

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, September 15, 1959.

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

QUESTIONS.**CONCESSION FARES FOR PENSIONERS ATTENDING HOSPITAL.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I understand that for some time past it has been the practice of the Government to provide free transport to pensioners who must travel from the country to the Royal Adelaide Hospital for specialized treatment. I believe that some pensioners paid their own fares and were reimbursed by the Hospitals Department after their arrival in Adelaide, whereas others, who were unable to find the money, were able to obtain an authority from the local police officer in order to provide for the fare. I am reliably informed that the practice of allowing police officers to grant this authority in certain proper cases has been changed and now it is necessary for all persons who are entitled to this assistance first to pay their fare and then be reimbursed by the Hospitals Department. I point out that this entails hardship to indigent persons in some cases. Will the Premier have the matter investigated to see whether my information is correct, and if it is, will he see that the former practice is reverted to?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not aware that there has been any departure from the previous practice. It is just conceivable that the recent decision to provide free transport of pensioners to hospitals in the metropolitan area was taken as the general Cabinet approval for reimbursement. If so, I assure the Leader that was not previously intended: the decision given was intended to apply to the metropolitan area. I will take the matter up with the Minister of Health. I appreciate that some fares from the country may amount to several pounds, which would conceivably be well beyond the means of the traveller.

INNAMINCKA OIL EXPLORATION.

Mr. COUMBE—As oil exploration work has been going on in the north-eastern part of the State, as the Mines Department co-operated with the companies that are investigating and carrying out the exploration work, and as this work is important to South Australia, will the Premier, representing the Minister of Mines, report to this House on the progress of that work?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I understand it is the policy of the company to issue to the Stock Exchange or the press a weekly progress report regarding the drilling programme, and that will be continued. In general terms, I do not believe that the work has been unsatisfactory: the bore is now over 10,000ft. deep; it is still in sedimentary rocks; and although there have been no significant commercial discoveries, I understand from the officers who have been conducting the operations that the information obtained is very valuable. As far as I know, everyone is entirely happy with the progress of the work up to the present. Overseas experience shows that there is a very slight chance indeed of striking oil in the first bore put down in the field, and that much geological and investigational work is necessary, sometimes involving a considerable number of bores, before commercial oil is found, so the fact that the Innamincka bore has not produced oil should not be regarded at this stage as meaning that oil will not be found in the centre of Australia. In point of fact, I think the investigations up to the present have been promising. I shall be pleased to take the matter up with the Minister of Mines to see if it is possible to give honourable members a more detailed and conclusive report soon regarding the work.

ST. MARGARET'S HOSPITAL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has entered into reciprocal arrangements for the care of aged pensioners who have to go to St. Margaret's Hospital at Semaphore? I understand that those people are at present being charged, whereas those that go to that home from the Royal Adelaide Hospital are not charged.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think the honourable member is referring to an arrangement which was made between the Government and St. Margaret's Hospital at Semaphore, and under which the latter undertook the care of convalescent patients from the Royal Adelaide Hospital, thus relieving very valuable bed accommodation at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. I will take the matter up with the Minister of Health to see whether similar arrangements can be made regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. St. Margaret's has done a magnificent job in assisting recuperation work after severe illnesses, and has relieved very valuable bed space of the Hospitals Department for more active nursing.

DISPOSAL OF STOCK.

Mr. HEASLIP—A serious position is confronting stockowners throughout the country areas. Their problem is how they are to dispose of their stock, most of which are still in a condition in which they can be transported from one area to another. However, the time is fast approaching when that stock will not be in that condition, and stock-owners will have to dispose of them by cutting their throats and burying them. Can the Treasurer provide, as has been done before, for concessions on the railways for the transportation of these stock in an endeavour to get as many as possible out of the State or to areas where some feed is still available for them?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am afraid that the problem the honourable member has mentioned is not so easy of solution as by transportation. Previously when we have had a dry season in some parts of the State we have had an unusually good season in the South-East, and I think that on one occasion about 2,000,000 sheep were moved to that part of the State; but, unfortunately, this year the dry conditions apply generally over the inside areas and at present I do not know of any areas either in South Australia or adjacent to the State that have not been confronted with a feed problem of the type mentioned by the honourable member.

Mr. Heaslip—Western Australia is all right.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Reports I have had from Western Australia only this morning are not to that effect. The position is not good in that State and in places where there is feed there is a shortage of water. It is not a problem of easy solution, but I will examine it, particularly to see whether there is any possibility of transporting stock to suitable areas. If that is possible, I assure the honourable member that the Government will do its utmost to facilitate it.

GRAIN STOCKS.

Mr. STOTT—Notwithstanding the few showers of rain that we experienced over the week-end, the position in some parts of the State is still very grim, and is getting desperate. I have already been asked questions about the Government's intentions in providing assistance to drought-stricken areas. Stocks of barley and seed wheat are rapidly becoming depleted, and if the Government intends to consider this matter it must act fairly quickly in order to conserve stocks of fodder at various points, either by providing assistance or by providing concessional freight rates for seed barley moved

to points where it is required. As the matters I have raised require some consideration by the Government, will the Premier place the matter before Cabinet as it has now become an urgent matter, and will he give me a reply as soon as possible?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Minister of Agriculture has already examined the position regarding grain stocks. The stocks of feed barley in South Australia are negligible, but there are fairly heavy stocks of wheat in some parts of the State. Up to the present there has been no demand for wheat for feed purposes, and it is doubtful whether at the present price of wheat it is economic for the wheat to be used for this purpose. On the general question, over a number of years we have had some experience in this matter and almost without exception any special steps taken by this Parliament have proved either to be inadequate in one respect or disastrous in regard to losses in another. The honourable member will recall that once, when it appeared that the position would be similar to the present position, we provided for large stocks of hay to be acquired by the Government. Then we had a good rain and the hay stocks were left on our hands for a number of years until they deteriorated so badly that we had to sell them at disastrously low prices. That is the type of thing that will, of course, always happen in this matter. There are ample stocks of wheat in South Australia at present, and so far as I can see they will not be moved for a considerable time. Stocks of feed barley are negligible, but I understand that the Barley Board, as a matter of policy, is not selling any more barley overseas.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Prior to the House going into recess during Show Week members pointed out, and it became apparent to me, that this season would be critical and I asked the Minister of Agriculture to obtain the current figures for wheat and barley stocks in South Australia and to ascertain what provision was being made, and would be made, to supplement them if necessary. Has the Minister a statement to make on this matter?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—This matter was referred to by the Premier and I should like to supplement what he said about present stocks of grain, which are not high. Mr. Nankivell raised this matter some time ago and I have had much discussion with the Barley Board and the Wheat Board about the various problems that appear to be cropping up because of the continuance of the bad season. Under its Act the Barley Board is

charged with having regard to meeting barley requirements in South Australia. During this season it has retained more than twice the quantity normally retained in this State. Of course, much barley has been committed, but I am talking about the stocks uncommitted, and they have fallen rapidly indeed over the last few weeks. Because of this the board has at present rationed barley to individual buyers down to 25 bags a week, because it wants to ensure that the barley is used properly and is not cornered by any particular body. Uncommitted stocks of barley for feed purposes in South Australia at the end of August were 118,300 bags. The board also held 69,000 bags in Victoria but, as I have said, since then the figure has dropped rapidly. In addition, the board is committed to load overseas barley for its prospective buyers and always has to retain about 10 per cent of each load in case the masters of the ships want to load 10 per cent more, and they can also load 10 per cent less. In other words, provision is made for up to 10 per cent more being required, which very likely will not be required. Under those normal conditions it may be assumed that there would be another quantity of barley left available in the State and, although it could not be said to be uncommitted, it would probably be available. What quantity it would be is anyone's guess, but it could be 50,000 bags or more. The honourable member asked me about seed for the next year, and the reply made by the Barley Board on August 29 to this question was:—

It is customary for the board in any year to make available to barley growers supplies of barley for seeding purposes from country stocks. Although the present indications are that the barley harvested from the current season could be well below normal it is still believed that there will be ample supplies available from the coming crop to supply whatever is needed by barley growers for their needs for seeding purposes. It is, however, desirable for growers who require barley for next year's seeding to lodge their applications with the Australian Barley Board at 30 Chesser Street, Adelaide, as early as possible in the New Year.

That letter was written on August 29 and because of the changing situation I have had further discussions with the Barley Board about it, as we still do not know anything about this season's crop. The chairman of the Barley Board, Mr. Spafford, who is an ex-Director of Agriculture and has probably an unequalled knowledge of agriculture in South Australia, is not so worried about the position that he considers there will be no

seed or anything like that, but he made a statement that may be of interest. He said:—

A review of the South Australian total production of barley and the average yield per acre harvested shows that if the 1959-60 season eventually proves as bad as the worst season recorded since 1896-97 there will be ample barley harvested to much more than supply the seed requirements for 1960-61. In the past 62 seasons the average annual yield of barley has on three occasions only been below 10 bushels per acre, viz., in 1896-97 at 7.44 bushels, in 1914-15 6.75 bushels and in 1944-45 at 8.85 bushels per acre. Even if the unlikely disaster of a total failure did overcome South Australia, present-day reports of agricultural conditions in Queensland and Western Australia strongly indicate good barley crops in both States, and as Prior variety predominates in Queensland, and is important in Western Australia, there should be no difficulty, except a freightage charge, in securing seed supplies.

As regards wheat, the following statement was made to me by the Wheat Board on September 7:—

It is estimated that after meeting current commitments for export wheat and flour, also home consumption requirements for flour and stock feed, etc., up to November 30, there will be about 5,000,000 bushels on hand including stocks held by flour mills. Should there be a heavy demand for wheat for stock feeding due to the seasonal conditions steps will be taken to ensure that sufficient reserves are retained to provide seed for the 1960 season.

COLLECTIONS FOR ASSISTANCE TO ABORIGINES.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Is the Premier aware that a move has been made by a Mr. H. Roberts to collect moneys in South Australia on behalf of an organization known as the Australian Aboriginal Council and that letters have been sent out on the letterhead of such a body asking for money for various projects for aborigines, such as hospitals, housing, education and scholarships. Does such a request come within the terms of the Collections for Charitable Purposes Act? I am under the impression that this body is not licensed under that Act. Information I have obtained from Victoria shows that Mr. Sexton, M.H.R., was originally approached to be a trustee of the organization, but he hurriedly withdrew after getting information from the Aborigines Welfare Department in Victoria. Although premises have been obtained in South Australia by Mr. Roberts and he is addressing organizations and asking for money, up to the present no aborigines' organization in South Australia that I can find can trace any money going to aborigines from the collections in this State. Will an investigation be made to see what the *bona fides* of the organization may be and what are the purposes of the collection?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Minister in charge of the Aborigines Department has heard of the activities of this collector and inquiries are being made. We shall be able to inform the honourable member soon on the *bona fides* of these activities and whether it has legal authority to proceed with the collections. I can assure the honourable member that an investigation is already in hand.

DEBT COLLECTORS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Does the Premier (as Acting Attorney-General) know that the principals of a firm operating as bad debt collectors mysteriously disappeared from the State taking with them the money they collected; that they had to be brought back and that they were prosecuted; and that a company of bad debt collectors was recently registered and operated in the western districts and that the two principals had a number of convictions? Will the Premier consider the advisability of making it necessary for bad debt collectors to enter into bonds so that the public may be protected?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no immediate knowledge of the matters raised but I will ask the Chief Secretary tomorrow to obtain a report. No doubt the Police Department or the Crown Law Office

will know of these matters, and I will give the House a report soon.

SHEEP STEALING.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Recently I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question regarding sheep stealing in my district and in his reply the Minister said that he would obtain a report from the Police Commissioner regarding the prevalence of sheep stealing in this State. Has the Minister any information to give the House?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—To supplement the reply I gave previously I obtained from the Chief Secretary the following report by the Commissioner of Police:—

The attached table shows the number of sheep reported as stolen each year from 1956 to August 20, 1959. From this it will be seen that, with the exception of the River Murray districts, there has been a distinct falling-off in the thefts reported. In considering these figures it should be noted that there is actually an element of doubt concerning the actual numbers missing when reports are made. Quite often incorrect or careless counting when checks are made can cause the figures to rise sharply and losses reported as thefts are often found to be due to sheep straying into the scrub and becoming lost.

I have a table that came with this report and I ask permission for it to be incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

RECORD OF SHEEP STEALING BETWEEN 1956-1959.

District	1959 (to 20/8/59).		1958.		1957.		1956.	
	Offences.	Sheep stolen.	Offences.	Sheep stolen.	Offences.	Sheep stolen.	Offences.	Sheep stolen.
South-Eastern . . .	7	368	11	1,011	12	668	5	136
River Murray . . .	5	297	6	154	10	245	14	562
Southern and Hills . .	9	346	14	761	21	692	29	1,132
Mid-Northern . . .	9	271	8	696	14	972	17	424
Upper and Far . . .								
Northern . . .	2	152	4	257	4	297	2	245
West Coast . . .	1	30	—	—	9	1,745	8	786
Yorke Peninsula . .	1	20	4	114	6	327	1	12
Totals	34	1,484	47	2,993	76	4,946	76	3,297

RAILWAY FARE INCREASES.

Mr. TAPPING—Recently it was announced in the press that railway fares would be increased from October 1 and that the average increase would be about 14 per cent. I have learned that in some parts of the metropolitan area the increase will be much greater, apparently because the railway is operating without opposition, therefore the patrons will be expected to pay more. Would the Minister of Works ascertain from the Minister of Rail-

ways if this is so, and will he obtain details of the various rates?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Yes.

INFANTILE SCURVY.

Mr. QUIRKE—In a recent copy of the *South Australian Farmer*, a provincial paper, is published an extract of an article from the Health and Publicity Council of Victoria written by Dr. Elizabeth Turner, a specialist in children's welfare in Victoria, in an effort to

reduce the incidence of infantile scurvy, which in Australia is the highest in the world, particularly in New Australians, who have attempted to adopt our practices when they have not been immunized against some of our methods. The article states:—

There is a general tendency to abandon the use of home-cooked infant foods and to rely more on sterilized, tinned, pasteurized and denatured food stuffs, without supplementary practices.

Can the Premier, representing the Minister of Health, assure the House that conditions such as that are not evident in South Australia, or if they are, what steps are being taken to offset them?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will put the honourable member's question to the Minister of Health to see if a survey can be made in connection with this particular matter. If the survey discloses room for anxiety I will point out to the Minister of Health that this might be a subject to which the *Health Notes* might refer at an appropriate time. *Health Notes*, which are widely distributed, serve a useful function and appropriate action might be taken through them.

PUMPING FROM SPRINGS AT HOPE VALLEY.

Mr. LAUCKE—A group of market gardening families for generations—in fact, since 1877—have relied on water from springs immediately below the Hope Valley reservoir for irrigating their properties and they are most perturbed at advice from the Engineering and Water Supply Department that it intends to pump water from these springs into the reservoir. If carried out, this proposal would impose severe hardship on those dependent on this supply of water. Will the Minister of Works, as a matter of urgency, have the proposal reviewed? I point out that in 1914 and again in 1934 similar proposals were not implemented when the injustice to the relevant landholders was realized.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—This week I received a letter from a gentleman, whose name I have forgotten at the moment, on behalf of the group of people to whom apparently the honourable member refers. He did mention the two previous occasions when it was proposed, as it is now proposed, to utilize this water by pumping it into the reservoir and he pointed out that on both occasions the proposal was not proceeded with. I think the reason for the two previous decisions not to proceed with pumping this water into the reservoir was that before

pumping actually commenced the need for it disappeared; the State was fortunate enough to have very good rains at the appropriate time obviating the necessity for action being taken. If we should be so fortunate again I have no doubt that the Engineer-in-Chief would not proceed with the proposal. I have referred the letter to the Engineer-in-Chief. I have perused the docket in relation to this and previous decisions, and I think there is still some doubt as to whether the water, which it is claimed comes from natural springs, does in fact come from natural springs or from seepage from the reservoir.

Mr. Laucke—It is a natural spring.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—That is a matter open to argument and upon which I am seeking further information. I do not want to be categorical about it at this stage. When I get an up-to-date report from the engineer I will communicate further with the honourable member and with his constituents who are concerned.

DIVERSION ROAD AROUND ELIZABETH.

Mr. CLARK—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently concerning the proposal to provide a diversion road around the township of Elizabeth?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Minister of Roads has conveyed to me the following report by the Commissioner of Highways:—

Land has been reserved for a by-pass around Elizabeth. The reservation leaves the Main North Road near the junction of the road to the drive-in theatre, passes on the eastern side of Elizabeth and rejoins the Main North Road north of the Smithfield Hotel. The by-pass will not be constructed in the near future, but the reservation will be available when the dual highway through Elizabeth cannot cope with the increased traffic.

BEETALOO VALLEY PRIMARY PRODUCERS.

Mr. RICHES—Some primary producers in the Beetaloo Valley because of the adverse season are suffering as economically as are the farmers whose cases have been mentioned here this afternoon. They have suffered severe losses because of frosts and one orange grove is now completely out of production and has been turned back into a sheep run. For some time these producers have hoped that the Premier might visit the area to discuss their problems with them firsthand. Can the Premier indicate if it is possible for him to go there at an early date or, if not, could he deputize one of his Ministers to go there and discuss these problems firsthand with the producers?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Some considerable time ago I made a commitment to the honourable member that I would visit this area at his request. I regret that I have not up to date honoured that promise, but I will see if I can fit it in in the near future.

MATERIALS FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. KING—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently regarding road-making materials?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My colleague, the Minister of Roads, has now forwarded me the following report by the Commissioner of Highways:—

Satisfactory natural soils occur and have been used in parts of this State for roads with traffic of light density. The Main Roads Department of Western Australia has been written for details in respect of the report mentioned by the honourable member, but no comment on the possibility of locating and using similar materials in South Australia can be made until details have been obtained.

STUART ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question concerns the Stuart Royal Commission. According to press reports, discussion took place in Chambers to the effect that Mr. Travers, Q.C., President of the Law Society, was likely to appear for Stuart. At the hearing on Friday it seems that difficulties were raised regarding Mr. Travers' appearance. As this was subsequent to a visit by the Premier to the Chairman of the Commission, does it indicate in any way that the Government is averse to Mr. Travers' appearing, and was that a subject dealt with in the interview between the Premier and the Chief Justice?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No. The Government has always been most anxious that Stuart have counsel, and indeed it has offered to pay for counsel. That offer has been open for a considerable time, but until now has not been accepted. The visit to the Chief Justice had nothing to do with Mr. Travers' representation of Stuart; in fact, it dealt with other matters altogether. Whether Mr. Travers can represent Stuart depends upon commitments he has to other clients. He is concerned in another case scheduled to come on today and which, as far as I know, did come on today. That was the factor causing complications so far as Mr. Travers was concerned.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Arising out of a reply given by the Premier to the member for Enfield, I ask the Premier is it not the case that the ordering of Criminal Court lists is

in the hands of the prosecution in South Australia and, in consequence, it is in the hands of the prosecution to say whether it will facilitate the appearance of Mr. Travers, Q.C. before the Royal Commission in view of the other briefs he has? Further, has the Crown Law Department taken any action in that way to facilitate the appearance before the Commission of Mr. Travers, Q.C.?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The setting out of the programme for this month had, of course, been done long before Mr. Travers' appearance had even been mentioned. Arrangements had been made for witnesses, counsel and everything else, and as the trial of the other man had been delayed already on, I think, two occasions, there was a strong case for it to continue. No doubt the delays have worried the defendant. I instructed Mr. Chamberlain that, if the Commission desired it and the Court was prepared to grant an adjournment of this case to facilitate the appearance of Mr. Travers before the Commission, we would not oppose it. There was no embargo and no desire to force the other case on if it could be set aside with the agreement of the parties, but I understand the Commission itself felt that, unless it had some assurance that some material evidence would be produced, it would have some doubts about granting a long adjournment.

Mr. Dunstan—How could any counsel give any assurance before going into his instructions? It would be impossible for anyone to do that.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I can only tell the honourable member the position as I know it to be—that the Crown Solicitor was advised by me that we would not oppose an adjournment of the Promnitz case if the Commission desired it and if the trial judge was prepared to grant it. I understand that no application was made for an adjournment and that the case is proceeding.

TOWN PLANNING APPEAL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—A couple of years ago, arising out of an appeal against the holders of certain land in the hills which came to be known as the Skye subdivision, Parliament set up a Select Committee to deal with an appeal against the Town Planner's decision. During the period the committee was considering that appeal the matter was taken to the Full Supreme Court, which, by a majority decision, delivered a judgment that to some extent, I believe, criticized the Act, certainly the Town Planner's authority, and to some

extent, indirectly, the Select Committee's authority. Mr. Justice Abbott said:—

Although there has been a considerable number of administrative tribunals set up in England by various statutes, this Town Planning Act is the first, so far as I can discover, which purports to give a final appeal by the tribunal (not by the applicant) to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament.

He further said:—

However, for what it is worth, this legislation makes the furthest advance against the Rule of Law which has yet been made by any democratic British Parliament.

He then went on to make certain other references, as did Mr. Justice Reed. As the committee has been more or less left in the air and has not proceeded with the appeal made to it, can the Premier (as Acting Attorney-General) say whether the Government has considered the implications of the judgment and whether, as a result of the judgment, the future work of the Select Committee is rendered impracticable? Further, does the Government intend to introduce amendments to the Town Planning Act with a view to its clarification?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I understand that the ground upon which the objections of the Town Planner were not upheld by the Court was a technical one rather than the ground mentioned by the honourable member. The original Act provides that the Town Planner may refuse to permit a subdivision where the Engineer-in-Chief does not give a certificate that the land can be readily sewered and provided with water. That provision applies, of course, only to the metropolitan area. When the Town Planner considered this subdivision he received a report from the Engineer-in-Chief that it could not be readily sewered and provided with water, and he objected to the subdivision on those grounds, but his objection was not valid because, in point of fact, the land was outside the metropolitan area as defined in the Act, and that was why the court decided to uphold the upsetting of the Town Planner's decision. As far as I know, no subsequent difficulties have arisen in this matter and, as far as I know, it will not be necessary to introduce further legislation regarding it. I have not had any reports on the necessity for any further legislation.

Mr. Fred Walsh—It still only applies to the metropolitan area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That particular provision did. It is one that

obviously could not apply to the country because in many parts of the country sewers are impracticable.

WELLINGTON FERRY SINKING: COMPENSATION.

Mr. JENKINS—Since the sinking of the Wellington ferry some months ago, one of my constituents has written to me regarding a claim he has lodged. It was being dealt with by the Crown Solicitor, who some seven or eight weeks ago advised that payment would be made within three weeks. When I rang the Crown Law Department this morning I was told that the matter had been referred to Cabinet. Can the Premier say whether the matter has been dealt with, and if so, when that person may expect payment?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not know the name of the honourable member's constituent but the Crown Solicitor recommended, without prejudice, that we meet some small personal claims, and this has already been approved by Cabinet. I presume the person concerned would be included in that, if it was a personal claim.

HOUSING TRUST LAND AT WALLAROO.

Mr. HUGHES—I recently asked a question of the Premier regarding land transferred from the Wallaroo Council to the South Australian Housing Trust for the building of homes for needy persons and I understood that he was taking up the matter with the Chairman of the Housing Trust. Has he a reply?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the Housing Trust reports—

At one time the South Australian Housing Trust proposed to build at Wallaroo two houses under the Country Housing Act for pensioners and the like, and, in fact, entered into a contract for this purpose. However, it was found that there were no families at Wallaroo requiring this type of housing and thus the contract was transferred elsewhere. If at any time it is found that there is a need at Wallaroo for this class of housing the trust will endeavour to fill that need.

COOBER PEDY WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. LOVEDAY—On the Coober Pedy opal field the only water supply available is a 500,000gall. underground tank. I am reliably informed that there is only about two months' supply left at the present rate of consumption of the water fit for use, there being considerable sediment in the tank. Will the Minister of Works call for a report on what other convenient supply of good water is available to the residents in the event of present supplies

running out and what effective arrangements can be made for its use?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Officers of the department have kept the Coober Pedy and Andamooka fields under close observation regarding water supplies. I cannot tell the honourable member what the present position is at Coober Pedy but I shall get the latest report and let him have the information.

COMMONWEALTH HOUSING.

Mr. RYAN—During the last war the Commonwealth Government built houses to house munition workers close to their place of work. Recently the following letter was sent by the Department of the Interior to the tenants of these Commonwealth-owned homes:—

Following a full examination of the purposes for which the Commonwealth houses erected for munition workers at Prospect, Ovingham and Woodville North are now being used, approval has been received for these to be offered for sale to the present occupiers thereof. If you are interested in purchasing the house which you are occupying the price required for same may be obtained from the Property Section of this department. All sales will be on a cash basis only. Before transfer can be given for the houses at Prospect and Ovingham it will be necessary for plans of these areas to be lodged with the Town Planner. It will therefore be approximately three months before sales of these houses can be completed. Transfers of the houses at Woodville North can be executed within about four weeks of the signing of a contract for sale and purchase.

There are 118 at Woodville North and the price asked by the department ranges from £1,850 to £2,150, and there are 60 at Prospect and Ovingham. Tenants of these houses, on receipt of the letter, applied to various Commonwealth departments and were informed that the only Commonwealth department available for the buying of properties, providing the prospective purchasers came within the category, was the War Service Homes Department, but it has refused to accept homes for buying purposes owing to the valuation and the type. Will the Premier confer with the Federal authorities for the purpose of arranging and supplying finance for the purchase of these Commonwealth-owned homes at Prospect, Ovingham and Woodville North?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I should like to examine the implication of the question and to make further inquiries before giving an answer. I shall inform the honourable member as soon as I get information on the matter. I do not want to give an answer now because we are getting many applications for the finance available to us for the purchase

of older houses rather than for the erection of new houses. If the money available from Loan funds is merely used to change the ownership of houses we are not helping overcome the over-all housing shortage. Government policy has been, as far as possible, to assist with the funds available the building of new houses rather than the changing of ownership of houses already in existence and occupied. This is a matter of Commonwealth funds being available, but from experience of requests made for Commonwealth funds I know that there is always a sort of back-handed compliment, and they will help us if they can take it out of our money.

PORT PIRIE HOUSING.

Mr. MCKEE—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked some time ago about the stoppage of work on Housing Trust homes at Port Pirie?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have obtained the following report from the chairman of the Housing Trust:—

The demand for rental houses of the South Australian Housing Trust at Port Pirie has virtually ceased; consequently the construction rate of houses at Port Pirie has been slowed down.

ABATTOIRS FACILITIES.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Does the Minister of Agriculture consider that the increased slaughtering facilities provided at the Metropolitan Abattoirs will be capable of coping with the large numbers of sheep, lambs and cattle being submitted for slaughter, and is it expected that a quota system will have to be implemented?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The abattoirs has coped very effectively with the demands made on it. For the week ended August 30, 51,328 sheep and lambs were killed in a five-day week; for the week ended September 6, 72,199 were killed in a six-day week; and for the week ended September 13, 91,064 sheep and lambs were killed in a seven-day working week.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Is the Minister aware that some very light lambs are being submitted for slaughtering and, further, could he suggest the worthwhile minimum weight of a lamb sent in for slaughtering?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The General Manager of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs has reported that his board is very much concerned at the number of light-weight lambs that are being submitted for slaughter. It is obvious from ante-mortem

inspection that many of the lambs will be condemned after slaughter, and in view of the heavy commitments imposed on the works due to seasonal conditions, producers and operators are requested to refrain from forwarding lambs under 30 lb. live weight. It is considered that a lamb at 30 lb. live weight will, on this season's experience, produce a 12 lb. carcass, which is the minimum weight acceptable to the inspection authorities.

GAWLER PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. CLARK—Yesterday I was somewhat concerned to receive from the Corporation of Gawler a report from the Department of Public Health, made by Inspector D. H. Kelly, relating to the toilet accommodation at the Gawler primary school. This somewhat lengthy report, which was rather disquieting, stated, among other things:—

According to the Architect-in-Chief's scale for sanitary accommodation in schools the available accommodation is sufficient for 500 students only. At present there are 820 students attending the school and the numbers are increasing annually.

The report goes on to urge that a number of additional pans and so on should be provided. Will the Minister of Education obtain for me a departmental report on the toilet accommodation at this school with a view to having the matter rectified if possible?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to do so.

MILLICENT WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Recently I asked the Premier whether provision had been made in the Loan programme for a water supply for the township of Millicent, and he said he would investigate the matter. Has he that information now?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Sufficient money has been placed on the Estimates for this year for the preliminary work, including the testing of bores, to commence this financial year.

HAMLEY BRIDGE RIVER CROSSING.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Has the Minister of Lands, in the absence from the Chamber of the Minister of Works, a reply from the Minister of Roads to a question I asked recently about a bridge over the River Light, south of Hamley Bridge?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS, for the Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Minister of Roads has

forwarded the following report by the Commissioner of Highways:—

A survey for a new bridge over the River Light south of Hamley Bridge has been made and is being plotted at present. It is proposed to prepare a plan as soon as possible so that consideration may be given in 1960-61 to the provision of funds for the construction of this bridge.

SPEED LIMIT ON MAIN NORTH ROAD.

Mr. LAUCKE—Can the Premier state whether the 35 miles an hour speed limit applicable to built up areas will apply to the Main North Road at Elizabeth when the two-lane highway is completed?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

TAILEM BEND WORK FORCE.

Mr. BYWATERS—During the debate on the Loan Estimates I asked the Treasurer a question regarding the reduced work force at Tailem Bend, and made a suggestion about a public relations officer for the Railways Department. Has the Treasurer a reply?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—My colleague, the Minister of Railways, has been informed by the Railways Commissioner that the introduction of diesel motive power has resulted in a reduction in the workshops staff at Tailem Bend. There is, however, ample work available at Tailem Bend for the staff now stationed there and the Commissioner considers that it would be uneconomical to forward locomotives or vehicles from Islington to Tailem Bend in order to have repairs carried out which could be more effectively handled at the former location. In addition, the workshops at Tailem Bend are not equipped for certain types of work. Consideration has been given on numerous occasions to the advisability of appointing a public relations officer, but the Commissioner feels that the needs of the Railways Department can be better served by the appointment of additional commercial agents in an endeavour to increase contact with the customer, and this action has been taken recently.

FERRY ACCIDENTS.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Works will be aware that an inquiry was instituted into accidents on ferries, particularly on the River Murray. I understood that a report was to be made available some time ago, but I have not seen any indication that the report has been made. Has the Minister this report, and does he intend to lay it on the table of the House so that members will have an opportunity to see it?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The matter of the operation of punts is not in my jurisdiction, but I will seek the information the honourable member desires from the Minister of Roads and Local Government.

COOBER PEDY SCHOOL.

Mr. LOVEDAY—On July 30, in reply to a question I asked concerning the establishment of a school at Coober Pedy, the Minister of Education quoted a report from Mr. Jolly, the Inspector of Schools, which stated:—

Any native children who are able to speak English satisfactorily and who conform to the normal standards of cleanliness and hygiene will be welcome to attend this school.

Will the Minister of Education consider withdrawing the first qualification, particularly as we already admit to our schools new Australian children who cannot speak English? This seems an unfair qualification to place in the way of an aboriginal child attending school and, if removed, the only qualification that would remain would be that the child should conform to the normal standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have much sympathy with this proposition, but this is not a matter capable of easy solution. I shall be pleased to have the whole position reconsidered to see what can be done, but there will be great difficulty, as it will be a small school with probably only one teacher. I will ask the Director of Education to review the whole matter to see what can be done in the intervening period before the school is opened.

B27 LAWN GRASS.

Mr. SHANNON—Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked on September 1 concerning B27 lawn grass?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I have the following report from the Director of Agriculture:—

This grass has been commercialised in the United States following extensive trials which showed it to be better for turf production in many areas than other strains of Kentucky blue grass. It is known as Merion blue grass in America. It has been sold under the name of B27 in South Australia over the last five or six years. Small turves of the grass have been marketed and planting of lawns has been done by breaking up these turves and planting out small rooted pieces of the grass. More recently seed of Merion blue grass has been on the market in South Australia. This seed has been obtained from America under import licence. Supplies are very limited at present and future availability of Merion blue grass seed on the market is uncertain.

Merion blue grass has been generally satisfactory in this State for producing turf for home gardens, etc. Whether or not it is markedly superior to other strains of blue grass under South Australian conditions is open to question. A series of comparative trials would be needed to clarify this point. It is considered most unlikely that Merion blue grass would ever become a weed under our conditions.

TRANSPORT OF FORESTRY APPRENTICES.

Mr. RALSTON—On August 13 I asked the Minister of Forests a question concerning the transport of apprentices from the Woods and Forests Department at Mount Burr and Nangwarry to the Mount Gambier Adult Education Centre. Has he a reply?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The Conservator of Forests reports:—

Arrangements have been made for apprentices at Mount Burr and Nangwarry to attend the trade school at Mount Gambier from the beginning of the school year in 1960 by using public transport. A travelling allowance of 3s. per trip will be paid by the trade school and the department will recommend that this be subsidized by a further 3s. per trip. The responsibility for providing apprentices with the necessary time off to attend classes is the employer's, while the mode of transport is a personal problem involving each apprentice.

To assist these apprentices, however, special arrangements have been made with the trade school for classes to be held at times which will fit in with public transport. During the balance of this calendar year apprentices have been given the alternative of attending at Mount Gambier with the use of their own transport or of doing a correspondence course. In connection with Cellulose Australia Ltd., I have been informed that their apprentices use their own private transport, but that petrol is supplied by the company for one car per trip.

MONARTO SOUTH RAILWAY COTTAGES.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently concerning the provisions of electricity to the railway cottages at Monarto South?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My colleague, the Minister of Railways, has now furnished me with the following report of the Deputy Railways Commissioner:—

Provision has been made on the current year's estimates for the supply of electricity to the railway cottages at Monarto South. The necessary plans and specifications are being prepared with the view to calling tenders for this work.

FISH TRAWLING.

Mr. SHANNON—I understand the Commonwealth Government has purchased, and is bringing from Scotland, a trawler to be used in surveying the fishing possibilities of our

coastal waters, and that Port Adelaide is to be its base. Does the Minister of Agriculture know whether that is so, whether berthing arrangements have been made with the Harbors Board, and whether the catch, if any, is to be treated in the Port Adelaide area and under what arrangements?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I think this question refers to the Southern Trawling Company, which has been formed as a result of Commonwealth Government activity after receipt of the proceeds from the sale of a whaling enterprise. The company is to be based at Port Adelaide and it proposes to examine the Great Australian Bight to determine the commercial value of fishing there. If successful, the company will no doubt continue to expand its activities.

Mr. Shannon—Do you anticipate a larger fleet of trawlers?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I do not know what the next step will be, but obviously the first thing will be to get the ship here and then to examine the commercial value of fishing in the Bight.

MURRAY RIVER SALINITY.

Mr. STOTT—After the high flood of 1956, water from tributaries and lagoons flowing into the Murray River brought a great quantity of salt, which has caused concern to growers at Waikerie, Loxton and adjacent areas. American authorities, particularly the Tennessee Valley authority, have considered this question and have been successful in meeting the problem by lowering the level of locks from underneath instead of from over the spillway. Can the Minister of Works say whether his department has considered this possibility or whether the River Murray Commission has done so? There is plenty of evidence in Waikerie and other parts of my district that the high saline content of the river is affecting vineyards and citrus trees. If his department has not considered this question, will the Minister institute an inquiry?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—This matter has been the subject of much consideration by the Engineer-in-Chief and his officers, and I have taken an interest in it myself. The member for Chaffey, Mr. King, has asked me a number of questions, both publicly and privately, about this, and we have examined the possibilities from various angles on several occasions. It is correct to say that with the subsidence of the flood, water not only from lagoons and small tributaries drifts back into

the river, but also subterranean waters dammed back by the high pressure of water, and so the salinity increases as a result of the return of the river to normal level. At least twice I have discussed with the Engineer-in-Chief the suggestion that the denser, more saline waters do drift to the bottom of the river at points where the river is deeper and that the more saline water would be better removed if the locks were opened at the bottom instead of the top. The Engineer-in-Chief has assured me that such is not the case, saying that this has been proved by experiments made by his officers who have from time to time taken samples of water at various depths and in various places along the river, particularly adjacent to locks. He has assured me that it would not improve the quality of the water to any extent if such steps were taken; if, indeed, it were possible to implement them. I assure the honourable member that this matter has not gone unnoticed and it has been studied on several occasions and, no doubt, long before my advent to the Ministry of Works. If information is available from overseas contrary to what I have, I should be interested to examine any report. From the Engineer-in-Chief's advice and from my own investigations I do not think we could hope to improve the quality of the water by the means suggested.

STATE BANK ADVANCES.

Mr. STOTT—Legislation introduced last year provided for loans up to £3,000 for the purchase of new homes. Naturally, there has been a big increase in the number of applications to the State Bank for loans, and this has caused some delay. A letter I received recently is as follows:—

Settlement under the contract is expressed to be subject to suitable finance being arranged, and at the time of signing the contract our clients were given to understand that the necessary finance would be available in from six to eight weeks. He has now been advised that application for a loan has been made to the State Bank, and that while the loan has been approved it will not be available for at least six months.

The Treasurer will readily see that the vendor of the property, having signed a contract, is probably bound for six months, and in the meantime he may have been able to sell his property to somebody else. Six months seems a rather long time. Will the Treasurer look at this matter, and see if these loans can be expedited?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member will realize that the State

Bank depends for finance on the State Government, which in turn obtains its money through the Loan Council. That money has to be raised concurrently with the spending programme, and it is not possible to spend the whole year's programme in the first few months of the financial year. If the honourable member will let me have the documents in his possession I will see that this matter is investigated.

GEORGE'S CORNER (NEAR PORT PIRIE).

Mr. RICHES—I have been approached by people living in Nelshaby who are concerned at the lack of warning signs at George's Corner, near Port Pirie. Last Saturday week a fatal accident occurred on this road when a taxi driver was unable to negotiate the bend, which is the sharpest one anywhere on the highway. A sign there shows that there is a cross road, but there are no warning signs to indicate dangerous curves. The people in that vicinity, particularly the fruitgrowers, have frequently asked me to inquire whether the Highways Department could place warning signs on the road and also see that the "cross roads" sign is placed where it can be seen by people who travel diagonally across the main road to Nelshaby. Will the Minister of Works ask his colleague (the Minister of Roads) to remedy this deficiency?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will take the matter up with my colleague. I am familiar with the crossing to which the honourable member refers. The new deviation road which has been constructed behind the town of Port Pirie enters the main highway at that point, and it was deliberately made a very sharp approach, I think for the purpose of slowing down traffic where the two highways meet. I know that, prior to that sharp bend being constructed, accidents occurred because the entry into the main highway was too easy and therefore traffic approached it rather too quickly. I appreciate the honourable member's point regarding warning signs, and I will take that matter up with my colleague.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

Mr. STOTT—Will the Minister of Education consider an alteration to school holidays, by having the same total amount of holidays that is now available but cutting down the length of the Christmas vacation and adding to the holidays at the two other breaks in the school year, which I think would be beneficial and would give the teachers longer time to prepare for the examination period? I believe the

breaking up of holidays into different periods is well worth consideration.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have already given the matter some thought. I have discussed it with the Director and Deputy Director until and including this morning, and have also given thought to the other suggestions as to some degree of uniformity of holidays between the public schools and the private schools. However, the latter problem is not by any means capable of easy solution, because the private schools vary between themselves as well, and in any case we have no power to make them uniform. I should be only too pleased, as would the Director of Education, to initiate a discussion with the heads of independent schools to see whether some uniformity could be brought about, and certainly to see whether the different holiday periods at present observed by the Education Department schools are the best ones, or whether they can be altered in the way suggested by the honourable member or in any other way.

FINANCE FOR HOMES.

Mr. RICHES—Before the House rose on September 2 I asked the Treasurer if he would inquire of the Savings Bank whether it would be prepared to make loans to owner-builders. In the interim, a carpenter from Port Augusta who applied to the Savings Bank for an advance to build a home was advised that it was not the policy of the Savings Bank to make any advance to owner-builders. No reason or explanation was given. That decision could have been reached before the Treasurer had an opportunity of approaching the bank. Has the Treasurer had an opportunity of approaching the Savings Bank, and if so, what has been the result?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have received a letter from Mr. Caire, General Manager of the Savings Bank, which states:—

In the years soon after the second World War building contractors for private homes were difficult to find, and the Savings Bank of South Australia played a big part in assisting people to erect their homes by personal effort and through sub-contract. Over 1,500 owner-builders have been granted loans by the bank. Where a person is a competent and experienced tradesman in the building industry and is engaging sub-contractors, consideration is given to an application for a loan. In recent years more contractors have become available, and with an increasing number of applications being received for buildings under contract the amount of loanable funds for new building purposes is being fully taken up.

I conclude that that means that the Savings Bank is restricting its loans to persons who

are competent tradesmen or in cases where there is a contractor. I have an appointment, I think within the next two days, with the bank board, and I will discuss this matter with the board personally and see whether I can obtain further information for the honourable member.

USE OF POLICE NOTES IN COURTS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am concerned about two recent cases, one not as yet before the courts and one which has already been before the courts. The first case was *Fullarton v. Wyness* in the Local Court of Adelaide, in which case the sole witness of an accident was a police officer, Constable Gutte. This officer had left the Police Force at the time of the hearing and was subpoenaed to appear before the court. Not being any longer a member of the Police Force, he had not his original notes he took at the time of the accident, but he had made a police report just after he had made those original notes while the facts were still fresh in his memory, and he asked that he be allowed to refresh his memory from that so that he could give evidence to the court. For this purpose the Commissioner's department was subpoenaed to produce the accident report made by the constable so that he might refresh his memory. Under the rules of evidence, he would not be allowed to go and look at the police report and then come and give evidence, but would have to produce in the court the document from which he refreshed his memory. When the case was called on there was a certificate from the Chief Secretary to the effect that he had seen the police report and that in his view it belonged to a class of documents which in the public interest ought not to be produced. That meant that the constable's evidence, which was the only independent evidence of the accident, could not effectively be given to the court, and the case had to be settled at considerable disadvantage to the plaintiff.

The second case concerns a similar matter, and is the case of Antonio Barone against a nominal defendant nominated by the Treasurer under the Road Traffic Act. In that particular case, Barone, a constituent of mine, was knocked down by an unknown vehicle. A Municipal Tramways Trust bus was involved in the accident. The only evidence that Barone could obtain was the evidence of the police officers who attended at the scene of the accident, since Barone himself was knocked unconscious and did not see what occurred. A request has been made to peruse the police report, and a reply has been received from

the Commissioner of Police that it is not the practice of his department to supply particulars from reports of accidents where Government or semi-Government vehicles are involved. I ask the Premier to take up with the Chief Secretary the question of policy in these particular matters, because the plaintiff in one case has already been prevented, and in the other case will almost certainly be prevented, from presenting his case properly to the courts in circumstances which cannot prejudice the Police Department in any way if the reports are released and the police officers are able to give to the courts the evidence which they should be able to give relating to the accidents in question. Will the Premier investigate these particular cases and see whether the policy can be reversed in these matters?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will place the matter before the Chief Secretary. For about 30 to 50 years there has been a rule that the Government does not provide evidence with which to shoot itself.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is obvious here.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—On this point I do not agree with the honourable member, because the Tramways Trust is not a governmental or semi-governmental instrumentality.

Mr. O'Halloran—I was referring to the electoral position.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Surely the honourable member would not expect us to take any action that would deprive him of his seat. I do not know who gave the ruling in the first place but the Police Commissioner works under it. The Police Department has always had some hesitancy about making police reports available because it has found that if people are asked to give information to the police knowing that they will be called on later to give evidence in the court they are hesitant about becoming involved. Instead of setting out fairly and squarely what they saw, they are more inclined to say that they saw nothing because they do not want to be involved. For that reason it has not been the policy of the Government or the Police Commissioner to make police reports available in the sense that it might prevent us from getting information from witnesses. In the two cases mentioned by the honourable member I do not think the rule applies, but I shall take up the matter with the Chief Secretary and inform the honourable member of the position.

HEALTH ACT.

Mr. STOTT—On August 6 I asked the Premier a question regarding amendments to the Health Act following on reports from Loxton that builders had installed in new houses substandard plumbing and drainage, and he promised to obtain a reply. If he has not already done so, will he get information on the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

RECREATION RESERVES.

Mrs. STEELE (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Government, before disposal, to make the first offer of suitable surplus Government land in the metropolitan area to the local governing authority for use as recreation areas?

2. If so, will an area of such land at the corner of Conyngham and Flemington Streets, Frewville, no longer required by the Mines Department, be so offered?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Allotment 26, Conyngham Street, allotment 27, corner Conyngham and Flemington Streets, and allotments 28 and 29, Flemington Street, were sold by public auction on March 10, 1959, in terms of section 262a of the Crown Lands Act.

HONEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated that the Governor's Deputy had assented to the Act.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Prices Act, 1948-1958. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In seeking an extension of the Prices Act for a further 12 months, the Government is motivated by strong evidence of inflationary tendencies. At the present time economic activity throughout the Commonwealth is at a high level. Manufacturing and trading companies are, in many instances, recording higher returns both as regards a higher percentage of shareholders' funds and on substantially increased capital. This State has the lowest level of unemployment in the Commonwealth and increased spending power in the hands of the public of this State for the next 12 months is calculated to exceed the amount spent last

year by no less than £27,000,000. Warnings that further inflation appears inevitable have been issued from a number of authoritative sources. The Governor of the Commonwealth Bank recently stated that "inflation is a serious and growing threat to the health of our economy."

The Commonwealth Government adopted a noticeably cautious attitude in the Budget recently announced by the Federal Treasurer, and my Government also feels that the economic situation is developing to the extent where strong inflationary trends must be heeded and every effort made to ensure reasonable price stability. If this situation is not dealt with, we might well expect to revert to the position which the country continually faced with spiralling prices only a few years ago. From all reliable reports the basic wage increase of 15s. per week appears to be causing considerable concern to primary producers, industry and the consuming public alike. Although its final effect has by no means yet become evident, it has already been responsible for a number of price increases which would otherwise have been avoided. Unfortunately some price movements have been unwarranted and the Prices Department has found it necessary to take action in a number of cases.

The continued progress of this State is inevitable. However, the amount of money which lending institutions can make available to prospective home buyers and the limitation of lending advances make it essential that costs and prices covering a wide range of services and commodities should be held in check. The people can only buy or build homes if prices are kept within the bounds of their ability to pay for both borrowed money and the day to day living items which it is necessary for them to buy. There is some evidence of a tendency by the Governments of those States which completely abolished price control a few years ago to re-introduce it on at least a few items. Whilst it is not desired to re-introduce control on any items in this State unless exploitation becomes evident, the fact that some of these States have again found it necessary to re-enter the field of price control reflects their growing anxiety. This Government has found that, while it has been necessary to continue some form of control, the savings effected as a result of the numerous investigations carried out by the Prices Department have enabled both the man on the land and the wage earner to procure a large cross-section of their requirements at prices lower than those which their counterparts are being called upon to pay in other States.

With the gradual release from control of a number of items, more agreements between the Prices Department and the associations concerned are coming into effect. The present situation makes it necessary that these agreements should continue, but they can continue only so long as the Prices Act is itself continued. We have not yet reached the position where, in the interests of the State, we can afford to do without this legislation. Investigations carried out by the department continue to show that there are still people in the trading community who would exploit others.

With the dry seasonal conditions repercussions affecting prices of a number of commodities may well occur. If this situation developed, the position could become serious without the assistance of the department to watch the position. With prospects of the man on the land having to face lower yields and income, his financial resources will require every protection. It is the Government's obligation to ensure that this lower income is not whittled away by unnecessary price increases. For the reasons given, the Government considers that this legislation must be continued for a further 12 months.

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

LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Land Agents Act, 1955. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its object is to make some amendments to the Land Agents Act which are considered necessary for the purpose of maintaining effective control over land agents, managers, and land salesmen. The proposed amendments have, in the main, been recommended by the Land Agents Board in the light of experience gained in the course of its administration of the Act. As honourable members know, the board is the statutory authority charged with the issue and cancellation of licences and generally with the supervision of land agents, managers, and land salesmen.

Clauses 3 and 4 will increase the number of members of the board from three to four, one of whom is to be the secretary. In the past instances have occurred where a member has been disqualified from dealing with a matter because of some interest that he may have in it and the effective number of members

has been reduced to two, the secretary not having hitherto been a member of the board. Clause 5 will substitute the words "a fit and proper person to be licensed" for the words "of good character" in section 27 of the Act which requires the board to be satisfied that an applicant for a land agent's licence has to be of good character. It is felt that the board should direct its attention to the general suitability of an applicant for the purpose of deciding whether a licence should be granted. Clauses 9, 15, and 29 make consequential amendments.

Clause 6 amends section 32 of the Act in two respects. Subclause (a) will provide that an application for a renewal of a licence may be accompanied by a renewal certificate or other satisfactory evidence of payment of the renewal premium on an existing fidelity bond rather than, as the Act now provides, a receipt for the renewal premium. Clause 10 makes a similar amendment in relation to land salesmen. The object of clause 6 (b) is to enable the board to reprimand an applicant for a renewal of a licence in cases where the board feels that cancellation or suspension of a licence is too strong a penalty to apply in the particular case.

Clause 7 amends section 35 by empowering the board to exercise a discretion whether it will accept a voluntary surrender of a licence. At present an agent in respect of whom an application for cancellation of licence has been lodged can surrender his licence and thus deprive the board of its right to continue an inquiry into his conduct. Clause 11 makes a similar provision in relation to registered land salesmen. Clause 8 (a) is a consequential amendment to that made by clause 22.

Clause 8 (b). Some doubts have been expressed as to the scope of section 36 empowering the board to cancel a licence on certain stated grounds or "any other ground" which the board deems sufficient. Clause 8(b) adds to the expression "any other ground" the words "whether of a like ground to any of those mentioned in this subsection or otherwise." A similar amendment in relation to the cancellation of registration of land salesmen is made by clause 12 (b). Clause 12 (a) is a consequential amendment to that made in clause 22.

Clause 13 extends the period allowed for appointment of a new manager of a corporation carrying on business as a land agent, following the death of the nominated manager, from one to two months. Clause 14 applies to

managers the provision already suspending the registration of land salesmen when they cease to be in the employment of a land agent. Clause 16 repeals the present section 60 setting out the duties of land agents with respect to trust accounts and substitutes a new section setting out in greater detail the responsibilities of land agents in respect of trust funds. An agent will be required to keep his trust account books properly written up at all times and to pay all moneys received in his capacity as a land agent into a trust account not later than the next day on which his bank is open for business after the day on which he receives the moneys.

Clause 17 amends the provisions concerning the duty to furnish accounts by permitting an agent to make an agreement as to the time within which an account must be furnished. Clause 18 applies the requirements as to advertisements stating the name of the responsible licensed land agent to firms or partnerships. Clause 19 enacts a new section prohibiting the publication of advertisements concerning the sale or disposal of land without the written consent of the owner of the land. The object is to prevent agents from misrepresenting themselves as agents for sellers.

Clause 20 increases the amount in which fidelity bonds under the Act are to be given from £500 to £2,000. Clause 21 increases the amount for which Commonwealth securities may be deposited in lieu of fidelity bonds from £600 to £2,250 and at the same time increases the amount of compensation that may be paid from £500 to £2,000. Clause 22 enacts a new section which will empower the Board of its own motion to initiate inquiries into the conduct of land agents, land salesmen, or managers. Clauses 8 (a) and 12 (a) make consequential amendments. Clause 24 likewise makes a consequential amendment.

Clause 25 enacts a new section 81 in lieu of the present one by making it clear that the board may reprimand instead of cancelling, with the additional provision that three reprimands within a period of five years will automatically result in cancellation. Clause 26 clarifies the powers of the board in relation to the costs of applications and inquiries. Clause 27 will allow the court before which an agent or salesmen is convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or an offence against the Act to cancel the licence or registration. A similar provision was contained in the earlier Act but was repealed in 1955.

Clause 28 clarifies the position concerning the delivery of notices or documents. Clause 29

provides that the Bill shall not come into operation until proclaimed. The intention is that it should be proclaimed to take effect immediately after the expiration of the term of office of the members of the existing board in January next.

Mr. DUNSTAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, 1942-1958. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of this Bill is to extend the operation of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act for another 12 months. While the housing position in South Australia continues to improve, the demand for rental accommodation is still greatly in excess of the supply.

In 1953, the Act was amended to provide that any premises built after the passing of the amending Act were to be completely free from control under the Act. It was expected by some that the fact that new premises were free from control would bring about the building of houses for letting. In point of fact, however, very few houses have been built since 1953 for this purpose, apart from those provided by the Housing Trust. There has been some building of flats for letting, but these are usually let for fairly high rentals beyond the means of the average worker. Thus the position is that, with an increasing population, the number of houses available for letting has shown only a relatively small increase, while the demand for those houses which are available for letting has not diminished.

If the controls provided by the Act were lifted, the result would most probably be that the rents of houses now subject to control would increase substantially. This has frequently been the case where, under the exemption given by section 6 of the Act, premises are let upon written leases for terms of years. That the demand for rental houses is not abating is shown from the applications received by the Housing Trust. During the year ended June 30, 1959, the trust received 5,385 applications for rental housing and 1,331 for emergency dwellings. During the preceding financial year the figures were 4,828 and

1,938 respectively. It may be mentioned that, during the year ended 30th June, 1959, the trust received 3,418 applications to purchase houses, as compared with 2,750 for the previous year.

Accordingly, the Government considers that it is desirable to extend the provisions of the Act for another 12 months. Clause 5, therefore, extends the operation of the Act until December 31, 1960. Clauses 3 and 4 make minor amendments to the Act. Section 55c of the Act provides, among other things, that a lessor of a dwellinghouse may give notice to quit on the ground that possession of the dwelling is required for the purpose of facilitating its sale. Section 55d provides that, if notice to quit is given on this ground and the lessee delivers up possession in consequence of the notice to quit and the lessor does not sell within three months after possession is given up, then, among other consequences, the lessor is to offer the tenancy of the house again to the lessee and any lease of the house, either to the former lessee or otherwise, is to be on the same terms as the previous lease.

The Crown Solicitor has advised that if, after notice to quit of this kind, the lessee does not give up possession until after a court order is made, he does not deliver up possession as a consequence of the notice to quit but as a consequence of the order of the court and that section 55d, therefore, does not apply. This result is, of course, contrary to the intended purpose of section 55d and clause 3, therefore, amends section 55d so that it will extend to a case where the lessee, after receiving notice to quit on the ground that possession of the house is required to facilitate its sale, gives up possession as the result of an order of the court.

Section 60 provides that where notice to quit is given upon one of a number of grounds, such as that the lessor needs the house for his own occupation, and possession is obtained as a result, the house is not to be sold or let within the ensuing 12 months without the consent of the local court. Among the grounds upon which notice to quit may be given is paragraph (n) of subsection (6) of section 42, namely, that the premises are reasonably needed for reconstruction or demolition. The Housing Trust has reported to the Government that cases have occurred where, after notice to quit is given under paragraph (n) and the tenant vacates, the house is then immediately relet, usually at an increased rent under a lease in writing.

It is, therefore, proposed by clause 4 that section 60 be amended by including a reference to paragraph (n). The result will be that, if possession is obtained after giving notice to quit under paragraph (n), the consent of the local court will be necessary to a reletting or sale of the premises within the ensuing 12 months.

Mr. DUNSTAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Dog Fence Act, 1946-1953. Read a first time.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a simple Bill. Its object is to provide that owners of any part of the dog fence, as defined by the Dog Fence Act, who fail to inspect or to maintain in a proper condition, the dog fence or to take all reasonable means to destroy wild dogs in the vicinity of the fence shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty of not less than £50 and not more than £100. The Act already provides that it shall be the duty of the owner of any part of the dog fence to maintain the fence and destroy wild dogs, and section 23 provides that if the Dog Fence Board is satisfied that any owner has failed in his duty, the board will carry out the necessary work and recover the costs from the owner as a debt.

While it is the intention of the board to exercise its powers where fence owners fail to meet their obligations it is felt that the exercise of these powers is not sufficient to secure the co-operation of owners, some of whom are apathetic, to the detriment of the interests of themselves and adjoining landholders. It is believed that a penalty clause would act as a stronger deterrent to neglect on the part of owners and the Bill provides that owners may accordingly be prosecuted for failure to carry out their obligations. Clause 3 accordingly so provides, while retaining the liability of owners to pay the cost of action taken by the board on default. The proposal is supported by the Stockowners Association, which has two representatives on the board.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.20 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, September 16, at 2 p.m.