

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, August, 18, 1959.

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

PETITIONS: WINE INDUSTRY.

Mr. KING presented a petition signed by five electors of the district of Chaffey and another signed by three electors of the district of Alexandra, asking that the House order an inquiry into the wine industry.

Received.

Mr. HAMBOUR presented a similar petition signed by an elector of the district of Light.

Received.

Mr. LAUCKE presented a similar petition signed by four electors of the district of Barossa, and another signed by three electors of the district of Angas.

Received.

QUESTIONS.

BLACKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Some time ago land was purchased at Blackwood for the erection of a new primary school. That was an extremely good move and I congratulate the Minister of Education and the Government generally on making it. However, no date has yet been fixed for the erection of that school and provision for it does not appear on the Loan Estimates. In the meantime requests have been made for improved toilet and washing facilities at the present school but the Minister has replied, within the last few months, that it is unwise to do too much at the old school as the new school is about to be built. However, as it appears to be some time in the future, will the Minister have the work at the old school put in hand or, if possible, fix a firm date for the erection of the new primary school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—As I have informed the honourable member and members of the school committee, it is intended to construct a new school at Blackwood as soon as possible, but in view of the tremendous demand for new schools—particularly secondary schools—it is impossible for me to fix a firm date for the completion, or even the commencement, of the new school. I realize that in the meantime it is necessary to effect improvements at the old school and a request has been made to the Architect-in-Chief to do so, but I have not received a written report from him. I understand, however, that an officer or officers of his depart-

ment visited the premises and that some improvements will be effected as soon as possible.

BEDFORD PARK SANATORIUM.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In this morning's *Advertiser* an article attributed to Sir Stanton Hicks refers to the care of the aged, particularly those who may be considered slightly mentally deficient. In view of information given to this House last week about the Bedford Park Sanatorium, has the Government any plans for that institution in the event of tuberculosis sufferers being removed therefrom?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If I remember correctly a question was asked about this institution earlier this year. So far as I know no plans have yet been made by the Hospitals Department in connection with it. We are not able to vacate it at present and until we can it is no good planning ahead. I hope the campaign carried out by the Commonwealth and State health authorities will be successful and that we will be able to vacate that institution.

REGISTRATION OF CRECHES.

Mrs. STEELE—Growing concern is felt, and has been expressed to me, by a number of organizations interested in the welfare of women and children with relation to the almost mushroom-like growth of creches and of child-minding centres. In this morning's paper some publicity was given to this following a meeting of the Adelaide City Council yesterday. A number of these creches do not, in the opinion of the Department of Health, conform to accepted standards of hygiene. I believe section 5 of the Maintenance Act relates to this matter. Will the Premier ascertain whether the Minister of Health will investigate the position and take steps, under the Act, to have these creches and child-minding centres registered?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined. I think that probably local governing authorities already have power but I will check and inform the honourable member in the course of the next two days of sitting.

JERVOIS BRIDGE.

Mr. TAPPING—Some people in the Semaphore district are greatly concerned about the apparently unsafe condition of the western approaches to the Jervois Bridge at Ethelton. About three years ago the then Commissioner

of Highways (Mr. Richmond) said that as the bridge was almost 80 years old it could be regarded as doubtful, and that, therefore, it should be replaced. Can the Minister of Works say whether the bridge is unsafe, or make any report on its condition?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am afraid I have not sufficient information to answer the question which, I think, is one for the Minister of Roads. I understand the Public Works Committee is at present investigating the general question of this bridge. I will obtain information for the honourable member.

SUPERPHOSPHATE PASTURE EXPERIMENTS.

Mr. JENKINS—Last week I asked a question concerning pasture failure, and I thank the Minister of Agriculture for his reply. Can the Minister say whether superphosphate companies market pound packets or samples of superphosphate containing various constituents so that farmers can make experimental plots and try out the various types of superphosphate and the constituents embodied in them? If they do not, will he ask them to do so?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I will find out whether that is the case.

ROYAL COMMISSION WITNESS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Can the Premier, as Acting Attorney-General, and representing the Chief Secretary, say by what legal authority the Sheriff and one of his officers acted in a seeming breach of the civil aviation regulations by going on to the tarmac at Adelaide Airport on Sunday and by what authority, in law or by warrant, did they remove from the airport the boy Alan Moir, apparently in custody? I am informed that when counsel who had requested the boy to be called before the Royal Commission asked Mr. Brazel, Q.C., assisting the Commission, what the position was, Mr. Brazel on Sunday replied that the boy had been taken into protective custody and that he would not be allowed to see anyone, including counsel for Stuart. By what law can any person be taken into custody except upon a charge, as to detain Moir and refuse to allow communication with him by his relatives, his employers, to say nothing of counsel whose witness he was, would appear to constitute the offence of false imprisonment?

The SPEAKER—The honourable member cannot debate the question.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am simply explaining it, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not debate it.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I beg your pardon Mr. Speaker. I was just explaining that point as it would appear to constitute the offence of false imprisonment. Can the Premier say whether the boy was, in fact, detained as described, and if so, what he, as Attorney-General, intends to do about it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I saw the report in the *News* yesterday that the Government had detained this boy and placed him in protective custody. That is not correct. Incidentally, I believe that the *News* knew it was not correct when it printed that statement, because a reporter of the *News* interviewed me yesterday morning and asked whether, as Attorney-General, I had taken any steps in the matter, and the same reporter also interviewed the Chief Secretary. In both instances he was told that we had no knowledge of the matter, that the action had been taken, as far as we knew, by the Royal Commission itself. I make it quite clear that no action was taken by the Government in this matter, and those facts were well-known. This boy is a young boy, and he is a witness before the Royal Commission.

The SPEAKER—The honourable the Premier must not deal with anything relevant to the Commission.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No, Mr. Speaker, I am only dealing with the facts relating to the bringing of the boy to South Australia and the conditions under which he was brought here. He is a fairly important witness before the Commission. The Government told Mr. O'Sullivan and his partner that it would stand the expense of bringing to South Australia any witness they desired and, alternatively, that if they did not desire to make the arrangements, the Government would make the necessary arrangements for witnesses to be brought here. That firm elected that the Government should bring the boy down. He is a minor and he was brought here under our control. I understand that when the matter was referred to the solicitor assisting the Commission, he asked the Court remand officer to keep an eye on the boy's welfare. Those are the facts as I know them. The boy was not detained in any lawful sense, and I understand that upon Mr. Shand applying to the Royal Commission, the Chairman of the Commission immediately said that, if desired, this boy was available to be interviewed by Mr. Shand. On the subject of legal restraint, I say the boy went willingly in accordance with

the arrangements that had been made for him to come down to South Australia. In point of fact, as the honourable member knows, if the boy had not desired to come we would have had no power to bring him to South Australia. I repeat that this action was taken not by the Government but by a solicitor acting on behalf of the Commission, that those facts were well-known, and that any statement to the contrary was obviously made to cloud the issue.

Mr. RICHES—I agree with the Acting Attorney-General's statement that the young man, Moir, should be adequately cared for whilst in this city, but is it a fact that the solicitor for Stuart had to obtain the permission of the Royal Commission before he could interview this lad? If so, was that intended by the Government when this action was set up, and does the Acting Attorney-General propose to do anything about it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have already stated the circumstances under which the witness, Moir, came to South Australia. It was as a result of arrangements made by the Government and, as far as the Government is concerned, as soon as he arrived he was under the control of and at the disposal of the Royal Commission. The probation officer had no instructions to give anybody permission to interview him and, equally, he did not allow the police or anybody else to interview him: he was at the disposal of the Commission. That is not out of the ordinary; it is quite normal procedure. The Government proposes to leave the Commission to sort out these matters, which I think is the proper procedure.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I understood the Premier to say that the action to which I referred was taken, not by the Government, but by the Royal Commission. What power, under the Royal Commissions Act, has any Royal Commission to take any person, minor or otherwise, into custody and refuse the right of persons to interview him? Secondly, I have always understood that the Sheriff was an officer of the Government and I do not see anything in the Royal Commissions Act which makes him an officer of the Royal Commission. I ask the Premier whether, in fact, this action was not taken by an officer of the Government? Thirdly, is it the policy of the Government to take into custody and refuse to allow people to interview any minor who comes to this city at the expense of the Government and, if so, under what legislative authority does it so act?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I shall be very happy, in due course, in my capacity as Attorney-General, to give the honourable member a free legal opinion upon these matters, which I am sure he will appreciate. However, I want to clear up one small point. As I have already told the honourable member, this lad was not taken into custody. He elected to come at our invitation and we were to provide accommodation for him. That was the original arrangement under which he came. He was not denied access to his friends.

URANIUM FOR JAPAN.

Mr. CUMBE—It was reported in the press last Saturday that Senator Spooner, the Minister for National Development, had announced that the Commonwealth Government was now permitting the export of additional quantities of uranium products to other parts of the world, including Japan. In view of this extension of the export trade, can the Premier indicate to the House whether this will in any way tend to increase the output of Radium Hill?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The announcement was of importance to South Australia. As honourable members know, we have had a contract with the Combined Development Agency for a number of years, but that contract is getting towards the end of its life, and we are naturally interested in a long-term continuance of the operations of the field. Prior to the announcement being made, we had been informed that the Commonwealth Government had allowed a trial consignment, to Japan, of uranium from the Mary Kathleen mine in Queensland. We have applied to the Minister for permission to make two small consignments of material to Japan to test the Japanese market. The Minister's statement is important as a long-term arrangement, but it is not of immediate moment to us.

DIVERSION ROAD AROUND ELIZABETH.

Mr. CLARK—My question relates to the proposed diversion road from the Main North Road around the city of Elizabeth. I first heard of this project some years ago when returning from Gawler with the then Highways Commissioner, Mr. Richmond. Mr. Richmond had told me of this project at a conference we attended. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Roads say whether it is still intended to continue with this project? If so, where will this new road leave the Main North Road, where will it rejoin the main road, and when is it likely to be constructed?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will refer the question to the Minister of Roads.

FUND FOR MOTHERS.

Mr. HARDING—I have received a letter from Dr. A. J. Forbes, Federal member for Barker, enclosing a letter from a lady in my electorate. Dr. Forbes' letter is as follows:—

I enclose a letter from a lady at Frances. There is no provision in Federal legislation for the payment she mentions, but it occurred to me that there just may be some State provision. I have told the lady that I am sending this letter on to you and that you will get in touch with her when you have made some inquiries.

The other letter states:—

It has been brought to my notice recently, and also a few years ago, that a mother who had seven sons straight in a row was entitled to a sum of money through the Government. As I am a mother of seven sons in a row could you inform me if this is correct, and, if so, how much it is and where I would apply for same?

Does the Premier know of a South Australian fund to assist such a worthy cause and, if not, does he know of any other fund?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I know of no fund available for the purpose, so I cannot oblige the honourable member.

DAMAGE TO STATUES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Over the weekend the press reported the ruining of a statue from the National Gallery, said to have been worth £350. Portion of the report reads:—

This is the second statue belonging to the Gallery which has been damaged in the past fortnight. A week ago yesterday two fingers were broken from the marble statue of Daphne, which was taken from its pedestal at the back of the Gallery. It was found in the University grounds.

According to the report, officials said they had their own ideas who had done the damage but there was no proof. It is obvious to me that the perpetrators of this vandalism were associated with the University. Like other members of the public, I am concerned about the acts of vandalism in recent months in both the city and the suburbs. Can the Premier say whether the police have taken any action in this case and, if the persons are known, whether a prosecution will be launched? If unknown now, will prosecutions be launched when they are known?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have seen the press report and I have no doubt that the matter was reported to the police and that they made investigations, but I will

secure a report from the Police Department. The answer to the last part of the question is undoubtedly "Yes."

VESSELS FOR ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION.

Mr. LOVEDAY—In view of the Commonwealth Auditor-General's remarks about the tremendous cost of hiring vessels for Australian Antarctic exploration work, will the Premier draw the attention of the Commonwealth Government to the desirability of having a suitable vessel or vessels built at the Whyalla shipyards for the purpose?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The report has been tabled in the Federal Parliament and this matter has already been the subject of several questions there. Under the circumstances I do not think it is necessary for me to take the step mentioned by the honourable member.

RAILWAY FARES.

Mr. RYAN—Will the Premier advise the House whether an increase in railway fares is being considered by the Government and, if so, whether a date has been fixed for the commencement of such increases?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The reply to the first question is "Yes." The Government has had to meet heavy increases in labour costs under the recent award, and just as the Tramways Trust has had to make adjustments in its fares it is inevitable that the Government will have to make some adjustment in railway fares. The Railways Commissioner has not yet forwarded his report so I am unable to say when the alteration will take place. I should think it would not be before the beginning of October. The honourable member must not take that as definite but I think that would be the date to be considered.

KINGSTON WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Has the Minister of Works obtained the report he promised regarding a water supply for Kingston?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Engineer-in-Chief has furnished me with the following up-to-date report:—

In my report of June 1, 1959, I mentioned that the Kingston scheme would probably take 18 months to complete and in making this statement, I had in mind the construction of the tank, which, as I see it, will be the last portion of the work to be completed. Main laying commenced last month and it is proposed to continue to completion. One bore has been sunk and the Mines Department has been asked to drill the other two required for

the scheme. When the bores have been drilled and tested, and it is known what capacity pumps are required, arrangements will be made to obtain them. Some difficulty has been experienced with the geological formations for the tank foundations and the Mines Department's geologist has requested the sinking of a 40ft. bore to explore subsurface conditions to a greater depth. When a satisfactory site for the tank is finally selected plans and specifications for it will then be commenced so that tenders can be called. An amount of £20,000 was included in the Loan programme for 1958-59 and the amount spent during 1958-59 was £17,588.

TRUST HOMES IN PORT PIRIE.

Mr. McKEE—Applicants are awaiting homes in Port Pirie but work has been stopped for some time on a number of homes under construction. Will the Premier explain why? What is the future intention of the trust regarding completion, and when will these houses be ready for rental?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will refer that matter to the proper quarter.

FIRES IN TEMPORARY HOMES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier any further report to make or information to give on the question of the unfortunate fires in temporary homes?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Appreciating honourable members' concern, I have obtained a complete summary of reports on fires that have occurred in this type of house. After these fires had become somewhat prevalent, I personally ordered in each case a coronial inquiry so that the matter would be properly investigated. This report deals with all fires except the last fatal one, about which we have not yet received a report.

A subsidiary matter was raised by an honourable member in a question concerning a complaint that the wiring in the home concerned was not in good order. In that connection I have obtained the following report from the Housing Trust:—

The South Australian Housing Trust has inquired into possible measures to reduce the risk of fire in emergency dwellings but is not yet ready to make a report. However, the following may be of interest:—In the recent issue of the *News* were what purported to be complaints from three tenants of emergency houses as to the electrical wiring in their houses. These complaints were immediately investigated. It was found that the wiring system was in good condition in each house with the following exceptions:—

In one case the earth wire had been cut and, in order to allay completely the tenant's fears, some of the roof was removed to examine the wiring. It was also found in one instance

that there were about five strands of wire in a fuse which had presumably been placed there by the tenant.

In one case the newspaper report stated that the tenant had been obliged to engage an electrician to do repairs. The tenant has now, by letter, completely refuted the suggestion; in point of fact, the tenant had an electrician in the house, but for the purpose of installing an additional power point to service an electric stove acquired by the tenant.

There is no record by the trust of any complaints by these tenants. However, the practice of the trust is that, whenever a complaint as to the wiring of an emergency house is made, it is investigated immediately even if the complaint is received at night.

I should mention that a couple of days after the fire occurred at Mansfield Park a trust inspector, as a result of a complaint received, visited a house in this locality some time after 8 p.m. and found that the parents of the family in question were at the cinema, leaving four small children alone in the house. The children were seated around a fire in the kitchen stove at the time the inspector called. The eldest child was about eight years old.

I turn now to the list of fires that have occurred, their circumstances and the results of the reports that have been obtained. The first set of reports I am dealing with concern fires that were not investigated by the coroner.

In the first one, in June, 1953, the damage amounted to £347. I will not give the names of the persons concerned or the localities, as they are of no interest to the public, who are more concerned about why the fires are occurring and what steps can be taken to prevent them. In this first case, the cause of the fire is thought to be an electric iron not being switched off. It was reported by a neighbour. In another fire, the total loss amounted to £1,229. It started at a wood stove. In another the loss amounted to £281, and according to the daughter of the tenant, arose from an explosion that occurred when the tenant lit a wood stove. In another, the total loss was £950, cause unknown; the occupants were in bed at the time of the fire. In another the total loss was £279 and the fire was probably caused by a cigarette being left smouldering in a lounge suite.

In the next fire the total loss was £912, and it was caused by children playing with matches. In the next there was a total loss of £1,207, and the fire started probably near a stove, an infant being alone in the dwelling at the time. In the next, there was a total loss of £1,039. The house was unoccupied at the time of the fire, the cause of which is unknown. In the next the damage amounted to £200 and again the house was unoccupied at the time.

There is no indication of any electrical fault, according to the electrical contractor who inspected it.

In the next the damage amounted to £34, the cause of the fire being unknown. In the next, damage amounted to £147, and the fire appeared to start in a lounge chair behind the kitchen door. In the next, damage amounted to £265 and the fire probably started in an armchair in the kitchen, probably from a cigarette, according to a report from the Fire Brigade. The wiring in that place was tested and found to be in order.

The results of the investigations by the coroner disclose these facts. In the first of these fires, the damage amounted to £1,100, and the fire was caused by an unlawful entry into the premises by an unknown person. In the next case there was a total loss of £955, the fire probably being caused by matches lit by children. In the next the damage amounted to £120 and the fire was caused either by ignited material such as a cigarette butt discarded on to a couch in the living room of the house, or by the spontaneous combustion of birds' nests and other materials above the ceiling of the house. Of the two causes, the former is, in the opinion of the coroner, more probable.

In the next, damage amounted to £198 and the cause was the careless or intentional act of an unknown intruder. In the next the damage amounted to £351, and the fire was probably caused by some discarded burning material such as a match or cigarette butt. In the next the damage amounted to £1,039, the cause of the fire was unknown but the coroner says it is not attributable to any act or negligence on the part of the tenant. In the last of these fires damage amounted to £1,207, and the coroner reports that it was caused by a child four years old playing with matches. The honourable member will see that in no case could the fire be attributed to any structural defects in the house.

Mr. LAWN—Will the Premier inquire from the Electricity Trust whether it is necessary for every power point in a home to be earthed?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will make the inquiry, but I think that the answer will be that wherever appliances are in operation they should be earthed. If a person is using an electrical appliance there should be an earthwire connected to a three-point plug.

Mr. Lawn—Every power point?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have always understood that every power point

should be earthed. If it were merely a light globe I would not think earthing necessary. I will refer the matter to the trust.

SEWAGE FARM GRASS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether, should an embargo be placed on the sale of green feed from the sewage farm as a measure to prevent the spread of beef measles, green feed from that source will still be available to poultry and pig farmers?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—A regulation is now in force to the effect that after June 30, 1960, no-one shall feed cattle or pigs with grass, or hay or silage made from grass, grown at the sewage farm. There is no proposal at this stage to ban the use of that grass for any other purpose, so poultry farmers need have no fear that they are included in the regulation. Pig farmers will be affected after June 30, 1960.

LI'L ABNER CARTOONS.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Since the *News*, in the interests of the investing public, has very commendably decided to refuse all advertisements from vending machine companies, will the Minister of Education ask if it will, in the interests of South Australia children, refrain from publishing the *Li'l Abner* cartoons and so assist the teaching staffs of our schools in promoting and maintaining a reasonable standard of spoken English?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am afraid I cannot comply with the request, if only for the very good reason that the cartoons are rather too subtle for me to understand, but I shall be only too pleased to convey the honourable member's request to the Editor-in-Chief of the *News*.

CONCESSION FARES FOR PENSIONERS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Last week the Premier said that he hoped to be in a position this week to make a full statement about concession fares to pensioners and others visiting the Royal Adelaide Hospital for treatment. Has he a statement?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. The Government has now determined the categories of pensioners who shall, as from October 1 next, be entitled to travel at off-peak hours at the fares prescribed for children upon vehicles of the Municipal Tramways Trust and upon trains within the suburban area.

Firstly, there will be included old age invalid and widow pensioners receiving pensions from the Social Services Department,

including also those wives of invalid pensioners who receive a special wife's allowance. Secondly, there will be included those persons dealt with by the Repatriation Department who are aged service pensioners, permanently unemployable service pensioners, and tuberculosis service pensioners, including the wives of permanently unemployable and tuberculosis service pensioners who receive a wife's allowance or pension. Thirdly, there will be included those Repatriation Department pensioners who are dependent parents of deceased servicemen, and who receive maximum pensions under Repatriation Regulations 32 and 34, or who receive pensions under Regulation 34AA.

Repatriation Department pensioners eligible for concession fares are broadly equivalent to pensioners covered by the Social Services Department. Blind and incapacitated ex-servicemen and blind civilians have for many years been granted free bus and train travel and this will of course continue. In addition to that, I have previously mentioned that people who are attending a public hospital under certain conditions also have their fares provided. That will also continue.

Mr. Lawn—What comprises the metropolitan area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as the Railways Department is concerned, it extends as far as Bridgewater on one side and, I fancy, Gawler on the other side.

BARLEY TRANSPORT AND LOADING CHARGES.

Mr. STOTT (on notice)—

1. What are the respective road transport charges incurred by the Australian Barley Board for carting barley *ex stock* from (a) Price to Wallaroo; (b) Price to Ardrossan; (c) Port Victoria to Wallaroo; (d) Port Victoria to Ardrossan; (e) Pine Point to Wallaroo; (f) Pine Point to Ardrossan; (g) Port Julia to Wallaroo; (h) Port Julia to Ardrossan; (i) Urania to Wallaroo; (j) Urania to Ardrossan; (k) Edithburgh to Wallaroo; (l) Edithburgh to Ardrossan?

2. Have 1,879,869 bushels of barley been transported by road to Wallaroo from the above receipt depots?

3. Is there a rebate of 12s. 6d. a ton in loading facilities at Ardrossan as against loading barley *ex bags* at Wallaroo?

4. How many vessels have been loaded with bulk barley at Ardrossan and what were their respective totals?

5. What is the estimated saving (calculated to date without any additional savings not

known at this juncture) on loading these vessels with bulk barley at Ardrossan as against loading barley *ex bags* for shipment?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The chairman, Australian Barley Board, reports as follows:—

| | To Wallaroo. | | To Ardrossan. | |
|-------------------------|--------------|----|---------------|----|
| | Per bag. | | Per bag. | |
| | s. | d. | s. | d. |
| Price | 1 | 1½ | 0 | 6½ |
| Port Victoria | 1 | 2½ | 0 | 10 |
| Pine Point | 1 | 4½ | 0 | 5½ |
| Port Julia | 1 | 6½ | 0 | 7½ |
| Urania | 1 | 1½ | 0 | 8½ |
| Edithburgh | 2 | 2½ | 1 | 4½ |

All plus 37½ per cent.

2. Not this season.

3. At present, yes, but amount is subject to variation.

4. Five vessels this season of which only one was fully loaded at Ardrossan. Respective totals:—10,349 tons, 8,955 tons, 11,015 tons, 11,738 tons, 10,200 tons (fully loaded).

5. No saving made on actual loading cost.

LAND DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. STOTT (on notice)—

1. Is the Government requesting district councils and other authorities to submit proposals for land development schemes?

2. Has the Government given any further consideration to developing the Lyrup-Bookpurnong area as a land development project?

3. If so, when will plans be completed for this area to be developed?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Director of Lands reports:—

1. District councils in selected areas have been asked to advise the department of any undeveloped or underdeveloped areas in their respective districts which the councils consider would be suitable for development.

2. The position is still as advised to the honourable member in letter dated August 25, 1958, in reply to a previous inquiry, viz.:—

That the State cannot accept the financial responsibility for the development of the area.

3. Vide answer to 2.

HONEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 12. Page 443.)

Grand total, £29,000,000.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—Whatever we may think of the speech delivered, and the programme outlined by the

Treasurer last week, I think we all admire his stamina in reading the speech of 100 type-written pages as he did. Its magnitude raised doubts whether he would complete the task within the time allowed. In the early part of his speech he was guilty of one of the greatest understatements I have ever heard when he said:—

I will now give members a brief review of the activities carried out in 1958-59 and information on proposals for 1959-60.

He then proceeded manfully to the task. He made his century and retired gracefully. The Treasurer certainly gave a wealth of detail for members to study. The speech contained multitudinous references and cross-references, and I confess that I found some of them very difficult indeed to follow. Last year when speaking on the Loan Estimates I suggested that the information should be co-ordinated in sections. It has certainly been submitted in sections, but unfortunately the co-ordination I sought is still absent. I had to wade through many pages of that 100-page marathon by the Treasurer in order to get information about certain matters.

I think we might briefly consider the source from whence the wherewithal to meet the cost of the various works and buildings postulated in the Loan Estimates comes. In June this year the Loan Council increased the sum available to the States by £10,000,000 compared with the provision made last year. The Treasurer did not say how much South Australia was to get out of that increase of £10,000,000, and I think that he might have, as it would not have taken him many more seconds to explain it. I have worked it out, and I think it comes to about £1,700,000. The approved Loan programme for the States this year is £220,000,000, and South Australia's total is £30,385,000. Of this amount £5,000,000 is for housing, leaving £25,385,000 for works etc. With repayments totalling £3,600,000 about £29,000,000 will be available this year for works, etc.

An apparent discrepancy exists in these figures compared with those figures mentioned by the Treasurer last year in introducing the Loan Estimates. According to *Hansard* (page 484) the Treasurer last year indicated that the total programme would be £31,722,000, whereas on page 1 of his speech this year he indicated that the programme for 1958-59 had cost £32,967,000, a difference of £1,245,000. I say this to warn members who might fall into the trap into which I almost fell. I nearly forgot that, in June last, we passed

Supplementary Estimates, and this explains the difference, so there is no discrepancy in the figures for the year.

It is nice to know that the State is progressing and that we are building reservoirs, water and sewer mains, schools and other institutions, mainly in the metropolitan and suburban areas, but we should be wise and consider the impact of the expenditure on the State public debt. Sooner or later we shall have to pay not only the amounts borrowed but the annual commitments for interest and sinking fund purposes. It is difficult to get reliable figures about the public debt, because they are not available until the Budget is presented. As near as I can ascertain, the public debt at June 30, 1958, was £297,000,000. The estimated Loan expenditure for 1958-59 was £27,000,000, after allowing for repayments and cancelled securities; therefore, the estimated public debt at June 30, 1959, was £324,000,000. The interest due on that sum must be considerable. In 1948-49 interest and sinking fund payments amounted to £5,000,000 and revenue was £22,000,000. In 1958-59 estimated interest and sinking fund payments were £15,000,000 and the estimated revenue was £72,000,000. Over the 10-year period there has been a substantial increase and we must view the position seriously.

Housing is an important problem. Despite all that has been said to the contrary, we still lag behind the housing demand. Last year the State Bank spent £3,126,000 on housing. This year £4,700,000 is provided—an increase of £1,574,000. On the face that looks good, but a closer examination shows that there is a carry-over of applications to the bank to the value of £2,000,000, as against a normal carry-over of between £300,000 and £400,000. The position is not as good as it seems at first glance and does not encourage people wanting financial help this year to build houses.

According to the Treasurer, during the year 3,150 units are to be completed by the Housing Trust, which is less than the number of houses completed by the trust in any recent year. I think it has been exceeded in every year but one in the last eight or nine. It was said that 700 of the houses would be built in the country this year, but most of them will be built at Whyalla and at one or two other country towns. I do not object to Whyalla people getting houses for they need them now and for some time to come, but other country towns need houses also and, unfortunately, they are not receiving much consideration. The

3,150 this year was about the same as the 3,142 completed last year. Our population is increasing continuously. Young mothers and fathers are in a difficult position in rearing their families because of the inadequate housing available for them.

Migrants coming to South Australia deserve consideration. They cannot be expected to live indefinitely in hostels where the charges are high—so high that both parents have to find lucrative employment. When it was suggested that people be brought to the State it was not envisaged that both parents would have to work in order to maintain their families. The mother should be at home looking after the family, but first she must have a house in which to live. Although the housing provision seems to be large it is not so: it is far from adequate.

I come now to the wealth of the State through primary production. We are experiencing a boom in secondary industry and tend to forget that primary production is the backbone of the State and the primary source of our wealth. Recently we were told that the Government had in mind an extensive land settlement programme. In an address to a conference of country sub-branches of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League the Treasurer said the Government would not abandon soldier settlement just because the Commonwealth had withdrawn from the field. He said that councils would be circularized for information about land suitable and available for soldier settlement. These Loan Estimates show that apparently the Government has little faith in its own scheme.

Mr. Hutchens—You cannot blame it for that.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not know about that. When a statement of policy is made, whether in a speech outside the House or in these Estimates, the two are correlated. If we say that we are going to do something we should furnish the necessary money. These Loan Estimates provide a way to help soldier settlement. We should honour our obligations to ex-servicemen; so should the Commonwealth Government, but it fails to do so. There is a breach of faith on the part of the Commonwealth Government when it abandons soldier settlement whilst one ex-servicemen seeks settlement. I commend the State Government for its all-out effort to provide land for settlement by ex-soldiers for whom the Commonwealth Government is doing nothing. A new generation has grown up since

V.P. Day. Young men who could not go to the war want to settle on the land. I refer to the sons of farmers who want to become farmers in their own right. These, too, are entitled to consideration, but what consideration can they get, what comfort can they obtain from these Loan Estimates?

Then we find that towards the repurchase of land for closer settlement a whole thousand pounds is to be provided, the same amount as last year. It would hardly pay the cost of transfer, etc., on a decent-sized holding. For Crown lands development £100,000 is to be provided. As I understand it, Crown lands development is the development of Crown lands that heretofore nobody has been prepared to take up; nobody has been prepared to be the lessee or the holder of these lands, although the opportunity has existed from time immemorial. Therefore, I think we are justified in assuming that the development of the remaining Crown lands poses problems that it will be expensive to solve. How far will £100,000 go towards the solution of those problems? The figure is the same as for last year on this item.

Next we come to other assistance to producers and find that £300,000 is provided under "Loans to Producers." Last year it was £600,000. This is an important item because it is to be applied mainly to assisting primary producers to form their co-operatives and manage the marketing of their production in the way it should be managed, yet this year the amount is halved. Does this show any enthusiasm for assisting primary producers? Does this provide them with the necessary encouragement to go on?

Then we come to the item "Advances to Settlers, £50,000." Last year the figure was £100,000. Again the amount is halved. As honourable members of considerable Parliamentary experience know, the Advances to Settlers Act and the financial provisions under which assistance was given to settlers played a worthy part in the development of certain areas of South Australia. After all, that is the best method of bringing about land settlement. By all means clear the land and pasture it to the extent that the incoming holder will be able to carry on while he is developing the balance, but for further improvements let us revert to the old system of making provision under the Advances to Settlers Act, thereby enabling a man to determine what progress he will make in an area and how he will make

it, rather than favour, as in recent years, providing a ready-made farm, which is a mistake. We have gone too far in that direction. It would have been better for settlers and the State if we had spread the money over a larger number of holdings and not been quite so punctilious about doing everything down to the erection of the dog kennel under the aegis of a Government department.

For fencing and water piping, £5,000 is provided. Last year it was £10,000, so again a figure has been halved. Though not a very big item it has been of assistance formerly in certain areas and undoubtedly could be of assistance now if any worth while sum were made available. I realize what the State Bank has done to assist primary producers, particularly in the more doubtful areas. After all, it was created by a former Labor Government, the Gunn Government, firstly to act as a buffer against extortion by the private banks and, secondly, to take some risks in assisting primary producers engaged in developing new country such as the Murray mallee and Eyre Peninsula, instead of being set up as a full-blown financial institution, as could have happened. That would have been of great advantage. When one realizes what has been achieved by the Rural Bank in New South Wales one wishes we had a similar institution here. Anyhow, the State Bank was set up with certain grants from the Treasury in the form of Loan money. Of course, it had certain deposits and earned fairly extensive profits but, nevertheless, it still depends to a great extent upon the Treasury advance from Loan funds to provide it with the finance necessary for it to carry out the work of assisting the primary producers, for which purpose it was primarily designed. Advances to the State Bank this year are to total £350,000. Last year £455,000 was made available, so this is another item that has been drastically cut, an item essential to assisting in primary production and in getting more production from the land. In this regard the Loan Estimates fall far short of what should be provided in a State like South Australia.

The Treasurer explained at length the Education Department's proposals for new schools, for enlarging old schools, and what have you. Last year I said that we were paying the penalty of past neglect. It is a very extreme penalty indeed. The schools we are proposing to build now should have been built years ago, when they would probably have cost considerably less than they are costing today. However, the main point is that, before some

of these schools are completed, a fairly large percentage of the school population they are being built to serve will have reached school-leaving age or the age for secondary education and that, as is the case in some of the older towns today, we shall have schools of more than adequate capacity because the school population they were built to serve will have grown up, left the area, and in due course married. They will have families of their own and provide a demand for school accommodation in the new areas in which they live, what time the old folk with no more children to fill the schools will be left behind in the old areas.

I said also last year that many of our modern schools were too large. In this year's Estimates several schools with 23 classrooms are to be provided. That is much too large. It imposes too great a strain on any headmaster properly to manage a school of that size. We should have evolved a plan of providing smaller schools and perhaps schools that would be more readily movable than some that are now being provided. Last year school buildings absorbed £3,600,000; this year £3,750,000 is to be provided. One would have thought from the great detail given by the Treasurer that we were going to provide at least twice the amount provided last year, but we propose to spend only £150,000 more.

I find also the differences in proposed costs of certain schools which were not explained by the Treasurer, and should be. For instance, a new school is to be provided at Elizabeth East. It is to be of precast concrete construction, to contain 23 classrooms, to cost £188,000, and to be completed late in 1960. As I said, 23 classrooms is too large for any school. Also, a new school is proposed at Elizabeth Grove, again of precast concrete construction, again to contain 23 classrooms, but to cost £130,000, and to be completed late in 1959. Why the difference in the estimated cost of these two schools? They are both of the same size, both in the same area, but one is to be completed late this year and to cost £130,000, the other is to be completed late next year and to cost £188,000. The difference is too large in an area where conditions should be similar, and it does not make sense to me. However, on reading further we find that at Clapham a precast concrete school of 23 classrooms is estimated to cost £229,000. We should examine these estimates to see whether it is not possible to

keep costs down because, after all, they are not buildings of recognized solid construction. I cannot understand why one school of 23 classrooms in one area should cost £130,000 and a similar school in another area £229,000.

The sum of £2,750,000 is to be provided to improve our railway system generally. I point out that the present railways debt is £33,860,000 and this will add to it. We all realize the great work that has been carried out by the railways in the past, particularly in developing the far-flung parts of the State, before motor transport was inaugurated. Today our railways are carrying items of primary produce at below cost in order to further assist primary production and, therefore, I think they are entitled to protection from unfair competition that arises primarily because the provisions of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution permit interstate hauliers to compete with the railways on interstate journeys without let or hindrance. They are not asked to pay anything for the roads they use or to register their vehicles in South Australia. They have an unfair advantage because the railways have to provide the track over which the trains run. It goes very much further, because there is no attempt to restrict the hours during which these vehicles may be driven and the hours drivers have to work, except that the latter have been policed to some extent by the Transport Workers Union. Unfortunately, the provisions of awards are being evaded by the owner-driver.

Mr. Hutchens—He drives until he rolls.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. Apparently the Government is not concerned with elementary safety precautions because last week when I asked whether it would ban or curtail the use of heavy transports on roads used by tourists in large numbers on Sundays and public holidays, the Premier said the Government would not because it would penalize South Australian industry. What about the penalty on the taxpayers who own the railways and have to make up the deficiency in railway accounts because of loss of freight due to this unfair competition? What about the danger to the unsuspecting holiday-maker of some of these vehicles getting out of control, as has happened frequently? What about the hold-ups caused by one or two of these heavy interstate vehicles in long lines of traffic? I want to make the Opposition's position clear. We are not opposed to road transport which has its place in the scheme of things, but we want to see that it is given its proper place as an auxiliary to rail transport rather than as a

disastrous competitor with it. We are asked to find another £2,750,000 for railway purposes and we should have some regard to protecting the asset we are increasing as a result of that expenditure.

An amount of £609,000 is proposed for ballasting, relaying, etc. Recently, there have been many derailments and there has always been a suspicion that some have been due to defects in the tracks. A considerable part of the Cockburn to Port Pirie line is in my electorate and there have been a number of derailments that have, in most instances, been due to weaknesses in the track. The Railways Commissioner is loth to recommend relaying that line because of the proposed conversion to standard gauge, but in view of the way that proposal is proceeding I suggest we relay the bad sections because the relaid sections would be worn out before the standard gauge became a fact. Is there any reason why we could not start relaying now with standard gauge sleepers and 93 lb. standard rails which could take their place in the unification scheme? I remind members that when we broadened the South-Eastern gauge we did not do it on the basis of 4ft. 8½in. but of 5ft. 3in., which was the only suitable way to do it then. Could not we relay the bad sections of the Cockburn line on the basis of 3ft. 6in. and at the appropriate time convert to 4ft. 8½in.?

The Treasurer said that £12,000 is to be provided for improvements to the suspension of 299 ore waggons. I take it these are the waggons used to bring concentrates from Broken Hill to the Port Pirie smelting works. It is not a large sum, but I am interested to know where this work will be carried out—at Peterborough, where it should be done and where the workshops have all the facilities and necessary manpower to do it, or at Islington, where far too much of the work that should be done at Peterborough has been done in recent years. It has been suggested that there is a mechanical deficiency at Peterborough for some type of work, but over the years I have been importuning the Government to remedy this defect by making available the necessary machines so that all the maintenance and rebuilding of rolling stock in the Peterborough division can be done at Peterborough, where there is an excellent staff from the management to the humblest employee. They have been frequently commended by visitors who know something of railway workshop management, and, in the past, when costs were taken out it was discovered that the work could be

done more cheaply there than in Adelaide. The suspension of 115 Silverton Tramway vehicles is to be improved. This work is to be done by our railways and paid for by the company, and that, too, should be done at Peterborough.

The sum of £12,000 is to be provided to complete the conversion of eight narrow gauge rail cars from petrol to diesel. There was no mention among the many and voluminous details given by the Treasurer of where these rail cars are to be used. I assume they will be used either in the Eyre Peninsula or the Peterborough divisions. I suggest that we provide Broken Hill with a daylight service in order to counter the competition by road buses, which is depriving the railways of many passengers. We have no hope of controlling the road buses under the Government's present policy, which is that we must not interfere with interstate hauliers or transport. We should provide an air-conditioned rail car service from Adelaide to Broken Hill and these trains should run in daylight. The railways have come part of the way by providing an air-conditioned service on the broad gauge as far as Terowie, but from there onwards people have to travel in a steam train on a fairly long journey at night-time. It is a comfortable steam train as steam trains go, but it takes all night to make the journey. This idea of night travel to and from Broken Hill is a relic of the days before aeroplanes when business people of Broken Hill preferred to come to Adelaide by train so that they could sleep at night, undertake their business transactions, and then sleep on the return journey. Today the Broken Hill businessman in the main uses the air service. It is because the ordinary person wants to avoid that long, and in the winter that cold, journey at night that I suggest we provide an air-conditioned rail car service right through, though it may be necessary to run a steam train at the week-end with sleeping cars. However, that should not interfere with the running of a daylight service on the other days. I should like to know that some of the rail cars are to be converted from petrol to diesel fuel for use on this line, and I should also like provision made for air-conditioned cars as are provided on most of our broad gauge trains.

Last year £3,150,000 was provided on the Estimates for hospitals, but only £2,140,000 was spent, and for this year the line is £2,050,000. It will be seen that estimated expenditure for this year is less than was spent last year. Surely, with the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we have not reached

the acme of hospitalization, although we certainly have reached the summit of expenditure. I have been unable to ascertain the final cost of this hospital. Items associated with its building have been on the Loan Estimates for several years, and the total expenditure is between £7,500,000 and £10,000,000. Another £150,000 is provided this year. I consider that our hospital policy is all wrong, but unfortunately that has been the case for too long for us to do much about it now. Some years ago I suggested that we should reconstruct the Royal Adelaide Hospital first, and make it the prime teaching hospital in South Australia with provision to treat difficult cases from the metropolitan area and the country, and that we should ultimately provide hospitals in the north, south, east and west of the metropolitan area to treat ordinary cases. Had we done that, I believe we would have solved our hospital problem to the satisfaction of most suburban people and at much less cost in building. Undoubtedly, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a wonderful building, but can we afford many more like it? I believe that the reduction in the amount on the Loan Estimates for hospitals postulates putting the brake on hospital expenditure, thus delaying the reconstruction of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Goodness knows its reconstruction is badly overdue in view of the age of some of the wards. I suggest that the amount provided for hospitals is not adequate.

I noticed in the Estimates a small but important item. An amount of £120,000 is provided for the Metropolitan Abattoirs for certain equipment required for the boneless meat export trade, most of which is, I understand, to the United States of America. I do not object to that, because I like to see every opportunity taken to exploit our meat export. Fortunately, the Americans are prepared to buy at satisfactory prices, but I am concerned that all this development should take place at the Metropolitan Abattoirs. There is no line in the Estimates or any suggestion that abattoirs should be established in country areas, yet about a fortnight ago I read that the Premier had visited Port Lincoln and made a speech suggesting that in the not distant future a second abattoirs would be required on Eyre Peninsula. Probably they will be required. I am pleased to know that that area has developed since a more adequate water supply has been provided. However, I want to know why provision cannot be made for additional abattoirs on the mainland,

where there are much greater numbers of stock than on Eyre Peninsula and where at present all the stock has to be forwarded to the metropolitan area to be treated for export. I could have dealt with many other lines in the Estimates, but my remarks can wait until we deal with the various items.

I will now deal with the impact of our public debt and the interest on our sinking fund commitments on this year's expenditure, which will be added to the expenditure of bygone years. Of course I know that the general financial policy is beyond our control. The great financial overlord, the Commonwealth, determines how much Loan money we shall have; in fact, it almost determines how we shall spend it. Therefore, year after year, we have to join with the other States in annual argument at Canberra in an endeavour to extract another few million pounds from the Commonwealth because the Commonwealth, as honourable members know, has been in recent years guaranteeing the States' loan expenditure up to a certain fixed figure. We prosper or we suffer as a result of a policy in the making of which we have no say, because unless the Commonwealth is prepared to guarantee the figure, there is nothing we can do about it. We cannot go outside the Loan Council arrangements and borrow money on our own security, but have to depend on what is made available through the aegis of the Loan Council. There has been great jubilation in Commonwealth circles recently over the volume of overseas investments in Australia and the fact that we can borrow limited amounts of money overseas. Investment, provided it is of the right type, is beneficial to this country, but when one sees the enormous profits that some overseas investors have been able to take out of this country, one wonders whether it is all beneficial or not. In my opinion borrowing abroad by Governments should not be resorted to.

I am old enough to remember the Commonwealth's Rake's Progress that followed the Kaiser's war. I know, too, of the great financial difficulties that the Rake's Progress of borrowing overseas and encouraging overseas investment created for the States, and for the Commonwealth itself. Because the prices of primary products decreased we found difficulty in meeting the interest bill. No-one can say that these circumstances will not arise again, although I certainly hope they will not, but I think we are sailing pretty close to the wind at present when we have to continue finding more than £300,000,000 a year to meet

all our overseas commitments. I do not for one moment suggest that this is all due to interest and dividends paid to overseas investors, but much of it is used to purchase from overseas articles which in my opinion could be made in Australia by using our own materials and manpower. There is a small surplus of manpower at present and it could grow, but it could gradually be absorbed by encouraging the manufacture of many of those things that are still imported from overseas. The reply comes ringing back from the archaic depths where the old conservative bogeys still lie—not dead, but only resting—that we cannot find the money. We found the money to fight the greatest war in history—Hitler's war. We found it to equip the greatest fighting force that Australia ever produced, and we also provided equipment for allies beyond the seas, yet we are told now that we cannot use national credit for developmental works. I say that we can, and we should. These developmental works would create a demand for goods for export and a demand in the home market, which is the best and surest market of all. Some day we shall reach the stage when we shall be able to talk about real development and real progress in considering our Loan Estimates without the financial holds being always imposed upon us.

Year after year sums are provided in the Loan Estimates for certain works such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Mount Gambier Hospital. In addition, the Yorke Peninsula water scheme, the Mannum-Adelaide water scheme and many others are included year after year, but in the main such schemes are no use to the community until they have been completed. They do not earn anything, yet interest and sinking fund on all the money that has gone into the partial construction of these works has to be met until the job is completed. It may be good politics to be able to show the people at Dingo Flat, Careys Gully, and other places that some public work that is vital to them is being undertaken, but it is not good economics as it means that over a period the cost of these works must be increased substantially as the result of the delay in their completion.

I suggest that in future we co-ordinate our planning of Loan expenditure and concentrate on those jobs that are most urgent. We should concentrate on completing those works at the earliest possible moment so that they can give service to the people they are designed to serve and yield revenue which they must earn in order to meet the interest and sinking

fund payments. I pointed out that I was not happy about some of the Estimates, and not only because of the disparity in the proposed cost of schools that I referred to earlier. The Queen Elizabeth hospital was originally estimated to cost, I think, about £1,300,000, but it has cost anything from £7,500,000 upwards. The Mannum-Adelaide pipeline was estimated to cost about £4,000,000 but it has cost nearly £11,000,000 and is still not completed. The Yorke Peninsula water scheme was estimated to cost under £2,000,000, but it has cost £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 and is still not completed. I could refer to other items on which I will probably seek further information in the future.

It is high time we had a Public Accounts Committee. I know the Public Works Committee goes into all questions, meticulously examines the estimates, and cuts and prunes where it can. It then recommends, or does not recommend, to Parliament. Usually, of course, it recommends to Parliament, but when that stage is reached the project is in the hands of the Government and it is apparently nobody's business from that stage onwards to see whether the estimates—on which the committee after a competent investigation bases its report—are realized. It is necessary to have a Public Accounts Committee to check the expenditure at the other end, after the job has been completed.

I have been critical of some items of expenditure. I want it to be clearly understood on behalf of the Opposition that we are not opposed to progress. The Opposition has its own ideas, particularly regarding financial policy, and it is convinced that those ideas are sounder than those being carried out today. While the present system continues we shall persist, to the best of our ability and within our Oath of Allegiance, to so direct our criticisms to the Government that they will assist in bringing about a fuller and better development of the State. We have undoubted resources and, if these resources are properly developed and if such development is controlled to prevent people from amassing more land than they require, and more of the fundamental things which are essential to production, we believe the State can go on to a great destiny, and we are prepared to assist in that respect. We believe in people; we claim that people are the only things that count in the final analysis. The duty of a Government representing a community is to develop the community resources in the interests of the people it governs.

Mr. JENKINS (Stirling)—I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the Treasurer in introducing the Loan Estimates gave a marathon performance. I think that came about because three or four years ago honourable members asked that more detail be given when the Loan Estimates were introduced. We certainly were supplied with great detail on this occasion.

During 1958-59 capital works expenditure, including £5,000,000 for housing, amounted to £32,967,000. For the financial year 1959-60, South Australia's share is £30,385,000, including £5,000,000 of Housing Agreement Funds, plus an estimated amount of £3,600,000 of repayments to the Loan Fund, making a total of £33,985,000, which is £1,018,000 in excess of last year. This should ensure for this current year a sum sufficient to carry on construction works and maintain the present level of employment. The season being what it is could, unless we receive good rains during the spring, involve the Government in heavy expenditure in supplementing the reservoirs by pumping from the River Murray and from bores. This applies to the country as well as to the city. The recent 15s. wage rise, with other factors such as teachers' salaries, would limit the construction works to about the present level.

I wish to comment on the comprehensive works being carried out by the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the Highways Department in particular. The Highways Department has certainly improved greatly in road construction know-how. Everywhere I go in my district, and in other districts, I hear favourable comment on the way road construction is going ahead, particularly on the Mount Compass-Victor Harbour road in my electorate. The earth moving equipment is expertly used. The surveying, in my opinion, has been excellent. Every bend has been surveyed so that people can see approaching traffic before they arrive at the turns, thus contributing greatly to road safety.

The establishment of Highways Department depots in country towns is a most noticeable feature. Now that the cost is mainly in the past, great benefit must result from this move and the decentralization policy of the department. However, one thing agitating the minds of country councils is the question of bridges, of which there are many in my district. Particularly in the hills and range country, almost all these bridges were built from 80 to 100 years or more ago and are falling into disrepair or becoming obsolete, thus imposing a considerable strain on local government

finances. I feel that perhaps an overall survey of these bridges by a departmental engineer would be of value to the Minister for future consideration, as undoubtedly he will be called upon for assistance by way of subsidy from time to time, and some provision may be planned ahead that will be helpful to all parties.

I hope that grants may be forthcoming for an extension of the bitumen along the road between Langhorne's Creek and Wellington when the present two miles of reconstruction is sealed. This road carries a good deal of traffic; its use has been accentuated more and more each year, and in its present construction is most uneconomical to keep up to standard. This highway in the future will certainly channel much hills traffic to the Wellington punt and over the River Murray in that direction.

The Minister of Works last year used almost £8,000,000 on water and sewerage works, and I feel sure he is committed for a large sum for three or four years to come, as the demand for water is greater each year. In the metropolitan area, in 1958-59 new water and sewerage facilities cost about £2,220,000. Country schemes, including sewerage works at Port Lincoln (£60,000) and at Naracoorte (£130,000), cost about £3,515,000 and took water to many places where it was much needed. That appears to be a very well-balanced programme between the metropolitan area and the country.

I feel that members must be impressed with the immensity of the projects being carried on simultaneously by the department. The demand is great, but the construction of works and extensions are widespread over the State. I believe that this department must in future receive a greater share of Loan moneys in order to meet the rising demand for water. The Myponga dam is a mighty piece of engineering, and a visit by members to see this project would be well worthwhile. The country towns, rural areas, and the proposed oil refinery, as well as Adelaide, will benefit from this reservoir of 6,000 million gallons capacity.

I have had several water proposals put forward for areas near Strathalbyn, and I have previously mentioned the disability of some farmers in that area. A water committee is at work gathering evidence on their needs and on a possible route for a main from the lakes to serve those areas. A most detailed investigation into the number of people it can serve, the loss in value and condition of stock through the salt content of bore water, and the increase in carrying capacity and production if fresh

water is available, is being undertaken to put before the Minister for his consideration. I believe that a practicable proposition can be put forward, and I hope it will prove sufficiently economic for the Minister to examine it thoroughly.

The proposals for the current year's allocation of funds seem adequate to keep up with the tempo of work. The Encounter Bay water scheme, for which £101,000 has been allotted this year out of a total of £374,000, rather surprised me at first. I had been told by the Engineering and Water Supply Department that the scheme would take effect from the middle of this coming summer and give progressive relief from then on, but I now understand there are considerable handicaps as the steel plate for the piping will not be available for rolling until some time in November. This means that the work cannot start before Christmas whereas it should be starting now; in fact, it was expected to start on August 1.

I believe also that the boosting engine, due from England, is some weeks overdue and that is causing some delay. I have been assured by the Engineering and Water Supply Department that there will be an adequate supply of water for the Encounter Bay water district in the summer because some mains have already been laid in Victor Harbour and the department intends pumping along the existing mains from Goolwa to Port Elliot. This will supplement the supply of water derived from the Hindmarsh Valley Reservoir. If this assurance is carried out the area will be assured of an adequate supply and I hope that the Minister will be able to see that it is carried out.

I thank the Minister of Education for being able to get ahead with the Strathalbyn primary school. I notice there is a line on the Estimates for £70,000. The contract has already been completed for over £50,000 and the work should be completed in another eight months. No provision has been made in the Estimates for the Mount Compass area school, but I hope provision will be made for it next year. I believe that area schools in the country are superior to any other kind of school because they are a type of school which is necessary for country children who, after schooling, wish to remain in the country and go on the land. I have much pleasure in supporting the first line.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—On the first line I wish to speak in general terms and discuss various matters during the course of

the debate. This afternoon I listened with much interest to the Leader of the Opposition and, having listened to his speech, I am confident that every member of the House will agree that he went into much detail and made a very constructive speech that no doubt would have been noted by many with pleasure. I do not intend to refer to what he said or to repeat his statements more than is absolutely necessary. The amount of the Loan programme is the largest ever presented in this place. It is interesting to see how the items are divided and the projects to which the money is to be applied. The sum of £27,967,000 is provided for public works generally, and for work under the Housing Agreement the total is £3,500,000. The South Australian Housing Trust is provided with £1,200,000, while the State Bank and building societies are to get £300,000. This is a total of £5,000,000 for housing.

It is interesting to note on which public works the money is to be spent and when one reads this very long list comprising Housing Trust, roads, bridges, irrigation, drainage, woods and forests, timber milling, railways, harbours, water supply, hospitals and schools, etc., one realizes that this large amount is to be spent on Government enterprises for the purpose of assisting the State's development. It should be noted that private enterprise depends for its survival and development on this long list of Government enterprises.

When we hear State enterprise talked of so often, particularly in South Australia, we hear it labelled with all types of tags. I am not prepared to admit that this is socialism although many people say it is. I deny that it is socialism although I say it is a long way from private enterprise. I do not decry private enterprise for I believe that competitive enterprise is the best we can get in any State or any age if it is competitive enterprise. I am sure I have the support of all members on this side of the House and possibly of all members in the House when I say that. It cannot be denied that the world is moving steadily in the direction of socialism and the Government has been wise in going as far as it could towards socialism, although not as far as the Treasurer would like to go.

It is amazing—and even the Treasurer will appreciate this—that there are many difficulties in this mixture of policies seen in South Australia. We have a very strange breeding in our political set-up caused by the present Government. The breeding seems to be by Capitalism out of State-ism and it is State capitalism in the final analysis.

I come to State enterprise and State capitalism in South Australia. The important thing about industry is not so much who owns it, but who controls it and with what motive. A State enterprise with a divided motive can only partly fulfil its purpose. "State enterprise" suggests that it is something to give service to the State. Whilst one must admit that as a result of State enterprise in South Australia we have progressed, private enterprise could not even hope to continue if it were not for the volume of money spent annually in State enterprises. How much more could we have done? That is the question we must ask when considering the Loan Estimates. How much more could we have done with our State enterprises if we had not been hobbled and hamstrung by the motives of the investor?

It is good for us to remember that we are still a young country with some mighty difficulties yet to overcome. We should not be overcome by our achievements as some people are overcome by what has been achieved in these years of world prosperity and local good seasons. We have raised money and have built up a bigger interest bill and an ugly public debt. Let us take stock and view some of the problems of our so-called progress. I agree when talking of secondary and of rural industry, there has been an increase in production in South Australia in almost every line, but we should not lose ourselves in gloating over our achievements: we should look to see where we could have done better. Could we have done less? I do not think we could have done less and justified our birthright.

We, as a State, must always be conscious of the fact that we are part of the British Commonwealth of Nations and that we are required to play our part in that great body by progressing. We could not have done less yet still retained the land and justified our birthright. Are we spending wisely? That is the point the Leader emphasized this afternoon. It is the responsibility of this House in this very important debate to make an examination—an unbiased examination—and that is what I propose to do. If our examination assists the Government I feel that we should lend that assistance. Are we planning correctly and are we raising finance needed for public works in the proper manner? Are we doing all we can to make the Commonwealth appreciate our difficulties? With these difficulties mastered, we can do much more; that is where I feel we are falling down. Far too often we talk of our achievements and fail to talk about the difficulties ahead. I wonder what percentage

of Federal members have it firmly impressed on their minds that nine-tenths of the area of this State has less than 10 inches of rainfall per annum. I wonder how many South Australian citizens are conscious of that fact or are conscious of the great difficulties of Parliament in providing for the irrigation of these low rainfall areas.

The spending of public money can only be judged by the results it brings indirectly. Therefore, I will examine the affairs of the State and go back into history over the period prior to World War II. It would need very few words of mine to convince the Committee that prior to World War II this State was a rural State with very few other industries. I have figures to support that statement. For a short period after the war we did but very little in rural development and it was not until after the introduction of uniform taxation that we saw any real development in secondary industry in this State. The *Pocket Year Book* and the *Commonwealth Year Book* reveal interesting figures. In 1938-39 in secondary industry we had 2,067 establishments. There were 7,965 employees. By 1947-48 the number of establishments was 2,865 and employees 73,346. By 1957-58 the number of industries had increased to 4,168 and employees to 92,476. The value of gross output in 1938-39 was £35,005,264, or £58 per head of population. In 1947-48 it was £104,571,084, or £159 *per capita*. By 1957-58 the value had increased to £332,098,361, or £368 *per capita*. The top basic wage in 1947 was £7 18s. 0d. a week; in 1958 it was £12 16s. 0d. The increased production as shown by the figures is not so great as one would imagine, but there has been an increase. When the basic wage was 15s. a week less in 1956-57 than in 1957-58 we produced goods to the value of £9 more *per capita* than in the following year.

My point is that even with the expenditure of large sums secondary industry production is decreasing. Often we hear it said that that decrease is the fault of the workers, but I do not hold that view. Despite the increased population, fewer people are being taken into industry than some years ago. The population increase has been amazing and I wonder how long we can go when employment in industry is not following that increase. In 1938-39 the population was 290,000; in 1947-48, 326,000; in 1958-59, 901,000; and in March this year, 914,000. Employees in factories in 1955-56 numbered 92,599, but despite the population increase in 1956-57 the figure was

91,981. The *Factories Statistics Bulletin* (No. 3 of 1959) says:—

The average number of persons employed for the whole year was 92,472, representing an increase of 491. It was, however, still a little below the peak level of 1955-56 when employment averaged 92,589. The actual number employed at June 30, 1958, was 91,928, 544 less than the weekly average for the whole year.

When I looked at these figures I was concerned because the position is not as rosy as we would imagine from statements emanating from Government sources. I was further perturbed this morning to hear in a news broadcast from the Australian Broadcasting Commission that employment is declining in seasonal work and that the overall position also shows a decrease.

Mr. O'Halloran—The worst decline in the Commonwealth.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes, yet we were told last week that all is well in South Australia and that we should go on spending money without considering the position. There is talk of a population of 1,000,000 by 1963, which means that there must be a greater expenditure of money on public works, but to what extent are South Australian workers benefiting? The workers on whom we depend for increased production should get greater benefits. They have to meet the interest payments due on Loan money and when they are not able to do that we shall have a recession. In order to meet these interest payments and to repay the loans the workers must be made to feel that their services are appreciated, and to bring that about they must be granted benefits. We are told, when it is convenient, that South Australians are good workers, but they are denied quarterly cost of living increases and an Industrial Code that would cover all workers. They are even faced with possible unemployment, and hard won conditions are being taken from them, with resulting industrial disputes. Some Government departments and private enterprise are ruthlessly using the penal clauses of the Industrial Code.

Mr. Millhouse—Would you give instances of the ruthless use of the penal clauses?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am prepared to do that. I am amazed that the honourable member is not aware of their ruthless use. If there had not been an election in this State recently they would not have been used by one semi-Government department. I refer to happenings at Port Augusta where workers were engaged to go to the new powerhouse on

condition that they would be transported to and fro free of charge. The Electricity Trust refused to negotiate further and forced the men to take direct action. Immediately the penal clauses were ruthlessly used. I could give the honourable member more instances.

Mr. Millhouse—I wondered what you meant by “ruthlessly.”

Mr. HUTCHENS—It would be difficult to define the word for the honourable member. How far one must go before being ruthless is difficult to say. There would be a wide difference of opinion between members on this side and those on the Government benches. The Government will not compensate the workers for the contributions they have made. The position has been made clear. People are being dealt with ruthlessly by capitalistic Government spending money with an undercover design. It wants to bring about class distinction by suppression, using the penal clauses, exploiting female labour, denying equal pay for equal work and limiting legislation dealing with factories and scaffolding inspection.

Mr. Hambour—What did you copy that from?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I did not copy it. It is abundantly clear to everybody, even to those who are purposely blind.

Mr. Millhouse—Give us an example of this exploitation.

Mr. Hambour—He doesn't know.

Mr. Millhouse—We want to have it made intelligible.

The SPEAKER—Order!

Mr. HUTCHENS—It is difficult to make remarks that can be understood by some people but I shall endeavour to oblige. I was about to deal with the exploitation of female labour. In New South Wales, which has a Labor Government, it is provided that where female labour does work equal to that done by male labour, it receives equal pay, but that is denied in South Australia. I say it is exploitation. With the expenditure of large sums of Loan money for public works and with the increase in production figures that we have heard so much about, one might reasonably expect the State finances to show some improvement, but do they? When I read the press and sometimes listen to the Treasurer speak, particularly at election time, I tend to cry out in a sudden burst of pride about South Australia being a wealthy State. I am proud of this State and I believe in its future, but by no means is it a wealthy State. This is brought home to us when the facts are made known.

Some time ago, I heard the honourable members for Gawler (Mr. John Clark) and Wallaroo (Mr. Hughes) talking about the *Song of Australia*. It was suggested that it might be used as the *National Anthem*. I think a more fitting song for this State would be *Another Day Older and Deeper in Debt*. It has to be remembered that we are no longer a claimant State. This will add to our difficulties and our public debt. In 1944 we had a total public debt of £108,305,000, which a head of population was £174 4s. In 1949 it was £127,501,000, or £178 14s. a head. There was a steady increase during those years. In 1957 it jumped to £297,190,000, or £340 8s. a head. In 1958 it was £324,565,000, or £359 14s. a head. This is an alarming increase in public debt and must cause concern. The Leader of the Opposition drew attention to it and referred to the huge interest bill associated with our public debt.

I suppose one could argue that we should be willing to accept an increase in public debt as something merely temporary. Surely no Government would go on building up and agreeing to borrow without confidence that the future would lead to greater production and prosperity for the State. Does any member opposite believe that it would? I do not think so. I think they have faith in our future but, if we believe in and have confidence in the State, why not show that confidence by the use of national credit and rid us of the dead burden of the interest rate? While industrial development is appreciated by the Opposition, we are anxious that it should benefit all sections of the community. We believe that our export trade must be maintained and that we, as a State, are still leaning, and for some years to come must lean, heavily on rural production in this regard. To argue anything else would be ridiculous.

To do this we must keep pace with our increased population. There is a line on the Estimates for land settlement. In good years we shall have to ensure that we keep a little ahead of the increasing population in our primary production. It must be remembered that for 12 years we have had good seasons and have been able to keep pace with our primary production.

The Leader of the Opposition drew attention to the fact that a small sum was provided for soldier settlement. This morning the Land Settlement Committee heard some figures which show that about £182,000 has been spent since April on the purchase of land for soldier settlement, covering an area of

approximately 21,000 acres. Of course we must not forget that most of this money is coming from the Commonwealth Fund, but something is still being done. Although we have more than 1,000 men established on the land in new soldier settlement, our figures over the years leave room for concern. In 1938-39, 31,290 men were employed on the land on holdings on their own account. In 1947-48 that number had declined to 27,901, and on March 31, 1958, it was 27,971. So we have 3,319 less than before the war on the land on their own account, which gives cause for concern.

Between 1948 and 1958 our population increased by more than 200,000, but the number of rural holdings by only 70. The cost associated with rural development on a large scale makes it a most difficult undertaking for private enterprise. The State Government can be successful only to a limited degree. I join with the Leader of the Opposition—and I feel that many members opposite will agree with me on this—in expressing regret that the Commonwealth Government has virtually pulled out of the soldier settlement plan. We all appreciate the great need for rural development, and the Commonwealth Government should honour its obligation not only to the returned men but to this State and all those who are willing and ready to go on to the land. Honest endeavours should be made to set up a long-range policy, with the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments co-operating for the development of rural areas.

Labor is convinced that thousands would be prepared to take up land and work it if they had a reasonable chance of getting out of debt in a working life-time. That is all they want. I am confident that Labor would support the Government in a plan of this nature. I confess it is a problem. I read in the press that the wool industry after good seasons and extraordinarily good prices says that, due to the high costs of production, if there is any further decline in the price of wool it will have to receive assistance. That is disturbing. The real problem is that we have priced ourselves out of the world markets. We have heard, and hear now, of record cereal crops of 80,000,000 bushels (or 88 bushels a head) for last year. In 1953-54 we produced 69,000,000 bushels of cereal (or 170 bushels a head). So that on a population basis we are not keeping up, which is a tragedy.

Turning to other lines of primary production, there was one milking cow to every four

persons in 1954. In the same year, according to the *Pocket Year Book*, we produced 22 lb. of butter, 33 lb. of cheese, 106 gallons of milk and 7 lb. of ham and bacon (*per capita*). In 1957 there was no change in the number of milking cows a head, but butter had dropped by 2 lb. to 20 lb., cheese by 3 lb. to 30 lb., milk by 5 gallons to 101 gallons, and bacon and ham was up slightly, by 1 lb. We should look at our production of meats. There was a slight increase in the production of beef, but the slaughtering of mutton should cause us real concern. In 1953-54 the total slaughtering was 2,637,000 head of sheep. In 1956-57 it had decreased by 308,000 to 2,329,000. Our exports in 1953-54 were 533,923 and in 1956-57, 389,440, a decrease of 144,483. In the *News* of July 17, under the heading "Trade down in South Australia" the following article appeared:—

South Australia's export-import balances for the 10 months ended April 30, were £10 million less than in the same period for 1957-58. Statistics released today show a £36 million excess between exports and imports for the period just ended, compared with £46 million excess for the period ended April 30, 1958. Items with lower export values, contributing mainly to the cut, included wool, skins and hides, minerals and metals, and many manufactured goods. Indicative of the lower yield from wool is the fact that in the 10 months of 1957-58 export of 112 million lb. fetched £32.6 million, but in the corresponding period of 1958-59, sale of 120 million lb. brought only £25.4 million.

That clearly indicates the danger to the primary producer of putting all his eggs in one basket. The Treasurer referred to the programme of providing housing this year. It is interesting to refer to his second reading speech on the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act Amendment Bill last year, wherein he said that during 1957-58 the trust received 4,828 applications for permanent rental accommodation as well as 2,750 applications for purchase homes—a total of over 7,500 applications for homes. To this figure must be added the number of unsatisfied applicants in previous years. Since then our population has increased by 13,000. The average increase in the last three years has been 22,000. To meet the requirements of our increased population, working on the basis of four persons to a home, we would need to build 5,500 houses a year. Figures supplied by a cement company, and quoted in this House recently, reveal that the number of homes constructed in the metropolitan area has decreased alarmingly. The "metropolitan area," in their figures, included

East Torrens, Salisbury, Elizabeth and Tea Tree Gully. In the years 1950-51-52 the average number of homes built was 6,717, but this had decreased in 1953-54-55 to 5,526, and in 1956-57-58 to 5,503. Last week, in reply to a question by the member for Port Adelaide, the Treasurer said the Housing Trust would not build more than 300 homes in the metropolitan area and then only in two districts.

Mr. Riches—Where are they to be built?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I would imagine in Elizabeth or on the South Coast. In the State electoral district of Hindmarsh there are 390 factories with 10,957 employees, but few new homes have been built there in recent years. A report by the Building Inquiry Committee tabled in the House on September 12, 1940, stated that in the Hindmarsh corporation area there were 29 per cent sub-standard homes; 19 per cent undesirable for use for habitation because of structural conditions, bad state of repairs or lack of amenities; 9 per cent unfit for habitation where demolition was necessary and 5 per cent of the very worst type of home. Following this report the Housing Improvement Act was introduced by the Treasurer who, according to page 636 of *Hansard*, said:—

The committee brought in a report to show the actual position as nearly as possible. I have dealt at some length with the statistical results of the committee's survey because it is necessary for the House to understand the dimensions of the problem with which we are faced. It is not merely a matter of building a few hundred new cottages to overtake the growing housing needs of our people, or of condemning and pulling down a few old houses in the back streets of the city. In the city of Adelaide more than 11,000 people live in sub-standard houses, and of these more than 3,800 live in houses reported to be unfit for human habitation. In the three worst areas—the city, Hindmarsh, and Port Adelaide—the number of people living in substandard houses is actually 20,800; and I am informed that the total number of inhabitants in substandard houses in all the areas included in the survey exceeds 26,000, of whom 7,600 are children under 15 years of age.

Later the Treasurer said:—

We ought not to shut our eyes to them. Even if thousands of people will endure them without a murmur, it is wrong for the community as a whole to allow such conditions to continue for a moment longer than it is obliged to. Bad housing conditions harm not only the persons who have to live under them, but also the rest of the community. Particularly in these days, it is above all things essential that every man and woman contribute the best of which they are capable to the service of the whole. We cannot afford to allow even a small section of the population to live under conditions which

must impair their morale and their efficiency. No one can deny that bad housing has evil effects on the people.

Later the Premier went on to say:—

So far, we have been concerned with the individual sub-standard house. It is obvious to anyone who pays a visit to localities where there is any aggregation of these houses that there are areas where conditions cannot be permanently improved by pulling down a house here and there and repairing some of the others. Numbers of poor dwellings crowded together on very small allotments situated in narrow streets and lanes constitute "slum pockets."

In Hindmarsh in 1941 there were 3,488 dwellings with a population of 13,016, and in 1954, the year of the last figures available, there were 3,800 dwellings and 13,561 people. I could not agree more with the Premier on this occasion, but the fact is that most of these houses in the Brompton and Bowden area still remain. I asked the Premier whether he would have something done in Brompton and Bowden similar to that done in Mr. Coumbe's district to provide homes for those living in substandard houses by the provision of multi-flats, because in that area all the services required are in existence, and thus a saving could be involved. The Engineering and Water Supply Department has stated through its Minister that it will spend £69,000 in the near future to replace mains, and therefore much expenditure could be saved in building in this area where the services are already available. I asked that multi-flats be used to replace sub-standard homes, which have a bad effect upon the general progress of the State. I believe that the construction of these flats would benefit not only the workers themselves, but also industry. Many of our people, in order to get a decent type of house, have to live a long distance from the industry in which they are employed, and this has the effect of reducing their wages. In 1953-54 the State built one house for every increase of three in the population, in 1954-55 the ratio was one to 3½, in 1955-56 it was one to three, and in 1956-57 it was one to 3¼. However, this increase does not meet the demands of a high standard of living or catch up effectively with our back lag. I believe that the housing position could be improved only with the co-operation of every section of the building industry. In accordance with Labor's policy, the Government should engage the services of the Institute of Architects, the Master Builders' Association, trade unions, and the Workers' Home Co-operative, to see what could be done. Their findings could be reported to a Minister in charge of

housing to see whether homes could not be made available for purchase.

I support the member for Light, who frequently advocates that people should be encouraged to purchase their homes rather than rent them. This can be done only if a low deposit is required and a low rate of interest charged. The Leader of the Opposition advocated an examination of expenditure on housing and that we should be careful to see that the money is expended wisely and without waste. He drew attention to the fact that many Government jobs are started, that some are left uncompleted or take longer to complete than expected, and that many exceed the original estimate. I believe that every member on this side agrees that there should be an accounts committee to investigate how money voted is spent. This view is given support by the successful operation of the Public Works Standing Committee. Mr. O'Halloran, in referring to the building of schools, said that we were reaping the result of past neglect. I believe that the Education Department would be well advised to limit its buildings of solid construction for the reasons mentioned by Mr. O'Halloran. We could adopt satisfactorily the building of prefabricated schools adjacent to existing solid construction buildings. It is true, as he pointed out, that often an area soon becomes highly developed, but that when people pass their reproductive age there is a fall in the demand for education facilities. Then we find that many of our solid construction schools are too big, and of course they cannot be shifted. I strongly support the idea of building prefabricated structures so that if the demand falls they can be shifted to another area, and thus construction costs could be kept low. I believe that some of the prefabricated school buildings in my district, particularly the Croydon girls' technical school, are admirable, and when accompanied by some solid construction are all that can be desired. I am sure the Minister will agree that they are excellent buildings, and very satisfactory.

The wisdom of having an inquiry by the Public Works Standing Committee into the expenditure of money on schools was proved in respect of a school in my district. Nobody desired more than I to see the Croydon boys' technical school being built. The Public Works Standing Committee inquired into that project and approved it, and it looked as though we were going to have that school very soon, but the committee then decreed that the original plan had to go by the board and that a more or less standard school had to be erected.

Although the district suffered some disadvantage, I now express my gratitude to the committee for its wisdom. Its decision will save the State and the department considerable money over a period of years. I do not propose to say any more at this stage, but will speak again on the lines.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—The member for Stuart made certain remarks concerning my attitude on what he calls "Socialism." I think it was the member for Hindmarsh who said that the best type of industry was truly competitive, free enterprise. That is a very profound statement, but I am afraid the honourable member will find it difficult in Caucus to reconcile his views with those of the member for Stuart. The member for Stuart accused me of being a Socialist because I supported the Government in extending water and electricity supplies and roads, but in fairness to him I must point out that he was completely confused. He started by criticizing my remarks concerning milk distribution. I had complained of a position that arose as a result of Government restriction, but I did not support that restriction, which he accused me of doing. I said that my producers would like to enjoy the same privileges as those who benefited from the Government restriction. That was the honourable member's first accusation against me of being a supporter of Socialism.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I remind the honourable member that this is the Loan Estimates debate, not the Address in Reply debate. The member for Stuart has not spoken in this debate.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I am only referring to his accusation that I am a Socialist.

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member is out of order in referring to any other debate.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I apologise, Sir, if I have strayed somewhat. I am sure the member for Stuart in his cunning knew that I would be called to order, because he cackled when I told him I was going to refer to this matter. However, I would be in order in referring to the remarks of the member for Hindmarsh, who, in his reference to land settlement, made a broad statement relating to the possibility of land settlement succeeding, by which I presume he referred to the settler making a reasonable profit. I have stated before and will state again that to ask any person with little equity in a property to go on with primary production in the hope of making a profit is placing him in a precarious

situation. I have previously touched lightly on the question of water supply, and I would now like to deal with that subject in a little more detail.

Mr. Riches—You would like a little bit more of it.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Some people have water in their personal being, even if it is high up in their anatomy. Certain parts of my district that have not been reticulated desire reticulation. I have pursued this question since my entry into Parliament, and I have come to the conclusion that under the existing policy these people will not get water. I think the reason is not that the policy was wrong originally, but that because of inflated costs they cannot meet the return required by the Government. Had these schemes been implemented 10 or 15 years ago the revenue would have been sufficient to warrant the expenditure involved. I will explain to the House in detail what I mean by that. Three schemes have been submitted to me, one by the present Minister and the others by his predecessor, and in each case the return was $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That percentage is based on the high costs of today, and if these schemes had been costed 10 or 15 years ago I am quite certain the return then would have been 4 per cent or 5 per cent. In rural production today the Government will accept a scheme showing $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. As an amenity to townships the figure reaches up to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and there are probably intermediate stages.

I will quote in particular the scheme which the present Minister submitted, because he prepared the costing of it. That scheme related to a little settlement named Hampden, which is $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Hansborough, where there is a pumping plant. On today's costs that scheme would show a return of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, based on the rating under the Act of 1s. 9d. an acre. In order to bring that up to a 3 per cent return the rating would have to be 3s. 6d. an acre. If that scheme were based on a $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent return, four times the rating under the Act would have to be imposed. We can see, therefore, how impossible it would be for these people to accept a scheme, even if it were granted, and I am quite certain the Minister would not approve of a scheme under which the people had to contribute 6s. or 7s. an acre. Because of circumstances beyond their control, and probably beyond the Minister's control, those people will be perpetually denied water reticulation unless the existing policy is changed.

I was accused of saying that the charges for water should be increased. I did say—and I say it again—that I think it would be fair for all people to pay the 2s. 6d. rebate which many South Australians now have to pay. In a question to the Minister I asked how many people on the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline paid 2s. 6d. today, and I think he replied that some people paid the 2s. 6d. and some did not. That is rather a peculiar position. This week I will attend a meeting in my district at which people will have a proposition for an electricity extension submitted to them: they will be asked to pay an annual charge of about £20 a year because that electricity has to be taken a little further out, which makes it less profitable. As a result they will be required to make this additional contribution. When we come to water, however, we find that, although pumping may cost £100,000, £200,000, or even perhaps £500,000, those people are not asked to pay any more. I do not suggest that they be asked to pay a surcharge on the water pumped to them for I know how impossible it would be to gauge that, but I think it is reasonable that they should be asked to pay 2s. 6d. the same as people on the Morgan-Whyalla line. We are depending more and more on pumped water. Perhaps the member for Stuart will agree with me. He is probably a 2s. 6d. touch himself.

Mr. Riches—I agree that we are becoming more and more dependent on the Government for all sorts of things.

Mr. HAMBOUR—If the supply of water is a Government prop I accept the argument. If Port Augusta is not 2s. 6d. I would like to know why not, because after all it is on main-pumped water. What is the situation in Port Pirie? Is that in the bargain basement too? That is again cock-eyed and yet here is a situation only $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the pumping plant and I can only get water for them at an exorbitant rating because I am not prepared to ask the Minister for more money out of revenue to add to his already high deficit. The Minister of Works has the tail-enders of water reticulation. Ninety-four per cent of the State's population can turn taps on. What are we going to do about the other 6 per cent? Inflated costs cause a difficult problem, but are we going to face up to it or say, "You cannot have water?" That really concerns me. I have several situations that will try to measure up to a financial proposition, but I am afraid they will not make the grade. Unless the Government

is prepared to look at the whole principle and policy of water reticulation I am afraid my constituents are not going to get water and, I believe, that applies in the Burra district and other country districts. The Gouger district has its problem but that district can speak for itself. I accept the fact that the Government is being generous in saying it will take a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent return on money on which it has to pay 5 per cent. That is a fair proposition, but it is not fair to the people who have no water in relation to those who have water.

I took out an analysis of the return of the other water districts and they are not so bright. The Adelaide water district returned 1.8 per cent, Barossa 1.4 per cent, Beetaloo a loss, Tod River a loss, Warren a loss, Morgan-Whyalla 1.5 per cent, and the others collectively lost. The total return was .2 per cent. If the whole of the State can return only .2 per cent on a much lower capital cost structure than exists today and my proposition can make a return equal to the best or near equal to the best on today's high cost structure, I say my people have more than qualified for water reticulation as compared with those who already have it.

I should like to see this whole question analysed. I know you cannot get something for nothing but I am quite sure that many of these schemes were denied simply because they could be put into effect only as money was available, and those on the tail end are going to be denied water or will have to pay an excessive rate. I have referred to the Minister for consideration a scheme that was brought into effect three years ago under which ratepayers are assessed at 3s. 4d. an acre on land that is not top quality land but could be described as medium land. Some of it is bad limestone and not capable of crop production. The men on this land managed while high prices and good seasons prevailed. Some who are in good circumstances will not be troubled by this rate, but I can refer to one man who has to find £110 a year for water. It may be said, and truly so, that he is entitled to £110 worth of water a year, but last year when he really needed the water he was restricted to a gallonage. In future dry seasons that will occur again and that man is not game to put in additional plantings on which he could use his water. The Government is rating or assessing people far beyond its capacity to supply them with water. I have not the answer to that but I know the position exists and I think it is unreasonable to assess a man for

something with which he cannot be supplied. That is the position with this particular extension put in three years ago. These people for whom I am seeking a supply at Hampden are in that position. They couldn't possibly use the water because when they needed it they would be denied its use. What we have to decide is this: is water an amenity? It is an amenity that is supplied to the majority of the people.

Mr. Jennings—Is it a necessity?

Mr. HAMBOUR—I say it is a necessity and in many cases people have to cart it. I ask the Government to look at the whole scheme to see if our deficit on water can be reduced even it is means lifting the price to 2s. 6d. for all so that we can deal with this remaining 6 per cent of the population and give them some hope of a scheme in the future.

I would like to go back to my people and say, "Yes, there is hope of getting water even though it has been costed out of your reach. I believe the Government will consider the whole question of policy and enable you to get the same terms as those with a water scheme put in some 15 to 20 years ago." It can be worked out that if the Government accepts from the newcomers as much as $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent those people would be virtually paying 27 times as much as those people who were connected 15 to 20 years ago. I ask the Government to review the matter because if it does not these people will not get water. I have been accused of saying some harsh things about the Electricity Trust, as well as some nice things. I regard it as the most efficient body of men that serve South Australia as a unit. Their application to their work has astonished me. When I have been promised something in one year and have got it one year earlier I have been most grateful. My constituents are mighty pleased with the service they get from the trust. They are pleased about the new financial arrangements and are not unhopeful of further reductions in charges. I am sure that the Treasurer will confer with the chairman of the trust to see whether further concessions can be granted. Of course, some anomalies exist. A man outside Tarlee was not included in a group through no fault of his own, and that could be supported by a report obtained by the trust. Subsequently he was brought in and the annual charge to him is three times more than it should be. In another instance a man is still being charged £124 a year, and his account with the trust is about £350. Surely he is

entitled to special consideration. I will refer these cases to the trust and I hope they will get the consideration they deserve.

Last year I referred to the loss made on railway refreshment rooms and made arrangements for an interested party to interview the Minister of Railways with a view to leasing them. I do not know what has happened since, but I hope the conclusion will be satisfactory to the State. The losses exceeded £20,000 a year and the position could be improved by collecting rentals for the rooms. I believe the Premier said in his policy speech that the railways would endeavour to get business from road transport on a competitive basis.

Mr. Ryan—They are going to increase fares.

Mr. HAMBOUR—We should get business by means of competition, not restriction. The railways should be able to beat road transport in getting business because they have many facilities not held by road transport, although road transport can take goods from door to door. Where business is available to them the railways should quote competitive prices. Last year I protested against wood being carted by a road operator to be sold to the Supply and Tender Board. It was a considerable quantity, and now tenders are being called for 1,600 tons. In the past wood has been carted by road to a Government utility. I tried to get it brought down by rail but the powers that be would not make a concession. I now have a document showing that they will accept an alternative quote on railway trucks. This shows that at last some common sense is being used. The contract for the wood carting is worth more than £1,000 to the Railways Department, and this sort of thing must be happening all over the State. Railway officers are keen to get the business, but they have no control over Government departments which refuse to give the railways a priority. In this way the business is lost. I do not want the House

to believe that the change of heart has been the result of my efforts. The man carting the wood by road apparently was hiring trucks without a permit from the Transport Control Board. I am not criticizing that, but I am criticizing what some Government departments are doing. They are taking business away from a Government undertaking.

There are several other matters I shall mention when the individual lines are discussed, but now I want to say something to Mr. Riches. In future when he quotes me I ask him to stick to the facts, not distort them. When he was speaking I thought he was a verbal contortionist. He took words completely out of their text and accused me of being a Socialist. I am generous in my outlook and I can see some good in the worst of people. I am accused of being a Socialist because I advocate the extension of water supplies and electricity services. I am also accused for advocating a better road system. If anyone looks at a certain document he will see that it refers to roads, electricity services and water supplies. Because of my remarks about those three utilities I was called a Socialist. I repeat what the member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Hutchens) said, because it is worth repeating:—

The best type of industry is truly competitive, free enterprise.

I shall have more to say when we deal with the lines.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Legislative Council intimated its concurrence in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.52 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 19, at 2 p.m.