under amendments to the Act and increased rates and taxes the rents of these houses are today £2 a week. This means that the tenants of the houses released from control are paying 10s. to 15s. a week more than tenants of similar controlled houses nearby. Can the Premier say why the homes were exempt, and will he ask the rent control section of the Housing

Trust to investigate my query? If my figures are correct, will the Government consider taking further action in the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member talks about a proclamation made some time ago. I think it was made because these people were not a profit-making organization but provided houses for the benefit of the community. I will inquire and get a report in due course.

EDEN HILLS SCHOOL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Some time ago I took up with the Minister of Education the matter of levelling the playing area at the Eden Hills school, and subsequently I had lengthy correspondence with him and the Minister of Works. Can he indicate the present position?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Minister of Works advises me that a contract for the work was let this week.

PLYMPTON HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—During last session I raised the matter of the Education Department's acquiring a portion of the Birkalla Recreation Reserve for the purpose of constructing a high school to serve the Plympton area. At that time the Minister said he favoured the idea and that negotiations were proceeding for the purchase of some of the land. I have since written to him and received a reply saying that negotiations were still proceeding, but that it was not possible at that stage to indicate whether or not they would be successful. I read in the press last week that the department was considering plans for new high schools, and one of them was to be at Plympton. Can the Minister say whether the department has acquired any of the Birkalla Recreation Reserve area for the purpose indicated and, if not, whether the department has another site in mind where a Plympton high school could be erected?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Government is acquiring about 20 acres of the land belonging to the Birkalla Polo Club. It is not possible for me to anticipate the decision of Executive Council, but a Plympton high school was one of the four high schools considered by Cabinet last Monday afternoon.

CAMPBELL PARK SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AREA.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Further to my representations and correspondence in connection with the Campbell Park soldier settlement area, can the Minister of Repatriation say what

stage has been reached in the negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—In either 1953 or 1954 the Campbell Park settlers had a lean year. That was followed by a flood in 1956 and in 1957, because of a low river, some of the settlers had a torrid time. One property was almost completely destroyed, and others were damaged. Recently I had a survey made of the conditions, and some of the land not destroyed, and two other blocks at least, will now be split amongst the settlers who suffered. When that is done I believe all the settlers in the Campbell Park area will have good blocks and without doubt will be able to meet their commitments. The State has sent on the scheme to the Commonwealth and I hope soon to have a reply. When it is received I will advise the honourable member.

STIRLING NORTH TO QUORN ROAD.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Will the Minister of Works ascertain the progress made with the reconstruction and sealing of the two miles of roadway between Stirling North and Quorn, which work was approved and, I understand, commenced some time ago? Will he also ascertain whether a start has been made on the reconstruction of the famous causeway, known as Madman's Bridge, over a creek between Quorn and Port Augusta?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will seek the information.

FAIRVIEW ESTATE.

Mr. HARDING—Can the Minister of Repatriation say whether any of the Fairview Estate will be accepted for war service land settlement? Some of the land has been cleared, burned, ploughed and sown. As the scheme is now nearing completion, does the Government intend to still hold the residential buildings at Lucindale and Penola, as well as the workshops and administration offices?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Twenty-one blocks in the Fairview Estate will be available for application soon. Seven blocks in another estate will also be gazetted as open for application. In the opinion of the State Government some of the blocks measure up to the standard accepted for soldier settlement, but they have not been accepted by the Commonwealth Government, although they are really good blocks. I am having an inventory made of all stock and plant that we think will be surplus and in due course the Commonwealth will decide what is to be done with it.

MURRAY BRIDGE PETROL STATION.

Mr. BYWATERS—I have been approached by several people about the erection of a service station at Murray Bridge following on the demolition of a really good house. Now within a distance of 100yds. there will be three service stations. My main worry is the demolition of the house. I have not been able to confirm a suggestion that there is legislation prohibiting, without Government permission, the demolition of houses for this purpose. Can the Premier say whether the Government intends to bring down legislation to prohibit the demolition of good houses for the purpose of erecting service stations?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The legislation mentioned by the honourable member was included in the Landlord and Tenant Act after the war and it operated for a number of years. There was difficulty in its operation and most members breathed a sigh of relief when it was repealed. The Government does not intend to re-introduce it. When a house is destroyed for this particular purpose its full value, and probably more, is received, and then the vendor can, if he so desires, speedily erect a bigger and better house than the one demolished. It is not a matter of the house being compulsorily acquired, because it is sold under free conditions. In every case I have investigated considerably more has been received for the house than would be obtained if it were sold for another purpose.

BARLEY SHIPPING COSTS.

Mr. STOTT—Will the Minister of Agriculture obtain figures showing the savings made per ship by the Australian Barley Board through the shipment of barley in bulk at Ardrossan as against its shipment in bags? These savings are of great importance to the growers in the locality who are paying for the intransit silo by means of a higher differential.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I will look at the matter and endeavour to get the information.

SPRINGFIELD COAL BASIN.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question relates to the exploratory boring that has been conducted since last year in the Springfield basin near Cradock in the search for coal. Can the Premier say whether this boring has disclosed any worthwhile deposits, is it being continued with that object in view, or, as the result of the data secured, has it been decided that further efforts in the area will be of no value?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This exploratory boring programme was approved by Cabinet and I am not sure that it has been completed. Reports up to the present have not been hopeful. Only once did a bore penetrate a seam of coal that was at all encouraging, and it covered only a limited area. I think that the Director of Mines came to the conclusion that that area would not represent an economic proposition, but I will get a report for the honourable member so that he will have full information.

ROAD PROGRAMME.

Mr. RICHES—The Governor's Speech stated that Parliament would be asked to vote increased sums for road making. I think His Excellency said that the increase would be £2,000,000. During the recent election campaign a statement was published setting out what purported to be a long-range road-making programme, but the northern part of South Australia was left out. Can the Premier say whether any of the additional money for road making will be available for urgent works in the northern part of the State?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not know where the honourable member got the idea that the northern part of the State had been left out, but I assure him that that is not so. The road making programme for the coming year is nearly ready for Cabinet approval, and as soon as it has been accepted by Cabinet I will let the honourable member know the programme for the area in which he is interested. It is an extensive programme covering all parts of the State.

Mr. Quirke—Will you give a general indication of the work to be carried out?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I shall be happy to do that, but members must realize that it is possible to approve a programme and then for some reason a contractor may not proceed very far with his work. Members must understand that it is a programme that has been drawn up, and not a completed job.

NAMING OF TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

Mr. LAUCKE—A number of rural automatic telephone exchanges are being installed in certain small country centres, and I ask the Minister of Lands if he will ensure, as far as possible, that the names given to those exchanges are strictly those of the immediate areas in which they are situated. Residents of Gawler River, a district steeped in the early history of the State and famed throughout the

Commonwealth for stud stock, are hostile because it is proposed to call the exchange there Angle Vale. Similarly, constituents of Mr. Hambour are hostile because the Koonunga exchange may not be named Koonunga because of its similarity to Koolunga.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I think the Surveyor-General is chairman of the Nomenclature Committee and I will refer the honourable member's question to him and bring down a report.

MURRAY BRIDGE ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE.

Mr. BYWATERS—At about the end of last year a full-time principal was appointed to the Murray Bridge Adult Education Centre and, through his efforts, the numbers attending the centre this year increased from 300 to 1,100. He is doing a magnificent job and this centre may become the number one adult education centre in South Australia, but he is handicapped because while he is out organizing there is no-one to answer any queries or give advice. The Adult Education Centre Council at Murray Bridge asked whether the Public Service Commissioner would provide a full-time clerical assistant there, and I understand that other centres already have an assistant, but there has not been any reply to that request yet. Can the Minister of Education say whether a full-time clerical assistant will be made available in order to allow the principal to go out and do more organizing so that he can improve on the excellent results he has already achieved?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—An application for a full-time clerk for the Murray Bridge Adult Education Centre was not recommended by the Public Service Board on the ground that the present volume of work did not justify such an appointment. However, the Public Service Commissioner has assured me that the whole question of clerical assistance in schools will be examined by the special committee at present investigating the organization and methods of the Education Department.

TAILEM BEND HOSPITAL.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Yesterday I asked a question regarding the Tailem Bend Hospital, which has been allocated £10,000 on this year's Estimates to assist in building a new hospital, but the money has not yet been paid out. The plans were approved and it was agreed to subsidize building on a one pound for one pound basis, and as it is

Government policy to subsidize capital improvements of this nature can the Premier say whether the subsidy can be granted on the new basis of two pounds for one pound instead of one pound for one pound?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Minister of Health has advised me that a subsidy of two pounds for one pound will apply to the work at Tailem Bend Hospital.

WILLSDEN SCHOOL.

Mr. RICHES—Four weeks ago the Director of Education visited Port Augusta, and in particular the new school at Willsdén, where he was asked if arrangements could be made for the erection of two portable school rooms in order to meet the emergency which has arisen in the matter of accommodation for children and which will be accentuated by the influx in July. Will the Minister of Education obtain from the Director a report on the result of his inquiries?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Director discussed with me his visit to Port Augusta and adjacent towns, and I understood from him that he was taking action immediately in relation to the two rooms, but I will speak to him again tomorrow morning and let the honourable member know the present position tomorrow afternoon.

MYPOLONGA PLANTINGS.

Mr. BYWATERS—Last year I introduced a Mr. Prosser, of Mypolonga, to the Minister of Lands as he was anxious about extra plantings in that area, and I understand that the Mypolonga Advisory Board has asked for extra plantings, but that would depend on stepping up the water supply. Has the Minister anything further to report on whether the department has considered Mr. Prosser's request?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will get a report for the honourable member tomorrow.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered, the House meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week, at 2 o'clock.

Motion carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved—

That during the present session, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and after the 6 o'clock adjourn-

ment on Wednesdays, Government business take precedence over other business, except questions.

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech:—

May it please Your Excellency—

1. We, the members of the House of Assembly, express our thanks for the Speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from June 9. Page 22.)

Grand total, £646,715.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I will not discuss the various items at length because the Opposition agrees that most of them are rendered necessary by circumstances which could not be foreseen when the Estimates were submitted last year. However, I am interested in the increased expenditure to be allowed for the Education Department.

Mr. Jennings—You may have had something to do with that.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Quite possibly. I would have liked the Treasurer to give more explanation of the expenditure on school books for various categories of students in secondary schools. This provision is included with expenditure relating to maintenance, cleaning, reimbursement of travelling expenses, etc., and it is not possible to ascertain the actual cost of providing free books for certain children. There is an historical background to this provision. On behalf of the Opposition I raised the question of providing free books to all children attending all schools before the commencement of the school year in 1958. I suggested it was a long overdue reform which should be adopted by the Government, but it fell on deaf ears and nothing was done. Early in February this year I repeated the suggestion with much emphasis and was supported by members of my Party. Nothing happened for a day or two, but then the Government announced that further provision would be made for free

school books after the election. I remind members that in the political climate there is much difference between a year before the election and a month after the election. The Premier's policy speech provided that the totally inadequate allowance of £4 a year for the first three years to certain secondary school children was to be extended to provide an allowance of £8 a year for the first three years, £9 for the fourth year and £10 for the fifth year, but that it was to apply only to secondary school students.

Mr. John Clark—Were any strings announced?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—No qualifications were mentioned and I think that those who might have been influenced to vote for L.C.L. candidates at the elections firmly believed that no strings would be attached to the allowance and that secondary school children would receive the concession during the five-year period if they remained at school. However, many conditions have been attached to the grant, and a number of worthy students are being deprived of the benefit. The Government should remove those conditions at once.

Mr. Hambour—What are they?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—There are certain conditions relating to the subjects that must be passed. If the honourable member requires further information the member for Gawler, Mr. Clark, will supply it. I have refrained from going into detail because Mr. Clark is more conversant with these matters and will give the Committee the complete picture. The Opposition still believes that free school books should be granted to all children attending all schools. We cannot object to this grant because it extends the principle, but we can justifiably ask the Government to make adequate provision in the Estimates for the extension of this privilege to all school children. I know that secondary education is important to our future citizens and that the time has passed when it was possible for young people to make their way in the world without the right education and we believe that the greatest possible facilities should be given to all children to participate in the benefits of education.

Mr. Quirke—Primary education?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am coming to that point; I thank the honourable member for his reminder. Primary education is compulsory, and it is essential to secondary education. In South Australia there are many large families, thank goodness! We want to see more of them, because we believe this country should be populated, and that the opportunity exists for it to carry a much larger population than

it is now carrying. The migrant who is brought by the stork and reared in the cradle under Australian conditions is the best type of migrant and is therefore entitled to the best possible conditions. However, in many homes where children attend primary schools the burden of cost is considerable. Although this is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough, and during the first session of this Parliament and in the Estimates for the next financial year we should provide for free books to be granted to all children attending all schools in this State. With these remarks, I am willing to allow the Supplementary Estimates to be carried.

Mr. CLARK (Gawler)—I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has opened this most important subject. I stand for completely free education, and so does the Party to which I have the honour to belong. This is nothing new; it has always been our policy that every boy or girl attending school, from kindergarten to the university, should have free education, and the time will come when this policy will operate. However, I am afraid that the present Government will never get to that stage.

Before the last election the Labor Party went to a good deal of trouble to state definitely its policy in relation to free education. We then said we believed it was an absolute necessity that all children in all schools should have free education and that no child in this State should be denied the fullest possible education, by which I mean education of their parents' choice. It is all very well to say that nowadays very few parents cannot afford to keep their children at school. There may be some basis for saying that, but my thoughts go back to a time not long ago when many parents had difficulty in keeping their children at school even during their primary school education. Although none of us desires that type of thing ever to occur again in this State, those of us who lived through smaller depressions and one big depression know it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that such things could happen again.

We announced deliberately and thoroughly before the last State election that not only would we provide entirely free education but that we would be willing to assist parents to continue with their children's education by making payments retrospective to January 1 last. We would have made it retrospective for a longer period, but we realized finances would not have permitted that.

Mr. Hambour—What children are you speaking of?

Mr. CLARK—All children being educated, from the kindergarten to the university. This policy has been in our platform for years, and when an election came about we naturally took the opportunity to educate our electors on our policy, and to get them to vote for a policy we thought to be right. When we announced this policy we believed that shortly afterwards we would have from the Treasurer one of his customary broadsides explaining how it was impossible for us to carry it out. Let me draw the attention of the House to the fact that we never had that broadside, obviously because it was not possible to deliver the broadside. Indeed, we would not have been bold enough to make the announcement as prominently as we did if we had not believed it was possible. However, we got something from the Government, and we got it very soon after our announcement. When making his policy speech the Treasurer made an announcement regarding increases in book allowances. I do not think I could be accused of being unkind if I suggested that this announcement was made as a counter to our proposals, which everyone was talking about at the time.

Unfortunately, subsequent events proved that the counter offer had much success. Let me remind members what it was. I hesitate to call it a bribe, although I have heard some suggest it was in the nature of a bribe. The offer made was that progress allowances would be increased in all years, and indeed, it would be given for some years where it had not been given before. In the first, second and third years at high school, all children were to be allowed an increased progress allowance of £8. A new provision was that in the fourth year there was to be a progress allowance of £9, and in the fifth year of £10. That looks a reasonably attractive offer, and to be honest, when I saw it, I thought that although it was a long way from free education, many thousands of people would benefit.

No matter how we who have been in the Opposition for some time dislike taking a little piece of a loaf when we would like the whole loaf, we have become used to being forced reluctantly to accept the piece. Along with many other people I thought the new allowance would be a big help to parents. In other words, it looked a fairly good or reasonable counter offer to our offer, and many people accepted it as such, but let us examine what happened. The Leader said he believed the Government had not fulfilled its promises. I

go further: I believe the Government has dishonoured its promises in this regard. We have been told that for the first, second and third years the progress allowance would be £8. Last night, by way of question to the Minister of Education, I referred to the allowance of £9 to fourth year students. I had heard it rumoured freely among educationists that boys and girls who were not successful in passing the Intermediate Certificate and who were going on to fourth year studies were not receiving the increase to £9. I asked the Minister if he would consider making this payment to children who had passed in a reasonable number of subjects but were unsuccessful in passing English, which is a compulsory subject, and the Minister was good enough to inform me that he would inquire into the matter. I have no doubt that he will, but unfortunately I do not think the inquiry will come to much because probably it is a matter of policy and he will have grave difficulty in having the position altered.

Let me state what is happening. I have heard rumours in educational circles about what is going on, but I thought it would be wise to check before speaking today. I contacted two men who teach at schools outside my district, and discovered that not only is the increased allowance not being paid for fourth year students after they have failed the Intermediate, but that they are not being paid any progress allowance at all.

Mr. Hambour—But they have their books from the previous year.

Mr. CLARK—Very many of those children, particularly the ones in whom I am more vitally interested, have passed in a number of subjects in the Intermediate examination but have failed in English, but they have been put into Leaving classes by their head teachers because, apart from the one subject, they are obviously too good to allow to waste their time in the Intermediate classes. The headmasters are hopeful that at the end of the year they will be able to sit for Leaving English as well as the other subjects.

A friend from a high school informed me that he had had this confirmed only this week, when he submitted an application for the progress allowance for children he thought would be doing fourth year work, although they had just failed in the Intermediate examination. One example mentioned to me was of a boy who has passed in six subjects, in two of which he obtained credits, but unfortunately failed in English. I can remember many cases in the last few years, and honourable members

may remember others. One was of a girl at the Gawler High School who won the Tennyson medal for English at the Intermediate examination, but I think she passed in only three subjects. The opposite could happen. I know a number of students who obtained credits in mathematics and other subjects but were not good at English. I also know of teachers who have risen to prominent positions in the Education Department but who had a number of tries before passing in English. That does not indicate that such a person is stupid. It rather suggests that he may be good at maths and other subjects but has some difficulty with English. The present practice denies boys and girls who, because of illness or some other reason, have been absent from school for a period the opportunity to get the Intermediate Certificate. I am not questioning the position of the fifth-year student, but as the practice is continuing for Intermediate students I take it that fourth-year students who do not pass the Leaving examination will not receive the £10 allowance for the fifth year. They would not be so great in number as the students who wish to continue from the Intermediate to the Leaving stage. When it was announced that the progress allowance for first, second and third-year students would be £8, for the fourth year £9, and for the fifth £10, most people thought it would apply to all students, but that is not the case. I do not think it is a special departmental interpretation of the regulation; obviously there is an instruction on what should be done. The promise has been dishonoured. It means that in the eyes of the Government, —and the policy is being carried out by the department— if a student does not pass the Intermediate within three years he is useless.

Mr. Loveday—It makes a fetish of the examination.

Mr. CLARK—Yes. It is unfair to the child who may be unfortunate in failing in the examination.

Mr. Shannon—What would you put in place of the examination?

Mr. CLARK—This is not the time or place to discuss that but in any case the question the honourable member asks has puzzled much abler brains than mine. We were told that these allowances would be paid: no member would dare refute that. It was stated about February of this year in the Premier's policy speech and the announcement was elaborated by others. The Minister of Education had something to say about it and I am sure it was included in electoral advertisements. I do not say that every child who fails to pass

the Intermediate is a tip-top student who would have passed if he had had better luck or had been helped a little more. Some children would miss it after 50 years of schooling. The progress allowances were offered with no strings attached but they are not being paid on that basis. I was pleased to hear Mr. Quirke refer to primary schools where attendance is compulsory. Some members might think I am favouring secondary schools but that is not so. There is an urgent need for, and an obligation on the Government to provide, free school books for primary school children. Attendance at schools should be compulsory up to 15 years of age. I understand the necessary legislation has been passed but not proclaimed. I urge the Government to honour its promise and make the allowances to first, second, third, fourth and fifth year students.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Gawler. As long as I can remember Labor Party policy has advocated the provision of free school books. In the past year or so the Government was asked to increase the book allowance, and about 12 months ago it was increased to £4 10s. for first-year technical school students. As the result of the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition just prior to the last State election the Government panicked and made the promise that has been mentioned this afternoon. At the last election the people showed their displeasure with the present Government. If my Party occupied the Treasury Benches this additional sum of £48,000 would be much greater. Prior to the last alteration the Government paid about one-third of the cost of the books. If the present total amount were increased by half it would about cover the total cost of the books supplied. Therefore, if they went back to the amount they were paying at the time of the election and increased it by 200 per cent, that would cover the further cost needed to provide for the children in these schools. It does not include tuition up to University stage. It would not be such a great amount of money. I should like to see a more positive attitude adopted against the Government on these Supplementary Estimates. I endorse the remarks of the two previous speakers and hope, still optimistically though with some doubt, that the Government will increase this amount in the next financial year.

First line—CHIEF SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HEALTH: Police Department—passed.

Sheriff and Goals and Prisons Department, £12; Miscellaneous, £332—passed.

MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINISTER OF
REPATRIATION.

Miscellaneous, £3,800—passed.

MINISTER OF WORKS.

Engineering and Water Supply Department,
£64,700—passed.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £383,000.

Mr. JENNINGS—The Treasurer was asked if information could be got about the cost of providing, since the beginning of the school year, increased allowances for books.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I think I have the information here.

Mr. JENNINGS—I am glad to hear that. The question was raised principally because of the bad feeling existing on this side of the House about the Treasurer coming along with these promises prior to the election and then obviously not honouring them, as has been explained to the Committee this afternoon by the member for Gawler and also in the introductory remarks by the Leader himself. We want to make our position clear. It is that, first of all, we believe we are entitled to insist on the promises, made by the Government prior to the election, being honoured. Secondly, even if they are, we are still not satisfied that our children and their parents are getting a fair go with an allocation of just so many pounds a year towards books, when we believe it is the right of all children to have free books no matter what school they attend or what stage their education has reached.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I regret I have not the precise amount involved in the additions for books, for which the honourable member has just asked, but I can get it for him by tomorrow. It is a substantial amount, for two reasons. It not only increases the amount that is paid in respect of books; it also increases the number of people receiving the books. An erroneous idea is prevalent that the number of persons receiving assistance with regard to books will decrease, but that is not so.

After the election, when the matter had been examined carefully by the Education Department, it was found that the Education Department's recommendations to the Government contained two mistakes. The first was in connection with the amount of money to be paid, which was, speaking from memory, set out as £8 a year for the first three years of secondary education, £9 for the fourth year and £10 for

the fifth. It was in respect of the first two years only of the period that the Education Department found, when it checked the actual requirements, that it had over-estimated the amount required, that the amount more than covered the cost of books required during those years. The position is not as stated by the honourable member. The Government has in no way desired not to carry out fully its obligations to the children of this State. The mistake made by the Education Department has been accepted by the Government notwithstanding the fact that it goes slightly further than the Government's pronouncement.

Mr. O'Halloran—If the books are not provided, surely they are not paid for?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The amount has always been a set amount for each pupil. We do not buy specific books, but credit to each pupil a certain amount for the purchase of books. That method has always been used, and was used in this instance. The Leader of the Opposition may say that, if there are a number of children in a family and they can by taking care of their books pass them on from one to another, they can get some slight advantage out of this; but I am advised that this is the only administratively fair way of doing this. I regret that I have not the amount here; I believe it is about £62,000.

Mr. HUTCHENS—With reference to the item "Ex-gratia payment to injured member of school committee, £750," I feel that this is an opportune time for me, keenly interested as I am in school councils and committees, to express appreciation. Apart from the money raised by the school committees and councils, a great deal is saved by persons coming along in the name of the council and rendering voluntary service at risk to themselves. It is not possible to guarantee them any compensation. On behalf of those concerned, I express appreciation for the payment.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £58,896—passed.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF
FORESTS.

Produce Department, £48,825; Miscellaneous,
£56,400—passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1).

The Supplementary Estimates were adopted by the House and an Appropriation Bill for £646,715 was founded in Committee of Ways and Means, introduced by the Honourable Sir Thomas Playford and read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is based upon the Supplementary Estimates which have been dealt with by the House. Clause 2 authorises the issue and application of a further £646,715 from the general revenue to meet the expenses set out in the Supplementary Estimates. Clause 3 appropriates that sum and sets out the amount to be provided under each governmental activity. Clause 4 provides that the Treasurer shall have available to spend only such amounts as are authorised by a warrant from His Excellency the Governor, and that the receipts of the payees shall be accepted as evidence that the payments have been duly made. Clause 5 gives power to issue money other than revenue or money received from the Commonwealth Government out of Loan funds or other public funds to make good any deficiency in the Revenue Account brought about by the payments authorized by this Bill, which is in the usual terms of an Appropriation Bill.

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

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of sessional committees.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 1).

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL (No. 1).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from June 9. Page 24.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill is the result of an amendment that was made to the Advances for Homes Act last year to liberalize the conditions under which advances may be made to persons desiring to purchase their own homes. On that occasion the Opposition welcomed it, as it always does, knowing it made it easier for persons to own their own homes, and supported the broad general principles of the Bill. As a matter of fact, we endeavoured to liberalize them to make it a little easier for the people with limited means to find the necessary deposit and conform with the conditions set out by the State Bank under their credit foncier system enabling persons to purchase homes by extended payments over a period of years.

At that time the Treasurer was adamant against our proposals because he said it would be impossible to finance them. The Government, having a majority of members who were prepared to put up their hands when the Treasurer said so, agreed entirely with him and our attempts were defeated. Now we find that money has suddenly become available from somewhere and in this Bill we are asked to vote a further £1,550,000 for the purposes mentioned therein. I understand that £700,000 is to meet commitments already entered into with the State Bank and the balance is to finance further commitments that may be entered into, even though the money may not be expended this financial year.

A few years ago we appropriated money for a purpose that could not be carried out in the financial year and the Grants Commission penalized us as a result. I am somewhat sceptical about this proposal and am concerned lest the Loan Council adopt a similar attitude to that of the Grants Commission. I certainly hope not because I want as much money as possible made available for the purchase of homes under the conditions laid down by the State Bank. I understand that the Bill will be financed from money standing to the credit of the Loan Fund at the commencement of the Act and money received by the Treasurer after the commencement of the Act from the repayment of advances of money borrowed under the Act. It seems to me that repayments of money approved in past Loan Bills are to be hypothecated to some extent to meet the amount we are asked to provide in this Bill and to that extent the amount available for Loan expenditure in the next financial year may be affected. However, that can be taken care of in due course and when the circumstances arise. I support this Bill as it will assist worthy people to obtain homes.

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

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

The SPEAKER—I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a Commission under the hand of His Excellency and the public seal of the State empowering me to administer the Oath of Allegiance or to receive the Affirmation necessary to be taken by members of the House of Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.56 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, June 11, at 2 p.m.