

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 22, 1959.

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

DEATH OF HONOURABLE J. J. CAHILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I ask leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This morning I received from the Minister of Roads, who is attending a conference in New South Wales, a communication to the effect that the Premier of New South Wales (Mr. Cahill) died this morning.

I had a great attachment to Mr. Cahill and greatly regret his passing, but today I will refer chiefly to his services to South Australia at the various conferences he has attended. He was a very distinguished statesman and was Premier of New South Wales for a long time. I was not, of course, associated with him in that respect, but I did come into close contact with him at both Premiers' Conferences and Loan Council meetings, and at such meetings he was always an extremely good friend to this State and a fair-minded and able advocate of the States' points of view. I am sure all members will join with me in extending to Mrs. Cahill our deepest sympathy in the very sudden and untimely death of her husband. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will be associated with me in these remarks.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I join with the Premier in expressing the regret of members on this side of the House and, of course, the unanimous regret of members of this Parliament at the passing of the late Premier of New South Wales. Mr. Cahill was my personal friend for many years, and I feel his passing deeply indeed. I appreciate the Premier's remarks that he was a good friend to South Australia at Loan Council meetings and Premiers' Conferences. It was one of the great characteristics of his make-up—one that no doubt endeared him more than others to many people—that he was not only a friend of small States but the friend and champion of little people. He was a great Labor leader and a great Australian statesman. His State and the Commonwealth owe much to his efforts, and I think all citizens will mourn his passing.

The SPEAKER—I ask members as a mark of respect to stand and observe one minute's silence.

Members stood in their places in silence.

QUESTIONS.**STATE TRANSPORT POLICY.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Today's *Advertiser* contains a brief account of the annual report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. I am concerned with the following reference to rail losses:—

Another major cause in all States in recent years has been the railway losses. Referring to the position of the S.A. Railways, the commission says it believes that there has been a tendency for its views and those of S.A. to be "somewhat at cross purposes." When the S.A. submissions and the State railway authorities refer to the practical upper limits of railway charges and the difficulties of increasing them, they are obviously discussing the charges against the background of circumstances in the State which makes railway charges particularly sensitive to competition. S.A. transport policy has an important bearing on the charges and this policy is founded upon wider considerations than railway finances. The commission does not think that these considerations which relate to the State's economic development, should be taken into account in the specific Budget adjustment which it makes for the impact of railway finance on the Budget.

I am particularly concerned with the last sentence. Can the Premier say what impact those considerations by the Grants Commission may have on the claim that is now before the commission for over £1,000,000 on account of this State's last year's deficiency?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not able to give the honourable member the information he requires because the commission has not yet given its decision. To what extent the Commission will consider railway revenue and railway finance in connection with the application before it I cannot say. This State now has many important industries which depend for their livelihood upon interstate sales and, in those circumstances, the Government has been anxious not to impede the development of those industries by fixing either high costs or placing untoward controls on transport by any effective means that can be devised to carry produce interstate. It would be short-sighted policy if we were, by imposing road restrictions, to drive industry away from South Australia. Summarized (and I think this is believed by the Grants Commission) our standard of rail charges is below some other States, but I think that the Grants

Commission also accepts that the standard of efficiency in operation here is very much above that in other States. So that whereas on the one hand we may be charging somewhat lower rates, it is, I think, conceded that our railways have been operating extremely efficiently and that the operating costs have been well below the average of the Australian States. However, I am only venturing opinions and until the Grants Commission makes its assessment it is impossible to give any accurate figure as suggested by the Leader.

Mr. HARDING—A report in today's *Advertiser* states:—

South Australia withdrew as a claimant State for special Commonwealth disabilities aid at the last Premiers' Conference when a new plan of Federal tax reimbursements to the States was adopted. However, South Australia and Queensland retained the right to apply for special grants under "unexpected" or "exceptional" circumstances.

The report continues a little later:—

It has yet to make a recommendation of the final adjustment of the advance made to South Australia in 1958-59.

Referring to the loss on railways, the commission goes on to say:—

The commission says it recognizes that the South Australian Railways is a most difficult system to operate. Apart from the ore traffic from Cockburn, the average haul is shorter than on any system except that of Tasmania.

Has the Premier anything further to add?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No; I cannot take it very much further than I have already in answer to the Leader of the Opposition. This matter has been the subject of discussion between the State representatives and the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Although we are not fully in agreement, I think it is admitted by the Grants Commission that the State system has been run efficiently; also, in its favour, that the State system has not had to write off the large amounts that many States have had on expenditure in the past, and that some allowance is made for that in connection with our somewhat lower charges for freight.

DULWICH POLICE STATION CLOSING.

Mrs. STEELE—I have received a letter from the Glenside, Glenunga and Frewville Progress Association regarding the closing of the Dulwich police station, which states:—

On the 6th April, 1959 a letter was forwarded to the Burnside Council in connection with the closing of this station. In a reply which was

dated 9th April we were notified that the council had already made representation to the Commissioner of Police for the Dulwich officer to be again stationed for duty at the Dulwich office. In reply to this request by council the Commissioner of Police said that there is little justification for keeping the Dulwich police station open.

The report forwarded to the council by the Commissioner was as follows:—

The police officer must necessarily spend much of his time making inquiries, serving summonses, and carrying out extraneous duties, all of which require him to be absent from the station. Whilst he is attending to these matters the public cannot receive attention. The mobile patrol policy which has now been put into effect ensures that the public receives assistance within a few minutes of notifying police headquarters.

The letter continues:—

The station is in a well-built-up area, boundaries as follows: Conyngham Street (east) to Bevington Road along Portrush Road to Kensington Road to Victoria Avenue along Greenhill Road to Conyngham Street. In the opinion of association members this should warrant the police station being open at all times for the public benefit and not having the officer away at the Norwood office for as long as a month at a time.

On several occasions members have had to travel to Burnside where there are two police officers in attendance or over to Norwood. This is most inconvenient to aged folk who need pension papers etc. signed or attended to. Gun and drivers' licences, reporting accidents, registration of births and deaths, are but a few mentioned amenities which could be promptly dealt with if the officer were on duty at Dulwich. Patrol cars as mentioned in the report are very good for urgent cases, but inadequate for public services as mentioned above.

At the October meeting of this association it was suggested that an appeal be made to you as the member of Parliament for this area for this matter to be considered. We would appreciate the return of our police officer, full time, at Dulwich and, if necessary, one of the Burnside officers to be transferred to Norwood, thus having each station manned and open for police business.

In view of the general concern felt, will the Premier investigate the position with a view to reopening the police station?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will have the position examined. As I mentioned recently, the policy of the Police Department has been more and more to make the police force mobile, by which means greater security can be provided than by having the police force tied down to set stations. However, I will take up the honourable member's request with the Chief Secretary and give her a reply in due course.

SALES TAX ON BUS CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Some weeks ago I was informed by the General Manager of the Tramways Trust, Mr. Keynes, that a bus service was likely to be inaugurated soon for the Shepherd's Hill Road area, which has a steep grade. Has the Premier had any response from the Commonwealth Government to my request for a reduction in the sales tax—which, I understand, is about eight per cent—imposed on the construction of buses that are licensed by the Tramways Trust, but not necessarily owned by it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am unable to give the honourable member a reply now, but I will look at the file, check up, and inform him of the position soon.

LAMEROO AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Has the Minister of Education a reply to a question I asked on October 7 regarding tenders being called for the paving of the area surrounding the classrooms of the Lameroo area school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—My colleague, the Minister of Works, informs me that a tender has been let for this work and that the successful tenderer was Gordon Stevens Ltd., which firm anticipates that the work will be commenced within one month.

FRUIT CANNING INDUSTRY.

Mr. BYWATERS—Yesterday, in answer to a question by the member for Unley, the Premier said, amongst other things when referring to the canning industry:—

If we concentrate on high quality production and effective management I still believe this industry can be placed upon a sound footing. The experiment undertaken at Berri last year clearly shows what effective management and high quality production can achieve.

Last night at Murray Bridge a good representation of growers from Mypolonga and some people interested in investments, met for the purpose of establishing a cannery at Murray Bridge. It was unanimously decided to go ahead with the project and to form a company to be named Murray Bridge Cannery. The Glen Ellen people came up, interested themselves in the proposed cannery and said there was a need to process fruit produced near Mypolonga and in other areas along the lower River Murray. It was emphasized that it would be necessary for the company to make haste slowly and to be particularly careful about high quality, as mentioned by the Premier. It was decided that only the best quality fruit would be canned. Will the Government help

an industry such as this, either in the way it helped the Berri Cannery or by some other means the Premier might like to mention?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The methods of helping industry are, of course, provided by Act of Parliament, and certain formalities must be gone through before any view can be expressed. I have had no application in this matter. I do not know the type of canning proposed or the market for the canned fruit, so it would be premature for me to say that the Government will give financial assistance. I suggest to the honourable member that if an application is received by the Treasurer he will give it every consideration and investigation.

LAKE BONNEY WATER STORAGE.

Mr. KING—My question arises out of the Premier's statement in a broadcast last night, and referred to by the Minister of Works, in connection with the storage of water in Lake Bonney near Barmera. If the project proves possible, can the Minister of Irrigation say whether it will be the means of opening up land north of Lake Bonney for irrigation purposes and, if the channel goes overland from Springcart Gully, whether the possibility of opening up some of the back country between that point and Lake Bonney will be kept in mind?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes. Every consideration will be given to the matter.

KINGSTON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. CORCORAN—On October 6 I asked the Premier a question regarding the prospects of getting an electricity supply for Kingston, and he said he would get a report on the trust's investigations. Is that report available now?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Huddleston, the Assistant Manager of the Electricity Trust, has sent me the following report:—

The Electricity Trust has been active in the South-East only since 1956. In this period the trust has built a new power station at Mount Gambier which increased the generating capacity in the area five-fold, and has built major transmission lines in a northerly direction to Nangwarry and north-westerly to Millicent. Over £2,500,000 has been spent on these projects and it has been essential to concentrate on the provision of adequate power plant. Contracts have now been let for a new power station at Nangwarry. It is proposed to develop power supplies throughout the area and the rate at which this can be done will depend on the availability of finance and materials and the extent of the trust's commitments elsewhere in the State. Development in the area must

proceed in an orderly fashion, and as Kingston is one of the most distant towns from the power system now being developed, it is not possible at this stage to say when it can be connected. The proprietors of the Kingston Electricity Undertaking have purchased a diesel generator from the trust's Millicent power station, now out of service since power is available from Mount Gambier. The installation of this machine at Kingston will improve the supply in that town.

TRANSPORT OF STOCK.

Mr. QUIRKE—At present there is considerable movement of stock in the northern areas by transport vehicles of the prime mover type and some of the distances covered are very long indeed; and these vehicles are restricted to 25 miles an hour, making the journey extremely tiresome to stock, which are not necessarily in the best of condition. As an illustration, a trip from Rudall to Spalding, a distance of 255 miles, took 13½ hours, 10½ hours being travelling time; meals, motor attendance and checking of load took three hours. That meant continuous driving, whereas if the trip could be done at 35 miles an hour the time would have been seven hours. These vehicles are geared to 30 to 35 miles an hour, which necessitates hauling in low gear over these long distances. As an emergency provision, can the Premier say whether it is possible, under the Road Traffic Act or by regulation under that Act, to allow such transport vehicles to be speeded up in consideration of the animals now being transported?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—South Australia, compared with other States, is not at all restrictive in its road traffic laws. Indeed, the permitted axle loading is very much greater than in the laws of other States. I think that the honourable member will realize that axle loading and speed go hand in hand to a certain extent. Axle loading has been the subject of discussion on a number of occasions, and South Australia is not in accord with the interstate code in this respect. I feel it would be a wrong policy to break down our road surfaces, because once it is admitted that an additional speed can be permitted, in point of fact it becomes the speed of every vehicle upon the road, irrespective of whether there is a question of urgency or not. My own feeling is that the transportation of stock should, if possible, be undertaken at night rather than during the day-time, when the heat itself can be a very important factor. It would be possible for Parliament to do as the honourable members suggests, but I question whether it would in the long run be a wise policy,

because I doubt very much whether Parliament could discriminate between vehicles. That would probably be very difficult, and probably unconstitutional.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Mr. COUMBE—I am concerned about the future generating capacity of the Electricity Trust to provide for the State's future needs. I am well aware of the expanding needs of industry and the fact that the population is increasing at a remarkable pace. I am also aware that a second power station is being built at Port Augusta in stages and that it is the Government's intention to investigate the possibility of generating power along St. Vincent Gulf by pumping water to a height and reticulating it back; and investigations are being made regarding the provision of a nuclear power station in the years to come. Can the Premier say what research is being done by the trust in regard to nuclear power generation? Has the trust a section working on this type of project, and are any of its officers being trained in this work? Are they co-operating with the Commonwealth in nuclear research, and has the trust any officers on exchange duty with authorities in the United States of America and the United Kingdom to enable them to keep abreast of the latest developments of this type of power generation so that when the time comes for such a station to be installed it will be in a position to go ahead with its forward planning?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Power stations being built will take the load in this State until approximately 1964. The Port Augusta station will be fully in operation by 1964, and from then on other plans will have to be developed to establish additional power sources. The first unit of the Port Augusta B station, a 90,000 k.w. unit, will come into operation early next year and, as far as I know, there is no suggestion whatever that our generating capacity will not be adequate to meet all the requirements of industry in the foreseeable future, by which I mean up to 1964.

When the Commonwealth Government established the Lucas Heights project and the Atomic Energy Commission there was a big change in policy in relation to getting information from overseas. Before the Commonwealth came into this matter we had a free and easy arrangement with the United Kingdom and the United States. In fact, we had a big interchange of officers always going forward

but, when the Atomic Energy Commission was established, there was an alteration in policy and we have had some difficulty in getting our officers into some of the places where we desired to have them. As a consequence, for a considerable period no additional officers were sent overseas. That has been cleared up more recently by the visit of a high-ranking member of the British Atomic Energy Commission to Australia and, with the full co-operation of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission, we now have the right to nominate officers actually to go into the power producing units in the United Kingdom; two such officers have been approved, one is already in the service, and I think that the other will be leaving shortly. Although we are not doing any active research—and I think the honourable member would realize that we could spend £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 in research without getting any further ahead than others—we now have the right to put officers into active training and are becoming thoroughly abreast of what is obtaining overseas. The latest information is that nuclear energy is consistently becoming cheaper in comparison with the cost of electricity. It is still slightly above the cost of electricity obtained from conventional fuel, but it is rapidly coming down to a competitive level.

BOOK SALESMEN.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Following on the Minister's statement that he was to have an interview with the manager of the Australian Educational Foundation Proprietary Limited, the firm associated with the sale of certain encyclopaedias, could he now state the results of that interview?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Mr. Harper, the governing director of the Ruskin Group Proprietary Limited, publishers and printers, of Victoria, wrote to me that he was gravely disturbed at newspaper reports of dissatisfaction expressed by myself, Mr. Shannon and other members concerning the operations in South Australia of the Australian Educational Foundation (Southern) Proprietary Limited. This company is one of the Ruskin Group's subsidiaries and operates in the educational field. It is responsible for the compilation, editing and distribution of *The Australian Junior Encyclopaedia*, with ancillary services. Mr. Harper asked whether he and other directors of the group could come to Adelaide to interview me, and he, with the director of sales (Mr. Vidor) and the director of editorials (Mr. Dwyer), met me in company with the

Director and the Deputy Director of Education, and we had a full and frank discussion on the whole problem.

Mr. Harper and his associates stated emphatically that they were just as concerned as we were about the position that had arisen in connection with the sales of their products in South Australia, and said that they would take every reasonable step to rectify the position as soon as possible. They asked me if I would be prepared to give them the names and addresses of the various persons who had written to me, the Director, the Deputy Director, or various officers of the Education Department, and also those who had written to members of Parliament and whose correspondence had been handed on to me. After some consideration, I decided to do so, and the Deputy Director (Mr. Griggs) compiled a list. Mr. Harper went back to Melbourne, but Mr. Vidor, the director of sales, stayed on for, I think, a fortnight and interviewed the various persons whose names were on the list. About a week ago he reported to the Deputy Director that he had made very satisfactory progress in satisfying the various people who had made complaints. That is the latest information I have; I had it in my bag so that I could give a reply if any member asked for information. If the honourable member or any other member who is interested would let me know whether their various constituents were satisfied, I would be glad to follow up any further inquiry. As these men came over from Melbourne and had a morning's discussion with me, and as they took all the available names and addresses I had and later assured the Deputy Director that they had satisfied the various complainants, I let the matter rest for the time being, but I shall be glad to receive any further information if there are still dissatisfied purchasers.

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. LAUCKE—Under the present system there are, in many instances brought to my notice, rather considerable delays in effecting settlement for land purchased by the Highways Department for the purpose of road widening. Presumably those delays stem from the many calls made on the limited number of surveyors available and the time taken to complete land title alterations incidental to those land purchases. To relieve and improve the position in relation to settlement with vendors, will the Minister of Works request the Minister of Highways to consider making a prompt pro

forma settlement of, say, 75 per cent of the value on completion of the sales agreement, with the balance payable on completion of the transfer?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will direct the honourable member's question to my colleague. There is, however, at present an arrangement to try to overcome the problem which has arisen and which the honourable member illustrates in his question. These small areas require much detailed survey and, in total, have meant a great volume of survey work for which surveyors are just not available. It was indicated last night, during the discussion in Committee, that various departments had extreme difficulty in obtaining surveyors, and the Minister of Lands will bear me out on that. That position applies in my department and is also being faced by the Minister of Roads. In order to expedite the matter, Cabinet recently approved an arrangement whereby an 80 per cent *pro forma* payment may be made and this now operates. The honourable member will find that, in cases which arise in his constituency from now on, at least what he has suggested is available.

MANOORA AND WATERVALE WATER SCHEME.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Has the Minister of Works a report on the progress being made on the water schemes for Manoora and Watervale?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Concerning the Manoora water supply, the Engineer-in-Chief advised me this morning that the investigations have proceeded and that, although they are not completed, he hopes to be able to supply the information on Wednesday next. Regarding Watervale, the estimate for the scheme is not complete and I am not able to make any report to the member.

ADELAIDE POLICE COURT HEATING.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Has the Minister of Works an answer to the question I asked him on October 14 regarding the heating in No. 1 Police Court, Adelaide?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Architect-in-Chief has reported that this courtroom is of such a height that the only way to effectively heat it is by the use of convection or radiator heaters or air conditioning. Space heating would be ineffective as the heat would be dissipated to the top of the room. Reasonable heating is provided for all the personnel mentioned in the honourable member's question, except defendants. Electric convection

heaters or radiators are located as follows in this court:—barristers' table—two 1,000 watt Rowco convector heaters are connected underneath it; magistrates' bench—two portable 1,000 watt single bar radiators; court orderly's table—one portable 1,000 watt single bar radiator; typists' table—one portable 1,000 watt single bar radiator. The total connected heating in the court is therefore 6 kilowatts.

HENLEY HIGH SCHOOL PLAYING GROUND.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Certain land opposite the Henley High School was recently acquired by the Housing Trust and I believe negotiations are proceeding between the Education Department and the trust for portion of that land to be transferred to the Education Department to provide a playing area for the Henley High School. I also believe that the people who owned the property before the Housing Trust purchased it have retained the frontage to Cudmore Terrace intending to subdivide it into building blocks. The persons interested in this matter are wondering whether provision will be made for ingress and egress to and from the school to the playing area. If provision has not already been made I ask the Minister of Education to bear that point in mind when negotiations are proceeding.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Negotiations are proceeding for the purchase of the land referred to and I understand that safeguards are being taken for ingress to the land. However, in view of the honourable member's question I will make doubly sure that that very necessary precaution is taken and I will let the honourable member have a reply as soon as possible.

COMMISSION ON MAIL ORDER GOODS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked recently about commissions on c.o.d. parcels?

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

In accordance with the respective by-laws, and as published in the Goods and Live-stock Rates Book for goods traffic and in the Coaching Book in respect of parcels traffic, the department charges commission at the rate of 1 per cent with a minimum of 1s. per consignment when forwarded by goods train, and 1 per cent with a minimum of 9d. per consignment when forwarded by passenger train for the collection of moneys due to the sender under the "cash on delivery" system. These charges have been in operation for many years and are raised to meet the additional cost involved in handling this class of business.

COOLING FOR GAWLER PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. CLARK—Some time ago I spoke to a member of the Gawler primary school committee and was surprised to find that when the committee had applied to the department to be allowed to install cooling or air conditioning units that application had been refused. In common with some other schools the Gawler Primary School has prefabricated rooms and, because of the lack of space, these rooms cannot be placed in the school yard in the coolest possible spot and they become very hot. The school committee asked the department whether it would subsidize the school on a pound for pound basis to enable the purchase of air conditioners and, if not, would it permit the conditioners to be installed and paid for out of school funds. This request was refused on both issues. The department was not, as I would expect in this case, prepared to subsidize, but, further, it would not permit the installation of such conditioners. I ask the Minister of Education if the department has any specific policy on such appliances and, if not, will he state the reason for this refusal?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Speaking from memory, a decision was made some years ago that subsidies would be granted for air coolers and air conditioners only in localities approved by the Minister where the climatic conditions made them either necessary or highly desirable. That was an innovation because, previously, they were not allowed under any circumstances at all as they were necessarily very expensive items of equipment: they applied to only one classroom and, if there were 700 schools throughout the State, many of them with a score or more of classrooms, it would amount to a prodigious cost if these luxuries or refinements were allowed. Although the Treasurer has been extremely generous to me in providing larger sums for education purposes in each succeeding year, there is a limit to what can be expected and if we expend huge sums on these items we must necessarily go short in other directions. I will give the honourable member a considered written reply so that he will have the fullest information.

Mr. Clark—My point is, why were they not allowed to install them at their own expense?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I was not aware of that and it certainly was not my decision. It may have been a departmental decision and I will find out what prompted

it. It rather surprises me and I very much doubt whether the information conveyed to the honourable member is correct.

Mr. Clark—It is correct. I saw the letter.

OIL CONCESSIONS.

Mr. HARDING—In this morning's *Advertiser* under the heading "Oil Search Concessions Criticized," the following statements appear:—

The Commonwealth was wrongly subsidizing wealthy companies engaged in oil exploration in Australia, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Calwell) said in the House of Representatives today.

Mr. Wilson (Lib., S.A.) said that unless the Government was prepared to give concessions to oil search companies, no overseas capital would be forthcoming for oil activities search in Australia.

I understand that oil companies in Alberta pay a royalty to their Government of 12½ per cent on all crude oil produced from their wells. Can the Treasurer say what concessions are given in Australia to oil companies' searching operations and what royalties would be received by the Government on crude oil, if discovered? Should petroleum products be found in South Australia would any royalties become due to this State?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The assistance given to oil companies has changed from time to time and I am not conversant with the precise position at present. Normally the Commonwealth makes grants towards the cost of exploration holes—not producing wells—and where the hole is not successful the assistance is, I think, 50 per cent of the cost. However, if the hole is successful I understand the assistance has to be repaid. I also believe some income tax concessions are allowed to oil companies undertaking exploration work. These, of course, are Commonwealth matters. So far as the State Government is concerned, the amount of royalty provided under the Mining Act is 10 per cent of the gross value of the oil produced.

ACQUISITION OF LAND NEAR MURRAY BRIDGE.

Mr. BYWATERS—Last Tuesday I asked the Minister of Lands a question about the acquisition of land for settlers who had had their properties acquired by the Federal Government. I understand the Minister has pursued this matter and has a reply.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member raised the question of an area of 4,000 acres being acquired by this Government for the purpose of being made available to

those settlers who have had their land compulsorily acquired for army purposes. There is no power for the State to compulsorily acquire land as suggested. I have made inquiries and find that of this 4,000 acres, 2,811 acres are held under lease from the Crown and the balance is apparently freehold. There is a possibility that the leasehold land may revert to the Crown, but this is by no means certain. However, should the land become Crown lands and be re-offered the claims of settlers who are losing their land to the Commonwealth would undoubtedly receive careful consideration by the Land Board and myself.

BIRDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. LAUCKE—Can the Minister of Education say whether negotiations for the purchase of land adjacent to the Birdwood high school to provide a playing field for that school have as yet reached a successful conclusion?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am pleased to inform the honourable member that I have been successful in purchasing the land. The negotiations have been extremely protracted because we were dealing with five separate owners of the land and there were wide discrepancies between the Land Board's valuations and the prices the several owners quite naturally desired for their land. In this connection I am grateful for the assistance of the members of the Birdwood High School Council and particularly for the co-operation of the honourable member who acted as intermediary and conciliator in the matter. I am sure that this area of over 11 acres will be a decided acquisition to that desirable high school.

MOORAK PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. CORCORAN—Some time ago I received a complaint from the secretary of the Moorak school committee about the inadequacy of sanitary services at that school. I referred the matter to the Minister of Education and asked whether he would cause investigations to be made. I have no recollection of hearing anything more about this. Is the Minister in a position to provide further information or will he make a report on this matter next week?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to obtain up-to-date information next week. I remember the honourable member's previous inquiries which I had referred, if I remember correctly, to the Architect-in-Chief and I think that the local district officer had

the matter in hand. I am anxious to assist that school because it is well conducted and I will see if something can be done in the near future to assist it.

PORT AUGUSTA TO WOOMERA ROAD.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I have asked several questions about the Port Augusta to Woomera Road and on October 6, in a reply, the Premier said:—

In the case of the Port Augusta to Woomera Road the Commonwealth provides the State with specific funds for the work in addition to those provided under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act.

In a subsequent reply the question of who directed the use of this money arose. The Premier said he would check the position. Has he any further information?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The information I gave the honourable member is quite correct: the Commonwealth does make available to the State certain specified sums for that road and the State is required to spend the money in accordance with the Commonwealth's requirements. I have given the amounts of money available. I have since checked and have found that it is anticipated that all the funds allocated to this road will be used during this year.

CONCESSION FARES TO PENSIONERS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question relates to the concession fares in off-peak periods, which were recently approved for pensioners in the metropolitan area, being available to country pensioners when in Adelaide. I have ascertained that the administration of this concession is entrusted to the Municipal Tramways Trust and that forms are available fairly widely in the metropolitan area, at the Tramways Trust Office, metropolitan post offices, etc. It would be a great convenience to country pensioners if the forms could be made available through country post offices so that pensioners wishing to participate in the scheme could apply for concessions prior to coming to Adelaide. Will the Premier consider this request?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined.

FREELING AND MARANANGA WATER SUPPLIES.

Mr. LAUCKE—Bearing in mind the difficulties experienced last summer in maintaining supplies of water to Freeling and district, can the Minister of Works indicate the progress made up to the present towards meeting the

situation this summer, and can he inform me when the proposed water scheme for Marananga will be initiated?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—A report from the Engineer-in-Chief this morning says that the main-laying for the Freeling and district water scheme has been commenced and is well advanced. The Marananga scheme was approved in September, 1958, one of the conditions of the approval being that a supply could not be given to the area until at least a portion of the Warren trunk main had been enlarged. The laying of the Warren trunk main is proceeding, but it is not expected that sufficient of it will be completed and placed in use to allow the Marananga scheme to proceed until the end of December, 1959. The District Engineer, when he formulated his year's main-laying programme, did not expect the Warren trunk main to be completed as far as Nuriootpa before the end of this year, and consequently he did not place the Marananga scheme in his programme for the first half of the financial year. Certain emergency measures have been necessary in this record drought year and these have to some extent delayed the year's normal main-laying programme. The District Engineer reports that he will not have the men and facilities available to commence the Marananga scheme before March, 1960, and if other emergencies occur it may be a little later than this. Emergencies are not directly associated with the scheme, but they affect the amount of finance available.

PETERBOROUGH WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works any further information about the town of Peterborough, which derives a considerable portion of its water supplies from underground sources, being included in the area to which water restrictions are to be applied, I understand, from today?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—When I answered the honourable member's previous question I presumed that Peterborough was included. I have checked with the terms of the proclamation and I now confirm that the area is included in the total area where the restrictions will apply.

UMEEWARRA MISSION.

Mr. RICHES—Can the Minister of Works say whether a decision has been reached regarding an increase in the accommodation for the teaching of children at the Umcewarra Mission?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am not able to say definitely yet what provision will be made, but I have asked the Architect-in-Chief, following on a visit I made in company with the honourable member to the mission a week or two ago, to look around to see whether he can find a building available and suitable for the requirements of the mission. He is doing that and as soon as he informs me further I will let the honourable member know. Efforts are being made to find a building and it will be provided as soon as possible.

WARREN WATER DISTRICT.

Mr. HAMBOUR—Last year, when water restrictions were imposed in the Warren water district, areas served by the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline were included. The Warren district uses Murray River water. Can the Minister of Works say whether that district will be included in the restrictions that are to apply as from today?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The list of the water districts involved in the restrictions is considerable and I am unable to memorize it. Therefore, I will check with the proclamation to see whether any portions of the Warren water district are included, and let the honourable member know.

HIDE, SKIN AND WOOL DEALERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Hide, Skin and Wool Dealers Act, 1915-1935. Read a first time.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 3.)

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1960, a further sum of £4,000,000 be granted: provided that no payments for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ended June 30, 1959, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service or by any regulation or by any award, order or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Motion carried.

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

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It follows the usual form of Supply Bills and provides for the issue of a further £4,000,000 to enable the public services to be carried on until the middle of November. Clause 2 provides for the issue and application of the £4,000,000. Clause 3 provides that no payments shall be made in excess of similar lines on last year's Estimates, except that the Treasurer may authorize the payment of increases in salaries or wages.

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

THE ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 21. Page 1177.)

Aborigines Department, £369,870.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I draw the attention of the Minister of Works to the effect of operations of bulldozer companies at the Andamooka and Coober Pedy opal fields. Although the question of granting leases to these companies has been considered by the Minister of Mines, I think it affects the future of the aborigines on these two fields. There are about 300 of them. Two bulldozer companies are operating at Andamooka and one at Coober Pedy. I believe they have been granted licences to operate for two years. Although an ordinary miner has to register within 30 days the lease he has pegged out a bulldozer company can peg out a lease and clean it out within 30 days, so it does not have to register. These companies are leaving the fields in a dangerous condition with vertical walls, parts of which are overhanging, and only recently a part-aboriginal woman was nearly killed and is in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The Minister should keep in mind that getting opal provides an independent living for a large number of aborigines, and is a very important factor in the lives of a large number of them. Many of the aborigines working on these two fields are half way between the two cultures, but nevertheless make close contact with whites. It is desirable that the work these people are able to do and the living they are able to get should be maintained for a considerable time.

I consider that the operations of these bulldozer companies will have a very adverse effect upon the living the aborigines are getting and will be able to get on these two fields.

I have discussed the matter with the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board and he informs me that at present aborigines get much opal from the spoil thrown up by the bulldozers. There are hundreds of tons of spoil in big heaps and obviously only a small portion of it can be worked over. The general feeling on the fields is hostile to the operations of these companies; although I have heard it mentioned that the advent of mechanical gear on the fields represents progress, I do not describe it as such, but rather the reverse. The position is not analogous to a company mining ore required in large quantities. If large quantities of opal are procured by mechanical means, it can quite easily have the effect of reducing the value of the opal and in that way affect the future of the aborigines, as well as that of others on the fields. I should like to see no further licences issued for this class of work, and the position should be reviewed so that a decision can be made whereby no extension of the work by these companies is permitted in future.

Associated with the advent of this mechanical gear on the fields we have had spurious advertising of opals alleged to be worth £1,500,000. Most of this is nonsense, but it is deliberately done to attract get-rich-quick people to the fields. This is a serious thing for the aboriginal population and others there because the water supplies on both fields are strictly limited. At Coober Pedy it has reached the stage when there will be no water unless rain falls. Many of these people arrive on the fields without proper equipment and become an embarrassment to everyone. The advent of these companies is, in my opinion, detrimental to the fields. They remove the top soil and work in from the edge of the hill and when they reach what is called the old sea bed the bulldozer is set to a very fine cut, and then men with picks follow the bulldozer up. As opal is not found on a dead flat level, some must be destroyed and some must be lost. The Government should nip the position in the bud to preserve what I call very good opportunities for independent work by aborigines. At Andamooka we have the picture of aboriginal children getting on very well with white children at school, a circumstance which I hope will soon be repeated at Coober Pedy. We should preserve this set of circumstances and improve the conditions there, in view of what is being done to bring these people into closer contact with our form of civilization, and thus assist them to bridge the gap.

It was stated by the department some time ago that galvanized iron was being provided to enable the aborigines at Andamooka to improve their living quarters. Some were living under very primitive conditions. I am told that this iron came from Woomera. It is only secondhand and some looks as if it has been through fire; some is curved as though it came from an old aviation hangar and has large holes as the result of its having been roughly torn off nails. It has to be placed on rough pine logs as there is no sawn timber. The field is a dusty place where there is not much rain, but when it does rain this iron affords little protection because water drips through the holes. To encourage these people to improve their poor quarters, it is desirable that they should be provided with new iron, or before the other iron leaves Woomera it should be rerolled and the holes mended. I went into one or two residences and found that the women particularly complained that, although they were doing their best to improve their living conditions, the iron was in bad shape and there was no ridge capping. This matter should be investigated because, if these people could be encouraged to make their homes shipshape and weatherproof, it would be another step in the direction we desire.

I hope that the time will come when we will have officers at these fields—either one at each or at least one associated closely with both. There are agents at each place but an officer of the department at each place could do a tremendous amount to assist these people. The agent at Andamooka is a school teacher who, by virtue of his teaching duties, is limited on what he can do. At Coober Pedy there is the Lutheran Mission, but that is not quite enough to do what is required. A competent trained officer is required to assist these people in a practical way.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—I listened with much interest to the honourable member's remarks regarding the operation of mechanical means in opal mining and I will bring the remarks to the notice of the Minister of Mines for consideration. I doubt whether there is power in the Mining Act to restrict the activities of people desiring to work their leases; indeed, I think the Minister's concern usually is to see that people work their leases. However, I am sure that the Minister will investigate the matter carefully. Regarding the provision of housing on the fields, my comment is that it is not always good to provide everything for an aborigine.

This applies generally over the whole field of the Aborigines Department and aboriginal welfare. Aborigines who work on the fields have equal opportunities with others who work there to obtain money for themselves, and I think the honourable member will agree, at least in part, that it is not necessarily always a good thing to be a fairy godmother to them; but they should be assisted to stand on their own feet and take their places in the community.

Mr. Loveday—I agree with that.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—With that reservation, I will consider what he has said regarding the iron sent there. I do not know the circumstances, but will inquire and ascertain whether they made any payment and, if so, whether they have received value for what they paid, and things of that nature. This morning I saw a docket from the Department of Mines in which putting down a bore of a certain size at Coober Pedy was suggested. The Engineer-in-Chief is now considering that because, if rain does not fall, this field may be short of water, if not out altogether, by the end of December.

Mr. KING—For a nurse at the Gerard Mission, £500 is provided, and £8,000 is set aside towards the erection of cottages for aborigines at that mission. Can the Minister explain the background of the provision for a nurse, and say whether negotiations for a general improvement to the mission have been brought to fruition?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member will see that provision is also made for nurses at the Yalata and Umeewarra Missions. This has been done by the department towards assisting the missions in the care of people there.

Mr. King—Is that a district nurse?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Not necessarily. It may be a permanent nurse, and I think the amount would indicate that she would be permanently located at the mission. However, I speak without proper information and am subject to correction. The sum of £5,000 is to pay for the work in hand at the Gerard Mission. We have built, I think, seven new cottages and have reconditioned seven or eight. We have also provided a complete water scheme to serve all the houses, and have connected water for outside septic toilets and for internal use and bathroom facilities in the new homes. I heard recently that the work is well advanced but I cannot say exactly when it will be completed.

Mr. King—Are these cottages the property of the Government?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The agreement provides that they are the property of the Government and that rent shall be paid for them. This is a necessary provision, and the rent collected will be available for maintenance and repairs when required.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The sum of £3,000 has been provided for the erection of cottages at Finniss Springs Mission and £2,000 for cottages at Nepabunna Mission. I am pleased that something is being done to improve housing in those two missions, but I have been asked to place a suggestion before the Minister for consideration. It has been pointed out to me that since the discontinuance of the railway line from Beltana there are some railway buildings in the town, particularly the railway station and office and one or two railway houses, that are no longer required by the Commonwealth Railways Department. I ask the Minister to consider whether some arrangement could be made with the Commonwealth Railways whereby these houses could be acquired and used by aborigines. They are nomadic and live on the banks of the creek and sometimes there is hardly anybody about, but it seems a pity that these fine, solid buildings should lie idle.

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

Mr. BYWATERS—The Auditor-General's report states that the net cost of maintaining aborigines at Point Pearce for the year 1958-59 was £9,927, or £25 9s. 1d. a head of the mean population. That figure represented a decrease of £11,840 compared with the previous year. The net cost of maintaining aborigines at Point McLeay in 1958-59 was £33,664, or £111 2s. 1d. a head of the mean population, which represented an increase of £2,241 compared with the previous year. The increase was mainly attributed to the increased deficit of £2,163 from farm operations, but, notwithstanding that, the increase seems to be substantial when compared with the cost at Point Pearce. There may be a satisfactory answer to that and if the Minister cannot supply it now perhaps he will find out for me. The trading store at Point Pearce showed a surplus of £341, of which £289 resulted from the sale of groceries, clothing, etc. At Point McLeay, although the trading store showed a surplus of £385, a small loss of £52 was incurred on the sale of groceries, clothing, etc., and in accounting for returnable drums. The

report stated that both these losses were to be investigated.

The farm operations at Point Pearce showed a profit of £15,168; at Point McLeay they showed a deficit of £2,163. I understand that Point Pearce encourages co-operatives, which reduce overhead costs, and I have heard allegations that the natives at Point McLeay sought work and were told that none was available, whereas work was being let out on contract. I would like to know the reason for the discrepancy between the two missions.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The difference is largely due to a very good wheat crop at Point Pearce last year. The Superintendent at Point Pearce told me last spring that he had 800 acres of wheat which he expected would yield an average return of 12 bags to the acre. I doubted that at the time and said so, but later he told me his expectations had been realized and, in fact, the returns were a little above expectations. That was a phenomenal crop over such a wide area and that would materially affect the net cost, to which the Auditor-General referred, and it would also explain why farming operations at Point Pearce showed such a great profit against a loss incurred at Point McLeay. I am not able, without inquiry, to give the reason for the losses at Point McLeay but I think it is usually accepted that a settlement of this sort is not necessarily maintained on a basis as economical as it would be if run purely as a farm. It is run to some extent for the purpose of giving employment to the people living there and that is not the best economic method.

There is no reason to think that the administration varies at either place. I visited Point McLeay on two occasions recently and I believe the manager there—he has since left to take another position in the Public Service—rendered very good service and the administration was generally of a high order.

Mr. CUMBE—I refer to the settlement of aborigines in the metropolitan area and pay a tribute to the work done at the North Adelaide Aborigines Women's Hostel. That hostel is doing good work and it is a home and a refuge for a certain type of woman. I pay a tribute, too, to the staff administering the hostel. The settlement of aboriginal families in suburban streets is a difficult problem because friction is often caused between the white residents and the aborigines, sometimes purely through misunderstanding. Regular and competent inspections of the houses and the conditions under which the families are

settled should be undertaken by the department. The department makes every effort to see that the aboriginal families are happy in the houses but I ask the Minister to investigate this aspect of inspections and say whether all possible efforts are made by the department to have regular inspections and visits made to see that the families are adequately housed and difficulties and frictions diplomatically ironed out.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The department's policy is to do precisely what the honourable member suggests. Last year two additional women welfare officers were appointed in the city; one of them was Sister Coulthard, who came up from Point McLeay. Whether it is in the city or in country towns that aboriginal housing is provided, the department does its best to see that aborigines are regularly visited and that a check is kept of the conditions. I point out that it would be beyond the department's power to prevent friction between neighbours. That happens in the best of regulated families, whether they be black or white. However, we do our best to satisfactorily settle aborigines in the community.

Mr. LOVEDAY—An amount of £5,000 is proposed for the North-West Reserve. Can the Minister say whether this provision is associated with the proposal to develop stock grazing in that area under supervision from Ernabella?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The amount is toward the cost of implementing the establishment of a cattle station in the reserve. It will be spent in the latter part of this year in preparation for further work to be done over a period of many years in building up that project.

Mr. Loveday—Will Ernabella be the supervisory centre?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Not necessarily.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—I commend the Government and the Minister for the assistance rendered to the Koonibba Mission Station. A further £2,000 is provided for the erection of cottages. The original cottages on this station have fallen into disrepair and recently the Government has advanced money for the construction of concrete dwellings. I hope it will continue with this project because many more homes are required. Last year £11,700 was provided towards the supply and reticulation of water to the station. Can the Minister indicate what progress has been made on that project? The residents of the station appreciate the assistance the Government has given

in connection with vocational training, although when I last visited the station it was too early to assess the results of this training.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The last time I referred the question of the water supply to the Koonibba Mission Station to the Engineer-in-Chief he informed me that he expected the work to be completed by this date. I will check and advise the honourable member privately whether it has been done.

Line passed.

Public Works, £1,215,800; Miscellaneous, £34,988—passed.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £10,330,050.

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

That the line "Contingencies—Primary, Higher Primary, and Area Schools—Maintenance, cleaning, reimbursement of travelling expenses, fares, motor hire, excess board, removal expenses, locality allowances for teachers, conveyance, boarding and book allowances for students, rent, repairs and improvements to school building, subsidies for school committees, equipment, rates, fuel, lighting and sundries—£342,000" be reduced by £100.

The Opposition is particularly concerned with the provision for book allowances for secondary school children. I have confined my motion to this particular item, although there are three more relating to book allowances, because it is the first appearing under the "Contingencies" heading and had I moved in respect of a later item, once the motion was disposed of, I understand it would have the effect of preventing discussion on items preceding it. There is a historical background to this proposal, which goes back to immediately prior to the last State election when I made a definite statement on behalf of the Labor Party that if it were successful it would provide free books for all school children. That statement apparently threw the Treasurer and his cohorts into some confusion because in his policy speech shortly afterwards the Treasurer said that the Government proposed to extend the progress allowance to secondary school students. This, of course, was a counter to my proposal to provide all books free to all school children. Let us examine the pledge given by the Treasurer to the people of South Australia. It was a pledge because in an advertisement it was so described. In the advertisement the following appeared:—

The education budget provides for the subsidy of books to ALL secondary school pupils. There is no doubt that the words used were "ALL secondary school pupils."

Mr. Lawn—But that was at election time.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. The pledge did its work and was, I believe, of material assistance in retaining the Government in power, but following the election we commenced to get complaints from parents of children attending secondary schools that their children were not receiving the progress allowance that had been promised by the Treasurer. Members will recall that during the June session the Opposition raised the matter rather vigorously, and subsequently I took it up with the Minister of Education by way of correspondence. The letter I wrote to the Minister was dated July 9 and stated:—

Re book allowances—I note that the regulations governing the payment of book allowances have been amended to provide that students who have passed in five subjects at the Intermediate examination shall be eligible to receive a book allowance in the year following their attainment of that qualification.

I do not say that the concession was the result of what was said at the June session, but it transpired subsequent to that session. The letter continued:—

Before this amendment was made I had considered the apparent anomalies of the regulations with a view to submitting to you suggestions as to the desirability and means of removing them; and, although the amendment referred to will effect some improvement, I still feel that a more comprehensive approach is necessary for that purpose. I understand that, before being amended, the regulations disqualified students from receiving a book allowance if, not having passed the Intermediate examination by the end of their third year of study, they either repeated the Intermediate year or proceeded to the Leaving standard in their fourth year. I am not quite satisfied that the criterion of attainment, as expressed in the regulations, is the correct one. Such a criterion may be reasonable enough for the purpose of determining whether a student should proceed to a higher standard of study, although, even in that instance, potential rather than actual achievement seems to be the proper test; but for the purpose of determining whether a book allowance should be paid it is, I believe, inappropriate, being in the nature of an intellectual means test in reverse. You will realize, of course, that the recent relaxation perpetuates the application of this criterion; and, in any case, the prescription of five or any other number of subjects must necessarily create anomalies and impose hardship at some point. There are several sound reasons why a student might not pass in any subject or subjects in the Intermediate examination—or, for that matter, the Leaving examination—such as illness during the year or at the time of the examination itself, examination “jitters” (which are not uncommon), accident, permanent disability (which may prevent a student from progressing as

rapidly as other students), change of school, etc.

I think they were good reasons why the regulations should be relaxed. The letter continued:—

I would prefer to delete reference to attainment as defined in the regulations and substitute therefor a provision to the effect that the book allowance shall be payable in all cases unless the Director, on the report of the headmaster, is satisfied that the student cannot benefit at all from his continued attendance at the school.

I think that was a perfectly reasonable suggestion and one which could easily have been acted upon and which would have removed the dissatisfaction that was brought to the notice of Opposition members. The letter continued:—

If, however, the attainment criterion is to be retained, I suggest that the Director should be given discretion to authorize the payment of the appropriate book allowance, notwithstanding the minimum requirements prescribed, in cases in which the headmaster certifies that it is in the interests of the student to repeat the Intermediate year of study or to proceed to the Leaving standard as the case may be. I would be pleased if you would give these submissions your sympathetic consideration.

I received the following reply dated July 22:—

I have your letter of 9th July, suggesting that the education regulations, covering the payment of book allowances, be amended to delete reference to attainment. You suggested the substitution of a provision to the effect that book allowances should be payable to all secondary students unless the Director, on the report of the headmaster, is satisfied that the student cannot benefit at all from his continued attendance at school. Actually, in my opinion, the cases mentioned by you are met under the existing regulations. The relevant regulation covering these cases reads as follows:—

In any case where a qualified student fails to reach the Intermediate standard of the P.E.B., or to reach the Intermediate standard of any secondary course instituted by the Education Department, within three years of the opening of the school year immediately following the completion of the primary school course, and the Director is satisfied that the failure was caused by illness or by other special circumstances, the Director may, from time to time, determine that such student shall be eligible for progress allowances for such period or periods beyond the maximum three years specified by the regulations, as he thinks fit, and such students shall thereupon be eligible for progress allowances for such period or periods.

Progress allowances have always been paid to students who have shown themselves competent to undertake secondary work by having gained a progress certificate. The regulation

quoted above does give the Director power to extend these progress allowances in special circumstances. In compiling the regulations for the payment of similar allowances to students in their fourth and fifth years of secondary study, the same policy of a recognized minimum attainment was applied. This minimum attainment, that is, five subjects at either the Intermediate P.E.B., Intermediate technical, or Intermediate area school examination, is considered by the senior officers, secondary superintendents, and the president of the Headmasters' Association as the minimum qualification necessary for a student to undertake a Leaving course of study, or a course of study at the Leaving level.

On the face, that appears to be a reasonable explanation, but the question of attainment still remains. If a student has not reached a certain standard he is not able to participate the progress allowance, unless it is certified that there are special circumstances.

Mr. Lawn—That was contrary to the policy speech.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, because the speech did not set out any qualifications whatsoever. It said in bald terms that the progress allowance would be increased and extended to all children attending all secondary schools.

Mr. Clark—Without any strings attached.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. No strings should be attached, but the Opposition would have been willing to agree to the suggestion set out in the letter of July 9, namely, that if the Director, on the report of the headmaster of the school, was satisfied that no benefit was to be gained by the student's receiving the secondary education, the progress allowance should not be paid.

We have had many complaints on this matter. Unfortunately, there appears to be no means of checking them. I asked a question on notice last Tuesday to see if I could ascertain how many students had applied for the progress allowance under the special circumstances mentioned in the Minister's letter, and how many applications had been granted. I got this delightfully vague reply:—

The Director of Education reports:—

“Information is not readily available to enable figures to be supplied in reply to Mr. O'Halloran's question in relation to applications for extension of progress allowances beyond the three year maximum period in accordance with regulation XXI, 2 (1) (b). In the case of book allowances, such claims would usually be included in the general claim forwarded by the head of the school. Separate applications for boarding and travelling allowances are made, but no separate record is maintained of these applications. Each appli-

cation is treated strictly on its merits. Although no figures are available, it is considered that the number of applications received have not been very large.”

Surely in a highly organized department such as the Education Department it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility to keep a record of the number of students who applied for the progress allowance in accordance with the provisions set out in the regulations, and then record those who had and those who had not been granted such allowances. There may be a considerable number—we do not know—but we have heard of a number of complaints from various parts of the State which appear to be justified.

I repeat that there should have been the provision for books for primary school pupils. We are spending increasingly large amounts on education each year and surely somewhere we could provide for this most desirable innovation. However, at the moment we are concerned particularly with secondary school students because in this age it is desirable that all who can possibly go on from primary to secondary education should be assisted so to do. The growing cost of books, school uniforms and, in many cases, transport to and from school is burdening many parents, especially those in avocations that carry with them ordinary remuneration. After all, they are the great majority of the community, the people entitled to consideration, the people from whom we should be able to expect technicians of the future to come, not exclusively from those able to pay for a secondary education.

The Labor Party believes that education should be free to all children from primary school to university. On that principle we stand because it puts all the children in the community on an equal footing in fitting themselves for their future careers. That is fundamental justice. We condemn the Government and the Treasurer for having departed from the definite promise he made prior to the last election, that at least primary and secondary school students would get an increased allowance for the purchase of books.

Mr. LAWN—I support the motion for the reasons given by the Leader and for others as well. Although this line deals with primary, higher primary and area schools, and among other things includes books, I am directing my remarks to books for primary and other schools. Ever since I have been old enough to take an interest in these matters, I have known that the cost of education was a severe

burden in my home when I was a child. For instance, I did not participate in school sports because the money was not available at home for the purchase of football uniform and other things. I know that we were not always able to afford books. Today, a considerable amount of school equipment has to be provided by parents for their children. Sometimes children cannot go on from the primary school because of the cost of education. In many cases, for that reason, parents find it most difficult even to keep children going at the primary school. The Minister may reply that books are obtainable free at the primary school—that if a father likes to sign a paper saying that he cannot afford books he gets them free. But that is not the kind of society I hope to see in our country before I retire. I hope to see this State progress to a point where a family can get free books for the children whether or not it is too poor to pay for them.

Naturally, I joined the political party that supported my interests better than any other. Ever since I have been a member of the Australian Labor Party it has believed in free books for school children; that education should be available to all children in the State irrespective of class, creed, wealth or privilege; that every child in our community should have the right to free education. Only yesterday, when discussing another matter, I said that in some cases wrong-doing was the product of our society. We are responsible to some extent because these people have gone wrong. The three greatest institutions in a child's life are the home, school and Sunday school. Our schools are playing a big part in the education and the moulding of character of our future citizens. Are we to say that a child cannot proceed from the primary to the high school if his parents cannot afford to buy his clothes, books and so on? It is beyond the reach of many families to send their children to a secondary school, and it is tough on some families to keep their children going even to a primary school without having to ask for free books. These should be available without their having to ask for them.

My Party has always included in its policy an item that all school books and requirements should be free. Prior to the last election I told the people that if I were returned I would advocate this and if a Labor Government were returned free books would be provided. The leader of the Liberal Party could see the danger to his Government despite the gerrymander, and within 24 hours of the delivery of the policy speech of the Leader of the Oppo-

sition he said that if his Government were returned it would increase the Government allowance for books to children attending secondary schools. However, he is not honouring that promise. Wherever I went during the election campaign this question was a live topic of conversation. The leader of the Liberal Party was shrewd enough to include it in his own policy speech. As a result of its policy, the Labor Party recorded a majority of 48,000 votes over the Liberal Party, and the question I have mentioned played an important part in the figures. The people want a Labor Government, if only for the reason that their children would receive free books.

Mr. Jenkins—Did you tell them that you would favour your salary being increased?

Mr. LAWN—We are the second lowest paid politicians in Australia. The *Monthly Summary of Australian Conditions*, issued by the National Bank of Australasia for March, 1959, had this to say:—

It is estimated that expenditure on books and clothing for the new school year will absorb £2,000,000 of the public's spending money.

The cost of school books plays a big part in the family budget, but some parents have to plead poverty and ask for free books, or go without something else to find the money to buy them in order to keep children at school. People in the Education Department have said that £2,000,000 would be an under-estimate. Many parents have told me that they had to allow their children to leave primary school because they could not afford to send them to a secondary school. They know that it is a child's right to have at least three years at a technical or high school, but the cost is prohibitive. Last year it cost me £70 for my daughter's first year at a technical school. I kept an itemized account and submitted it to the Taxation Department with my return and the amount shown was never questioned. I am pleased to have this opportunity to protest against the action of the Government in perpetuating a policy that has been pursued for years and which has precluded many children from continuing their education. I hope the Government will be willing to accept the just claims of the Leader of the Opposition and agree to provide free books to all school children in South Australia.

Mr. QUIRKE—I am in a position where I have to declare myself, and I always do on such occasions. I do not support this motion, because it is tantamount to a vote of no-confidence, but I wholeheartedly support the

principle behind it. I ask members whether it is possible to educate a child without books. Our Constitution provides that education is compulsory, and that entails a supply of books. It is becoming expensive to educate children, and I challenge anyone in this House to put up a substantive case that, while there is compulsory education, we can have it without books.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—I listened with attention, as I always do, to the interesting, informative and relevant speech of the Leader of the Opposition. At the outset let me say that I have a certain amount of sympathy for the sentiments expressed by the Leader, the member for Burra and the member for Adelaide, but I part company with the Leader on one aspect. He concluded his speech by condemning the Treasurer for dishonouring the promise he is alleged to have made to the electors in his policy speech. The Leader is usually carefully documented, but in this case he was not, because he referred on about three separate occasions to the Treasurer's policy speech, but did not quote from it. Instead, he quoted from some advertisement authorized by some other organization or person. May I take the opportunity, just for the record, to quote from the Treasurer's policy speech, the relevant portion of which is as follows:—

The educational tasks of the future will be even greater than those in the past. During the next five years the number of pupils in Government schools will rise to approximately 200,000, and it is clear that there must be no slackening in the provision of buildings, teachers and equipment. The Government has accordingly prepared a plan to meet requirements of the next five years. The plan provides for 200 new school buildings, 1,200 acres of land for school sites, 220 houses for country teachers' residences, 1,000 new classrooms at existing schools, 5,000 new teacher trainees, enlargement of the Adelaide Teachers College to accommodate 2,500 students, and an expenditure of £1,500,000 on transport. The estimated total expenditure on education during this period is £86,000,000. Included in this estimate is an amount sufficient to meet an increased allowance for school books for all students attending all secondary schools in this State.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is precisely what I said.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The speech continued:—

The amount of increased allowance is in accordance with an estimate the Government has had prepared by the Education Department, and will be as follows:—First year, £8; second year, £8; third year, £8; fourth or

Leaving year, £9; and fifth or Leaving Honours year, £10. The Government will make provision for the payment of these rates for the 1959 school year. The supply of books in primary schools will be maintained on the same basis as previously and, as in the past, special care will be taken to see that free books are available to every child where circumstances make this necessary.

It seems to me that the Treasurer made it abundantly clear that, although he said "all students attending all secondary schools," he went on to itemise how they would be paid in the first, second, third, fourth or Leaving year and fifth or Leaving Honours year.

Mr. Lawn—That does not necessarily qualify it, though.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—There has always been a qualification.

Mr. Lawn—People did not know that.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—There has always been a qualification for a book allowance. Before I came to represent Glenelg in this House, and for many years, the regulations made under the Education Act provided that only a student who qualified by receiving the progress certificate or some equivalent was entitled to a book allowance of £4 10s. a year for his or her first three years at a secondary school, making a total allowance of £13 10s. for students qualified to receive the allowance. It can be seen from this that there has always been a necessary qualification before payment of the book allowance.

Mr. O'Halloran—So the advertisement I quoted was a lying advertisement.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I do not subscribe to that. I have quoted from the policy speech and the law of the land contained in the regulations under the Education Act. It is common knowledge that early this year the Government decided to increase the allowance for the first three years to £8 a year—a total of £24 as against £13 10s. paid previously. In addition, as was announced, it was decided to extend the allowance to £9 for the fourth or Leaving year and £10 for the fifth or Leaving Honours year, so that the total book allowance payable is £43 instead of the previous total of £13 10s. I want to make it clear that there was no dishonouring of a promise made by the Treasurer—that the Treasurer did not dishonour any promise that he, as Treasurer, made. I take the full responsibility for saying that I was responsible for drafting the necessary regulations, and there was a law of the land under the relevant regulations made

under the Education Act dealing with book allowances for the first three years for students who had obtained a progress certificate or an equivalent. In order to implement the Treasurer's promise contained in his policy speech, it was necessary to draft the amending regulations.

Mr. Ryan—But you made the regulation after the elections.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It was in March, following the elections. In drafting the regulations to implement the Government's new policy I, as Minister of Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and the Deputy Director, followed a principle, which had been observed religiously over the years and was already incorporated in the regulations, of providing for a qualification for the receipt of this additional increased book allowance—the additional allowance for the first three years and the new allowances for the fourth and fifth years. The existing regulation defined a qualified student for the book allowance as one having a progress certificate, a qualifying certificate or equivalent approved by the Director of Education. Accordingly, the new regulations as originally drafted provided that, to receive the allowance for the fourth or Leaving year, a student must hold a Public Examination Board or area or technical Intermediate certificate and be taking the Leaving course. Those regulations were drafted; they were approved in Executive Council; they were referred to the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation; and they were laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament and I received no protest that there was any dishonouring of the promise of the Premier in relation to them. But I did receive complaints from the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition and from other members of Parliament—

Mr. O'Halloran—The matter was ventilated here.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes, and I received complaints from other interested parties in relation to certain aspects; in particular, that it was considered that the Intermediate certificate was too rigid in relation to the subject matter of English. That was the point that the honourable member for Gawler, with his long experience in educational matters, laid great stress on—in my opinion, quite rightly so.

It was found that some students who had gained passes in five or more subjects in the Intermediate did not obtain a

certificate because they did not obtain a pass in English, which was a compulsory subject, and accordingly they did not qualify for the book allowance although they had shown themselves competent to enter the Leaving class. Accordingly, again in consultation with the Director and Deputy Director of Education, I drafted new regulations to make these students eligible while not reducing the required standard of education. Again, these new amended regulations were approved by Executive Council; were referred to the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation; were laid on the table of both houses of Parliament; and were approved as were the earlier regulations.

I suggest, with the greatest respect, that the complaints were related to hardship caused to a relatively few students and they did not go to the root of the complaint which is now the subject matter of this protest in Parliament. I go back to where I commenced—and I do not want to weary the Committee by quoting the regulations—but I refer to them again:—

Education regulation 21.—Progress allowances—conditions of eligibility.

This regulation has been in existence and all the regulations have been here for at least 10 years before the notice of all honourable members of this House. This regulation lays down the conditions of eligibility of any student to obtain any book allowance. It applies to progress allowances generally and it says in the opening paragraph:—

Subject to the provisions of these regulations every student who has been awarded a qualifying certificate or a progress certificate or equivalent approved by the Director, and whose parents are domiciled in South Australia or (in cases approved by the Director) in a reciprocating State (hereinafter called "a qualified student") shall, for a maximum period of three years immediately following the completion of the primary school course and while attending an approved secondary school, be eligible for the benefits (hereinafter called "progress allowances") specified in the next paragraph.

Following paragraphs then state what the allowances are, but the whole basis of these book allowances is to qualified students and I think it was well known that in that context "all students" was meant to refer to "all qualified students." I emphasize again, to the best of my ability, that whatever other complaints there might be by members of the Opposition and the member for Burra and any other member of Parliament there is not free education from the kindergarten to the university and there is not free allowance on all

books of all types. That I suggest is the subject of another debate at another time when the rules permit it. The honourable Leader apologized in advance for himself when he realized he was sailing very close to the wind, whereas the honourable member for Adelaide sailed right over and toppled into the lake because he went on to something which, but for your great indulgence, Mr. Chairman, would never be allowed here.

That is no doubt a proper subject for a debate in this House on an appropriate occasion: whether there should be free education for all from the kindergarten to the university and whether there should be free books for all. I think a very good case can be made out for it if we bear in mind that there is, of necessity, only a limited amount of money that can be made available for education. We may differ in our opinions on the sum and on the limit by many millions of pounds, but there must be a limit. Again, of necessity, if we are going to spend a much larger sum on one aspect or item of education, such as school books, then of necessity we must reduce our expenditure on other numerous items to make up for it and I think that is a subject which this Parliament might well debate and decide. What are the highest priorities of expenditure in relation to education? It may be the general consensus of opinion that free school books should be very high indeed on the list of priorities to the exclusion of many other items of expenditure.

Mr. Clark—Hear, hear!

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—That may be so and I should be very pleased to take part in that debate, not in any spirit of opposition, but with the greatest goodwill in the world and with the greatest co-operation, because I have strong views on the subject matter myself. However, this is neither the time nor the place to enlarge the scope of the debate on the whole question of free books. There has been a large increase in expenditure as a result of the Government's decision, even on the somewhat restricted scale for which I was responsible in consultation with the Director and Deputy Director of Education, because prior to the implementation of this new policy the expenditure by the Education Department on book allowances was £145,000 whereas last year it increased to £324,000—a very material increase in one financial year—and this year £376,000 is proposed.

Mr. O'Halloran—That expenditure is for all books, of course, and is not necessarily limited to secondary school children.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—In 1957-58 the expenditure on book allowances was as follows:—Higher primary and area schools, £11,000; boys' and girls' technical high schools, £28,000; country technical schools, £2,000; high schools, £70,000; private schools, £34,000—a total of £145,000. In 1958-59 the expenditure was for higher primary and area school, £20,000; boys' and girls' technical high schools, £56,000; country technical schools, £4,000; high schools, £167,000; private schools, £75,000. I have used round figures, but the total for 1958-59 was £324,000. That was a tremendous increase in expenditure in that period. As the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) referred to the question of books generally, I might just mention the great increase in the number of children who are receiving free books. In 1949-50, 2,302 were granted free books; in 1950-51, 2,286; 1951-52, 2,181; 1952-53, 2,584; 1953-54, 3,269; 1954-55, 3,152; 1955-56, 3,647; (and now we come to the significant years) 1956-57, 4,346; 1957-58, 5,905 and 1958-59, 8,738.

Mr. Bywaters—Does that mean that our prosperity is waning?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It means specifically and definitely that the promise made by the Treasurer in his policy speech—"The supply of books in primary schools will be maintained on the same basis as previously, and as in the past, special care will be taken to see that free books are available to every child where circumstances make this necessary"—and the promise I made as Minister of Education that there would be a more liberal policy in relation to the granting of free books than there had been in the past, have been honoured. I invited members generally, and members of the public, to make those promises known to interested parties and as a result the number of children receiving free books has increased.

Mr. Lawn—What do the parents have to claim to obtain free books?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—That they cannot afford to pay for them.

Mr. Lawn—And they dislike that, as do the children.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I do not think they dislike it at the present time. In the past there may have been some unnecessary discrimination, but I do not think that was by any deliberate action on the part of headmasters or teachers. There again, during the last couple of years notices have been placed in the *Education Gazette* and I have made statements in the House in reply to questions

asked by the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Edwardstown, Enfield and others, with the result that people are losing their inhibitions in relation to this matter and are freely applying for the grants—as they are entitled to—and they are being treated very generously. As Minister of Education I am only too pleased to increase and widen the scope of this list of free books until such time as a decision is made whether there shall be free books for primary schools generally.

Mr. Quirke—There appears to have been a big increase in the cost of the books themselves. Is that reflected in the departmental accounts too?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Most commodities have increased in price: ask any housewife. The main increase has not been so much the increase in the cost of the books as the increase in the number of children who have become eligible for them as the result of the policy enunciated by the Treasurer and that which has been implemented by myself to the best of my ability as the responsible Minister. As Minister of Education I make the promise that I will be pleased to investigate personally any complaints that any honourable member has in relation to any hardships which may be caused. The regulations were designed to give that discretion to the Director of Education, because it was probably assumed that the Minister would not have time to give detailed attention to complaints, but I have the time and the inclination to do so, particularly if any complaints are received by me directly from members of Parliament.

Mr. O'Halloran—Or parents?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes, but it would hasten the consideration of them if they came either from members of Parliament or through them. I have had a rough calculation made and so far as the department is able to ascertain only a limited number of complaints have actually come before the department and that is why, in the hurry of endeavouring to go through the whole of the ramifications of the department, the reply to the Leader of the Opposition was not as specific as he would have liked. He used the delightful description “delightfully vague.”—

Mr. O'Halloran—It was certainly vague.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes, and I agree with the Leader that with a department as large and as efficient as we claim the Education Department to be we should have the records and, if we have not got them, we should seek to be in a position to obtain

them so that we can readily supply the information which is of great moment to the parents of the children concerned. I give the Leader and other members of the Opposition—in fact the whole House—my definite and positive assurance that I am very sympathetically disposed towards the problem and I shall be only too pleased to give every application my personal attention.

Mr. CLARK—I congratulate the Treasurer on his wisdom in allowing the Minister of Education to reply to the Opposition case. The Minister is regarded by us as an inherently decent chap and his delightful manner and the kindness with which he answers all sorts of questions appeal to us, but I cannot agree with him when he makes a valiant attempt to explain away our accusations that the Government's promise in connection with free books had not been honoured. I believe the Minister used the words “Leaving Year” and “Leaving Honours Year,” in spite of the fact that “all” was included in the policy speech. We consider that to be quibbling. Election advertisements are costly affairs and the one mentioned could not have been cheap. The word “all” is printed in large black capital letters. It was obviously done to catch the eye but the words “Leaving Year” and “Leaving Honours Year” were not in such big print. The advertisement definitely referred to “all” secondary schools. When we refer to the “Leaving Year” we must remember that some students are in the Leaving class without having passed the Intermediate examination and are there because the headmaster thinks they may be able to pick up and even pass the Leaving examination.

In the Government's original plan, which we took to task earlier this year, a student must have passed the Intermediate examination in order to get the progress allowance in the following year. The severity of that has been slightly evaded. The excuse that the Minister put forward might have passed muster but for the fact that during a debate earlier this year Mr. O'Halloran and I drew attention to the discrepancy between the announcement in the Treasurer's policy speech and what was being done. Mr. O'Halloran said that the Government had not fulfilled its promise, but I had the temerity to go further and say that the Government had dishonoured its promise. If the reference to Leaving classes had been noted at the time surely the Government, having been accused by private members of dishonourable practices, would have answered them at the time.

I do not want to say much about the Minister's remarks; but he pointed out that only a limited amount of money is available for education, and that is true. We have been told that the amount now available is large, and the Minister suggested that he would like to see it even larger, but he said that it just could not be any larger without taking something from other items. Under the system we use to obtain our money that is correct, but I will try to show where the money can be obtained without reducing the Budget items by one penny. I have tried to do it before and I have now reached the stage where the press in South Australia agrees with me. I will try to show that more money could be spent on educational items. Let me make the comparison between the statements on book allowances in the policies of the two Parties. In the Labor Party platform a whole page is devoted to education. I will not read the whole platform, but just the following two matters:—

Commonwealth grants specifically for education and sufficient magnitude to enable the States to meet in full their educational requirements.

Extension of free education to all citizens of the State up to and including the University. All school books and requirements to be free.

At the moment all the States cannot do that, but they are doing what they can and are spending enormous sums on education. I have a copy of the Liberal and Country League platform and I checked to see what it had to say about education, but to be honest I had some difficulty in finding it. I could not find it on the State platform, but found it in the objectives of the Liberal and Country League Party. Really there is no need for me to read it because Government members know their holy writ, but I will read it for the benefit of Opposition members:—

To have an Australian nation in which there is a revised and expanded system of child and adult education designed to develop the spirit of true citizenship . . .

If I may interpolate there, the education system surely should be designed for other purposes as well. It continues:—

. . . and in which no consideration of wealth and privilege shall be a determining factor. Of course, at the moment there is no question that if wealth and privilege are not the determining factors, certainly lack of wealth and privilege is the determining factor. In all primary schools, at least at the moment, hardship has to be proved before free books can be obtained. It is a sort of means test in

reverse. We must remember that the increasing cost of books, particularly for large families, is a very real hardship in many cases. As suggested by the member for Adelaide, the increasing cost of other items is a burden on many people. For example, voluntary subscriptions are a fine source of funds for schools, but, although voluntary, they are not always easy for some parents to afford, and children naturally like to give the same amount, if possible, as their friends at school, even though their parents cannot afford it. There is no doubt that school children look better wearing school uniforms, but they are, unfortunately, costly; but wealth is not supposed to be a determining factor.

The only way of ensuring that wealth is not a determining factor is to let all boys and girls have free books. I am glad to note that that appears to be the Liberal Party's policy as well. The Minister is obviously in favour of it. In the Labor Party's policy speech, which preceded that of the Treasurer, we said that free books had always been our policy; it was necessary and we decided it was about time we said more about it and advertised it more. Although over the years we have sought from the Government that the progress allowance be increased, we have never been successful. Imagine our amazement when, shortly after our announcement about free books in our policy speech, there followed the Treasurer's announcement. If honourable members question that it is impossible to give free books, I reply that it can be done if the resources are there. It is certainly done in the United Kingdom and New South Wales, and has been for a long time. To a large extent, free books are provided in Queensland. To a somewhat lesser extent, not all books but all writing books and books of that nature are provided in Western Australia. In other States the book allowance is similar to ours. We made our announcement on free books and before long we heard the Treasurer's announcement and read large advertisements in the press about what the Government was prepared to do. The Labor Party can take some credit for that. That was the first result of its free education policy. I may be wrong, and the idea may have been in the Treasurer's or his Party's mind before our announcement. I am open to correction on that, but the obvious inference would be that, because our announcement was likely to have definite results, it was thought wise to make a counter-proposal, although the Government had refused to do anything about it before that.

As there seems to be some confusion on this issue, let me remind honourable members of the Government's promise. It was: for the first, second and third years—£8; for the fourth year—£9; for the fifth year—£10, and to all children in all secondary schools. Most people thought that the word "all" in large print really meant "all." The second result of the Labor Party's policy was representations in this House by the Leader and other members drawing attention to cases we thought were worthy of a book allowance; and also the Leader's letter. I want to see a third result, which will come in time: we should have free books in all schools. I have suggested continually over the years that we should obtain from the Federal Government, by hook or by crook, funds specifically for education. I have pointed out that the Prime Minister has, unfortunately, not been inclined to do very much about this. I have mentioned that the Australian Teachers' Federation, public bodies and welfare clubs, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Primary Producers' Union and others interested went to the trouble of organizing a large petition of 130,000 signatures to present to the Federal Parliament, and the Prime Minister was reluctant to receive it. Eventually, it was presented by the Federal Labor Party to Parliament, with, I am sorry to say, very little result. It had the result of causing the Prime Minister to meet a deputation from the bodies mentioned. He said that his Government had always been generous in grants to the States. That may be debatable. He also said that section 96 of the Constitution presented no bar to the Commonwealth making educational grants and that the States had never asked for grants specifically for education. In the past I questioned the Treasurer on this subject, and he did not appear to think it could be done. At the Premiers' Conference in March last, Mr. Hawke, then Premier of Western Australia, suggested that a joint Commonwealth-State commission should be established to investigate thoroughly the education systems of the States. He said:—

There is an urgent need for something to be done on the financial sides and on the other sides also as far as the States are concerned, particularly in regard to secondary and technical education.

The Prime Minister said that he was not attracted to the proposal and that he would set out the Commonwealth's views in a letter to each of the State Premiers. The reply meant that the State Governments would not

get anything for this purpose. I was pleased to see articles in the *Advertiser* and the *News* supporting the point of view that the States should be assisted by the Commonwealth. The *Advertiser* had this to say:—

Having recognized a responsibility to higher education by appointing the Universities Commission, and committing itself to heavy spending in that field, Canberra cannot consistently say now that primary and secondary education are none of its concern. The Universities Commission itself expressed anxiety over some aspects of secondary education, though this was not its real concern. It referred, for example, to a "wastage of talent," and "room for much improvement in the percentage of those who continue at school after the age of 15 years." More recently, the Australian Industries Development Association has argued the case for a vigorous effort to raise our school standards. The States, however, can do little more with the means now available. They can therefore hardly accept as final the Federal refusal even to support the investigation of the position.

I was delighted to hear the Minister of Education at a public gathering express this opinion:—

While appreciating the force of the arguments in opposition to the principle of direct Federal assistance for objects which fall constitutionally within the province of the States, this Commonwealth decision will be a great disappointment to all State Education Departments. Even though the Premier had been extremely generous in providing ever-increasing funds for education, it would be idle to profess that South Australia can meet the huge demands from all sources for various educational needs. Without further financial assistance from the Commonwealth it is impossible for the States adequately to meet the needs of education in this new industrial age. In my opinion the public should be told this plain unvarnished truth.

The Minister did a public service in saying that. In these days we need firstly free books so that no child can possibly be penalized. I was pleased to hear Mr. Quirk say something that I intended to say. After all, all boys and girls who attend primary schools are compelled to go there, thank God, and that being the case they should be provided with free books. It is not a matter of the school they attend, whether it is a departmental school, a church school or an independent school. I believe that the time is long past when there should be free books. Legislation has been passed, but not proclaimed, providing that children should attend school until they are 15, and I believe it has not been implemented because funds would have to be taken from other sections of the Budget, and we just cannot afford to do that. An effort should be made

by the Government to obtain funds from the Federal Government to be used specifically for education. The Government must stand condemned until it carries out its declared policy. I support the motion.

The CHAIRMAN—I should like to remind members that we are not debating free education.

Mr. RICHES—I take it, Mr. Chairman, that you are happy to announce that just as I rise to my feet. You have allowed other members to do it.

The CHAIRMAN—It is not to continue any longer.

Mr. RICHES—I was not at all impressed with the Minister's reply. In fact, he has not replied to the case presented by the Leader of the Opposition. I want to make clear my reasons for supporting the motion. The Minister went to some lengths to point out that regulations had been submitted for the consideration of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. I do not know whether that was because Mr. Clark is a member of that committee and it was thought he would take umbrage. I cannot understand the Minister at all. The regulations were laid on the table of the House and no objection was taken to them, and it was therefore understood that the House agreed to them. These regulations made some improvement to the situation that obtained before they were gazetted and, since this House cannot alter a regulation, it is inconceivable that it should be suggested that we should have opposed it. It seems to me that it is the Government's attitude that, unless we take steps like this to demonstrate our opposition to what is going on, it is an indication that we agree with what has happened, so we are forced to state our views when opportunity presents itself, as it does when we are asked to vote on these lines on the Estimates.

I feel most strongly about the fact that a promise that affects children at high schools within my electorate has been broken; nobody can read anything else into the Treasurer's policy speech. I agree that we cannot hold the Government to an advertisement but we can hold it to a policy speech, and surely nobody can read into the words "all students attending all secondary schools will be provided with free books" that children who did not obtain the Intermediate Certificate would be excluded. The Minister knows that I have raised this matter in questions and I have

spoken in debates earlier this session. He had an investigation made, but still most children attempting the Intermediate Certificate for the second time are left without assistance. I believe that the children who, by some circumstances, are not able to obtain this certificate at the first attempt need assistance more than any others. Why should they be omitted from the provisions that were promised to the people before the elections? Can it be said that they should not go back to school and have another try? Nobody should adopt that attitude, particularly if they look back into history and notice that those who have done so have not always succeeded.

The Minister of Education then referred to the financial position of the department, the increased vote and the increased expenditure. That may have been relevant in relation to our claim that free books should be provided for all children in all schools, primary and secondary, but it is not a valid argument against keeping this promise. Surely we could not be asked to accept as an excuse for not paying these allowances to children who are trying for their Intermediate certificate a second time that the cost will embarrass the department or the State. The Minister has said that few children are excluded under the regulations, and I believe that is so; but, as it is so, surely he will not say that these few will embarrass the finances of the State? I support the previous speakers who have made a claim for free books. We claim free books in primary as well as secondary schools, although I will not debate this matter, which has been adequately covered. I urge the Minister to consider these children who have been excluded this year who could be provided for without any embarrassment to the State's finances, and ask him to show that there is a desire on the part of the Government—because I believe there is a desire on the part of every member of this House and every officer of the Education Department—that children should not leave high school merely because they fail at the Intermediate examination the first time. I support the motion.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am not surprised that the Treasurer chose not to enter this debate but to leave it to the Minister of Education to say the sort of thing that the Treasurer constantly says in this House. The Treasurer has a habit of saying black is white.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! What line is the honourable member dealing with?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am dealing with the line to which a reduction has been moved, and am replying to what the Minister of Education said. I am not surprised that the Treasurer left it to the Minister of Education to do his job this afternoon, because the Minister of Education has attempted to show that what is black is white, although with much diffidence. It is not surprising that he approached the matter with considerable diffidence, because he is a lawyer and knows the meaning of words. The Treasurer, of course, knows the meaning of words but is careless in using them. He rarely attempts consistency, but the Minister of Education normally attempts consistency, which is why he spoke with such obvious uneasiness.

The Minister said that the statement made at the time of the last election was that there would be a subsidy for books for all secondary school pupils. He said that that would mean to anyone who listened to it “all qualified secondary school students”; in other words, “all” did not mean “all,” but “some.” The Minister knows what sort of treatment he would get if he went before a court and said “This document says ‘all secondary school pupils’ but that does not mean ‘all secondary school pupils’; that means ‘all qualified secondary school pupils’.” The court would promptly say “What is the basis of any such clause, any such complete alteration to the plain meaning of English?” The Minister would not be able to reply; he could not.

There can be no doubt whatever about what the Treasurer’s words meant to the people of this State. When he said “all” the people of this State took him to mean “all” and not “some,” yet that is what the Minister now tells the people of this State that he meant—that it was only intended to apply for some secondary school pupils and not all. That is inconsistent with what was said before the election. If, in a certain legal transaction, a man came and said “I will provide something for all the people involved in this transaction” and later said that didn’t mean “all” but “some,” and all he did was to provide for some of the

people in the transaction and not all, the courts would have a word for that representation. They would call it fraudulent misrepresentation. That would be the legal term for what had been done and that is what has been done on this occasion and, because of that, the Government does not deserve the confidence of this Committee or the confidence of the people to whom at the time of the elections it made the representation, which it has clearly not honoured.

Mr. Coumbe—Absolute rubbish!

Mr. DUNSTAN—The honourable member can always say “absolute rubbish” to anything he does not like, but he cannot reply and say how those words are to be taken to mean what the honourable member says they mean.

Mr. Coumbe—My remark was in relation to what you just said.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Honourable members opposite, when they are in a tight corner, have a habit of uttering words like that without being able to produce an argument but, if the honourable member were to try this sort of argument before a court, he would see what sort of a situation he would get himself into, and the Minister of Education knows what sort of situation he would get into if he attempted this sort of gobbledegook there. He cannot get away from the fact that he is saying the statement means something different from what it does mean. This is a reason for refusing confidence in the Government that made that representation and refused to honour the representation that it made and, in those circumstances, the Government ought not to have the confidence of the Parliament or the people. I commend the motion to honourable members and ask them to vote for it.

Motion negatived.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.44 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 27, at 2 p.m.