HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, November 3, 1959.

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

SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

QUESTIONS.

RAIL STANDARDIZATION.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The press reported over the weekend that the Commonwealth Government had agreed to assist the Queensland Government to rehabilitate the Townsville to Mount Isa railway by providing about £20,000,000 over a little more than four years. There is some perturbation in my electorate as to what effect this may have on the unification of the Peterborough Railway Division, which has been the subject of negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments for some time. Has the Premier any information on this matter, and can he say whether the new proposal is likely to postpone the beginning of the broadening of the gauge from Cockburn to Port Pirie?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no direct knowledge of the new proposal except what I have read in the press. I have some background knowledge of the matter in as much as the Loan Council was asked by the Commonwealth Government to approve of the Commonwealth's borrowing £30,000,000 from the International Bank to rehabilitate the Mount Isa line, and, as the money was coming from the International Bank and did not in any way impinge on the financial position in Australia, I strongly supported the suggestion that the work be done. I do not wish anything I say to be taken as being detrimental to Queensland and the Queensland case regarding the Mount Isa line. I think that work is important, and I have not the slightest objection to its being undertaken and speedily fulfilled. As a matter of interest, when the matter came before the Loan Council one or two States were reluctant to approve of the approach to the International Bank, and I am rather proud that I led the States that supported Queensland.

I do not want it to be assumed for one moment that South Australia would be hostile to the Mount Isa work being undertaken, but I must confess that I was very surprised to see that Queensland was able to get so speedily a decision upon this matter that was not in accordance with the original proposals before the Loan Council but one that meant that the Commonwealth was finding the money. No approach was made to the Loan Council on that matter and, secondly, a certain amount of politics obviously came into the decision because it was stated in the press—and, I have no doubt, correctly stated—that this activity was reported on by the Prime Minister direct to the Liberal and Country Party members in Queensland. That indicates to me that certain political pressure was brought by Queensland to see that this work was undertaken. I have had much experience in public affairs in this country, and I must compliment Queensland on the way its representatives have always stood up and seen that their State received a fair deal on sugar agreements and all other matters.

Be that as it may, I cannot but feel that South Australia's Broken Hill line is getting shoved more and more into the background. The report I mentioned to the Leader regarding that line has now been partially analysed by the Railways Commissioner. That report indicates that, instead of having two gauges on South Australian railways, we would have three; as far as I can see, it would mean that the proposals submitted to us could not be worked in practice, and they are certainly foreign to the agreement previously made with us regarding unification of lines and rolling stock.

The third thing that comes into it is the question of finance, and that could have a bearing, although I would not be able to say precisely what it would be. I am pleased that Queensland has this railway, but I cannot but wonder why South Australia's claims, not only regarding the Broken Hill line but also the Port Darwin line, which is now precisely 50 years outstanding, are so conveniently overlooked.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I, like the Premier, do not dispute in any way the assistance being granted to the Queensland Government to rehabilitate the Mount Isa to Townsville railway. I realize the national importance of that project. I also realize that for many years, as the Premier said, members of all parties in the Queensland Parliament have

co-operated in pressing the claims of that State for advantageous consideration by the Commonwealth. Will the Premier consider the advisability of having a conference of all members representing South Australia in the Federal Parliament to obtain their good offices towards securing recognition for South Australia's just claims?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have considered that on a number of occasions. At present the Railways Commissioner is working on the estimates provided by the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner, Mr. Hannaberry, and, when his report is available, I intend to follow the suggestion of Senator Paltridge in which he said he would be prepared to discuss the whole matter with me. I do not intend to call a conference of South Australian Federal members until we have fairly and squarely negotiated with the Senator, but I cannot help feeling that this matter has been pushed to one side and that there is no support for it in Federal Cabinet at present, notwithstanding that there is a firm agreement that was ratified in Parliament with the support of both Parties. I cannot help feeling that there is no firm intention on the part of the Commonwealth Government to proceed with the agreement at present. I have invited the Prime Minister to submit this matter to Cabinet and give a frank statement on Commonwealth policy on it, but we have not yet been able to achieve even that. However, I will follow up the investigation of Mr. Hannaberry's report and then arrange a conference with Senator Paltridge to see to what extent he is prepared to meet the position as it will be disclosed. If that is not successful, the Government will either have to consider the suggestion of the Leader or find out from the High Court whether the agreement means anything or can be just set aside without any further concern as to its usefulness.

EYRE PENINSULA STOCK TRANSPORT.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—I realize that some form of rationing had to be placed on the delivery of sheep to the metropolitan abattoirs, but the recent ban of carrying by truck is an imposition to Eyre Peninsula producers. Road transport is the only method of delivering their stock to the abattoirs apart from the uneconomic and excessively costly method of delivering by motor truck to Port Pirie and thence by rail to the metropolitan abattoirs. Will the Minister of Agriculture use his influence to have this part of the State released from such an imposition?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The honourable member will realize that because of the extremely dry conditions the Gepps Cross abattoirs has been receiving tremendous numbers of sheep for sale: it has actually slaughtered about 750,000 sheep in the last seven or eight weeks. Because of the record yarding it was necessary to restrict the road deliveries of sheep last week and this week. I have been in touch with the Abattoirs Board and it is quite probable—although I cannot say at this stage that it is certain—that there will be no further restrictions after this week. Apart from the dry conditions, the butchers' picnic yesterday affected the situation somewhat. I have asked the Operational Committee to consider the case of Eyre Peninsula separately from the other areas of the State in relation to road transport. I do not know whether that will have any effect, but should it be necessary to maintain restrictions the committee has agreed to regard Eyre Peninsula as a separate case, although it has made no commitment. I understand that some stock firms are willing to permit sheep to come from these areas by road to their paddocks at Gepps Cross, from which they can arrange sheep sales to Victorian buyers. I suggest that anybody in the honourable member's district interested in that proposal communicate with his own stock firm.

TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In last night's *News* under the heading "Education Minister outspoken: Commonwealth must give us funds" an article refers to the Government's inability to provide the necessary number of teachers, and suggests that many teachers are inadequately trained and insufficiently qualified, and that there is a general shortage of accommodation. The article also states:—

> It is impossible for the States to provide sufficient funds to meet the huge and growing needs of education without further Commonwealth financial assistance.

In an effort to obtain some further financial assistance from the Commonwealth for education, is it the Minister's intention to ensure a uniform approach to the matter of qualifications of third year certificated technical high school students compared with high school students who obtain the Intermediate certificate? If this were done, could it have a beneficial effect on the Commonwealth Government, particularly as it would indicate that this State recognizes the value of the two certificates?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The subject matter of this question has been discussed on several occasions by the Director of Education, the Superintendent of High Schools, the Superintendent of Technical High Schools and me. A difference of opinion exists between us as to the relative merits of the several suggestions, and it is still a matter of discussion. I hope that the Director will be in a position to give me a final report and recommendation later this year so that we shall have some finality by the beginning of the next school year.

ROAD TRANSPORT OF PARCELS.

Mr. JENKINS—My question relates to the Transport Control Board's policy concerning the weight of parcels carried on the passenger bus from Adelaide to Victor Harbour, and mainly relates to the Mount Compass area which is not served by rail, and which is 17 miles from Victor Harbour and about six or seven miles from Willunga. Willunga has a carrying service from Adelaide, but the delay in securing goods from it for Mount Compass is sometimes as much as a week. I have received two complaints in the last week, one relating to a man who took his car to a garage and discovered that two shock absorbers would have to be fitted. An Adelaide firm was communicated with and asked to put the absorbers on the Victor Harbour service bus. However, the goods could not be taken because one absorber weighed five pounds and the Transport Control Board rules that not more than one parcel shall be consigned to any one consignee. The Willunga carrying service was then tried, but the parcels could not be delivered through it and ultimately a car had to come to town to fetch the shock absorbers. Will the Premier make representations to the Transport Control Board to have this rule altered to meet the convenience of people living in the area between the two towns served by train?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think the rules were made in the interests of passengers, because unless some such rule applies a passenger service rapidly becomes a freight service and passengers get poor accommodation and service. I will refer this matter to the Transport Control Board and get a report.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICES TO SCHOOLS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I congratulate the Minister of Education on his forthright statement at yesterday's annual conference of the Australian Council of School Organizations. He referred to the necessity for a happy band of children, a contented group of teachers, and an enthusiastic parents' and friends' association. I have the utmost respect for those people who gain distinction in furthering the interests of education by their service and self-sacrificing actions, but, unlike some jockeys and sportsmen, they do not receive knighthoods and seem to be forgotten after they cease to render service. Will the Minister of Education consider issuing a certificate of merit to those people who render outstanding service to our education system through school committees, school councils, parents' and friends' associations and mothers' clubs, so that it may be a further incentive for people to work and a means of encouraging others to do this work which is of vital importance to the Education Department?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to give early and favourable consideration to the honourable member's excellent suggestion. I fancy that some such system is in operation in one or more of the other States. I will investigate the whole matter and let the honourable member know the result as soon as possible.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO ORGANIZATIONS.

Mr. McKEE—During the Budget debate I asked the Premier whether the Government would consider giving financial assistance to the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. In reply he said that where religious activities are associated with an organization it has not been Government policy to contribute to its funds. I have previously said that the organizations mentioned are worthy of assistance and are assets to the community. They receive no assistance whatsoever from any church organization or religious body. Their funds are raised through the efforts of their members and by the holding of specially arranged functions; but in Port Pirie particularly, where there is a limit to such functions, money is becoming more difficult to raise. Recently the Victorian Attorney-General (Mr. Rylah) became very concerned about the growing delinquency and as a result of his efforts the Victorian Government decided to grant £20,000 for leadership training, so that more leaders would be available for youth work. In the following year the grant was increased to £70,000—£20,000 for youth leadership training, £30,000 for general maintenance of clubs, and £20,000 for capital expenditure and equipment. Can the Premier say whether the Government will further consider assisting these worthy organizations?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Any remarks I make are not in any way to be taken as not showing appreciation of the work of these two organizations. It is magnificent and in the best interests of the community, but where an organization has a semi-religious flavour the Government does not normally make a grant to it, and that is the position with the two organizations mentioned. The fact that other Governments and other places may have a different policy cannot alter the policy which the Government in South Australia has set out to follow, and which is scrupulously fair to all religious organizations. We do not support any such organizations in their work, or organizations that are not completely acceptable to all religious organizations. If the honourable member desires to have a further discussion on this matter I shall be happy to discuss it with him, but unless there is something behind the question that I do not know about I cannot promise that the present policy will be altered.

MURRAY BRIDGE POLICE STATION AND COURTHOUSE.

Mr. BYWATERS—At the beginning of this year work on the courthouse and police station at Murray Bridge was completed, according to the Public Works Committee report at a cost of about £46,000. Alongside the courthouse was the residence of the police officer. I understand that when the evidence was taken a recommendation was made that the building should be demolished, but apparently this was not in the committee's recommendation. The sum of £1,600 was spent on the building for renovation purposes and my latest information is that now the house is to be demolished and additional money spent for the erection of offices and other accommodation. On top of that, I have heard that a tender has been let to increase the garage facilities at the Murray Bridge police station, and even before this job has been started it has been recommended that the building be demolished after completion. There seems to be something wrong somewhere along the line. Will the Minister of Works get a report on what is proposed to be done at the Murray Bridge police station and courthouse, especially bearing in mind that £1,600 has been already spent on a building that is to be demolished?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will investigate the matter and bring down a report.

WATER CONSERVATION.

Mr. LAUCKE—The recent extremely heavy water consumption in the metropolitan area emphasizes the need for care to be taken generally in the use of water. The value of heavy mulching on home and public gardens with such materials as straw, sawdust and seaweed, as a means of conserving the moisture and reducing the consumption of reticulated water has not, I feel, been generally realized. A saving of up to 50 per cent in water requirements can be made in the hot summer months by adopting the mulching practice. Will the Minister of Works consider inaugurating a publicity campaign by press and radio to encourage the use of mulching in the interests of water conservation?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I have noticed in the gardening notes in the press from time to time that the people whose advice is sought in these matters, particularly in the early part of the summer, refer in at least a casual way, and sometimes more specifically, to the value of mulching. It also adds to the humus in the soil and thus in the long run has a secondary effect. There are merits in the suggestion and possibly the Engineer-in-Chief may be glad to consider it and other measures, and bring before the notice of the public ways in which water can be saved without necessarily losing very much in the production of their crops. I am grateful for the suggestion and will bring it before the Engineer-in-Chief.

COMMUNITY HOTELS: EXEMPTION FROM INDUSTRIAL CODE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier obtained a report from the Minister of Industry on the matter of community hotels being outside the scope of the Industrial Code?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Crown Solicitor reports as follows:—

In my opinion the view expressed by the Secretary for Labour and Industry is correct. To bring the business carried on by a community hotel of this kind within the definition of "industry," it is necessary that the business or trade of a hotelkeeper carried on in the hotel shall be carried on "by way of trade or for purposes of gain." I think the cases of Shoobridge *v.* South Australian Jockey Club (1922) S.A.S.R. 224 and of the Hospital Employees (1953) 25 S.A.S.R. 189, although they are not quite on all fours with this case, support the view that a Community Hotel, the profits of which are to be applied solely for the benefit of the community, does not carry on a business or trade "by way of trade" or "for the purposes of gain."

It would not be necessary to amend the legislation to bring community hotels within the definition of "industry." It would be sufficient for both Houses of Parliament to pass a resolution approving their inclusion in the definition of "employer" (see paragraph (*b*) (vii) of that definition in section 5 of

the Industrial Code); and they would then fall under paragraph (*a*) (ii) of the definition of "industry."

That report has been obtained from the Crown Solicitor, and I will see that the honourable member receives a copy.

PORT ADELAIDE CASUALTY HOSPITAL.

Mr. RYAN—Has the Premier received information from the Minister of Health on the number of cases treated at the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. In 1956-57, 7,598 cases were treated; in 1957-58, 7,436; and in 1958-59, 7,178.

WEEKLY RAIL TICKETS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Works obtained a reply to my question relating to weekly tickets for a five-day working week?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My colleague, the Minister of Railways, informs me that the position has been considered and it has now been agreed that the Monday to Friday periodical tickets shall be available for travel commencing at or after 11 p.m. on Sunday evenings, or on the last train on any particular line where there is no train available after 11 p.m. on such line. This concession became effective as from November 1, 1959.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Some people living at Elizabeth and employed at the British Tube Mills leave home on Sunday evening for their employment, and it would appear from the Minister's reply that they will not get this concession. Will the Minister obtain a definite assurance that these people commencing work on Sunday evening as their first shift will receive consideration?

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

ELECTRICITY FOR MONARTO SOUTH COTTAGES.

Mr. BYWATERS—A few weeks ago the Minister of Works stated in reply to a question that money had been put on the Estimates and tenders would be called for putting power into cottages occupied by railway employees at Monarto South. Men living in these homes have told me that a few days later Electricity Trust men were there looking around, asking what was required and so on but, since then, there has been complete silence. As these people are anxious to get the power connected, will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Railways when it is likely that these cottages will be connected with electricity?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Yes.

INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL CHARGES.

Mr. RICHES—Can the Premier say whether the Government is considering increased charges at Government hospitals, and, if so, can he indicate the reason and say on what basis the increases, if any, are likely to be made?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Many of the present charges at Government hospitals are less than what the patient is collecting from medical benefits schemes through being in hospital. In fact, some people are making a profit by being in a hospital. A committee is at present investigating hospital charges, and the Government intends to increase charges.

LAND AGENTS' LICENCES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—Does the board under the Land Agents Act in granting licences to persons to operate under the provisions of the Act insist that applicants must be natural born or naturalized citizens of Australia?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The chairman of the Land Agents Board reports that the board does not insist that applicants for licences or registrations be natural born or naturalized citizens of Australia.

BOOK ALLOWANCES.

Mr. RICHES (on notice)—

1. How many applications have been received for book allowances to students in secondary schools who are studying for the intermediate examination for the second time?

2. How many applications have been granted and how many refused?

3. What would have been the cost to the Government if the applications which have been rejected had been approved?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The replies are:—

1. Sixty-two (62).

2. Seven (7) have been granted and fifty-five (55) refused.

3. £440.

HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Members will recall that a Bill introduced by the member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) sought to establish the closing of banks on Saturday mornings. After some consideration, the Government introduced an amendment, which was accepted by this House and by the bank officers, to the effect that before a proclamation closing banks on Saturday mornings could be made, trading banks had to arrange to stay open from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday afternoons. That legislation was accepted by the officers of the banking organizations in good faith, and was, I believe, generally supported by the principals of the banking companies operating in South Australia. However, an interstate complication arose as some trading banks in other States which also had savings bank branches were somewhat apprehensive because the Commonwealth Bank had agencies in post offices and would therefore be able to get some advantage in other States because their agencies would be open on Saturday mornings. Because of that complication, the legislation passed in South Australia has not been operative, despite protracted negotiations entered into in an attempt to reach agreement.

All the present Bill does is substitute the words "savings banks" for "trading banks" in the earlier amending legislation. The amendment provided that no proclamation should be made unless trading banks remained open from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday afternoons. The savings banks were principally concerned because their customers did not have cheque accounts. I have reason to believe that if the savings banks remain open the trading banks will do likewise, and therefore the Bill will give effect in general terms to what was desired at the time the amendment was passed. If the savings banks are prepared to open on Friday afternoons the problem can be overcome, and the proclamation regarding Saturday morning closing can be made.

I have good reason to believe that the savings banks are prepared to remain open on Friday afternoons and that the trading banks are preparing to follow their lead. The amendment merely seeks to give effect to the arrangements previously contemplated by Parliament.

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

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1934-1958. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill contains some amendments of the Road Traffic Act which the Government has decided to proceed with immediately, without waiting for the consolidating and amending Bill dealing with road traffic generally. Most of the clauses in the Bill relate to the conduct and management of traffic on roads, and are based on recommendations made to the Government by the State Traffic Committee and the authorities concerned with the administration of the traffic laws. Some of the amendments were in last year's Bill which lapsed, but the speed limit provisions which were in that Bill are not included in this Bill.

I will explain the clauses in their order. Clause 3 deals with the effect of orders made by the court disqualifying defendants from holding and obtaining drivers' licences. Under the present law it is commonly accepted that an order disqualifying a driver operates immediately it is made, so that if a defendant has driven himself to the court by motor car and is disqualified by the court he cannot lawfully drive himself home. This does not matter so much in the city, but in the country it can be very awkward. Magistrates on a number of occasions have felt embarrassed by having to make orders which rendered it difficult for the defendants to return home, and have asked that the law should be altered so that they will be able to suspend the operation of an order of disqualification for a period that is reasonable in the circumstances. Clause 3 will enable this to be done.

Clauses 4 and 5 deal with the offences of unlawfully driving and unlawfully interfering with motor vehicles. At present the principal Act provides that unlawful driving and unlawful interference are two separate offences, and prescribes different punishments for them. For the offence of unlawfully driving a motor vehicle, the defendant can be sent to gaol for a period up to 12 months for a first offence and two years for a second offence, and ordered to pay compensation. For unlawful interference there is no power to order imprisonment or compensation but merely a fine not exceeding

£50. The Government has been asked to introduce legislation combining these two offences into one section. It has been pointed out that the offence of unlawful interference with a motor car is often quite as serious as unlawful driving, and there is no good reason for having different penalties. However, the damage done by unlawful interference can be as serious as the damage done by a joy-rider, and it is logical that there should be power to order compensation in both cases. Clauses 4 and 5 accordingly combine the offences of unlawful driving and unlawful interference so that they will both have the same penalty and consequences.

Another amendment in Clause 4 is a provision that complaints for unlawful driving or unlawful interference can be laid at any time within two years after the commission of the offence. At present, the time limit for proceedings for these offences is six months, but it often happens that an offender is not discovered until more than a year after the commission of the offence. The proposal to extend the time limit from six months to two years is not unreasonable when one considers that unlawful use of a motor vehicle is akin to larceny and that there is no time limit on prosecutions for larceny.

Clause 6 empowers courts to disqualify drivers who drive vehicles carrying loads in excess of the weights prescribed by the Act. Overloading is today a common offence notwithstanding the substantial penalties imposed, and the Government considers that the penalty for disqualification might act as a greater deterrent. The maximum period of disqualification proposed is twelve months.

Clause 7 enables members of the Police Force and inspectors appointed under the Road Traffic Act and persons in charge of ferries to question drivers of vehicles as to the nature or constituents of the loads on their vehicles, and to ask questions for the purpose of enabling an estimate to be made of the weight of the vehicle or its load. Heavily laden vehicles nowadays are often covered with tarpaulins, and it not easy for those who are charged with the enforcement of the law to tell by inspection whether the load on the vehicle is likely to exceed the limit or not. Moreover, when large vehicles are on ferries it is important that the ferryman should know the nature and approximate weight of the load.

Clauses 8 and 9 make some consequential amendments to the principal Act, the need for which has been overlooked in the past. Their object is to make it clear that members of the Police Force have the same powers as inspectors under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act relating to the weighing of vehicles and their loads.

Clause 10 inserts definitions of "intersection" and "junction" in the principal Act. Over the years different definitions of these words have been placed in different sections of the Act, and it is desirable that they should now be made uniform as a preliminary to the simplification of the law. The definitions proposed in the Bill are to the same effect as those recently adopted in the Victorian Traffic Regulations, and are similar in principle to those of other States except Western Australia. The effect of the definitions, put shortly, is that an intersection is the area within lines joining the corners at a place where roads cross each other, and a junction is a part of a road within the prolongation of the boundaries of another road which adjoins it. Much thought has been given to these definitions by traffic engineers and numerous alternatives have been considered. No conceivable definition is completely satisfactory for every place where roads cross or meet, because of the varying angles and the varying number of roads concerned, but it seems that the definitions in the Bill have the fewest defects. The new definitions will have an effect on a subsequent clause relating to speed limits at intersections, which I will explain later.

Clause 11 provides for the Highways Commissioner to control the erection of traffic light signals. Under the present law all councils have power to erect these signals. Without in any way questioning the competence or good intentions of the councils, it must be pointed out that the lack of overall control is leading to differences between traffic lights which is embarrassing to motorists, and which will increase unless something is done to secure uniformity. Clause 11 provides for a scheme of control of light signals, similar to the control exercised in connection with traffic islands and roundabouts. A council which desires to erect lights must give notice to the Highways Commissioner. If the Highways Commissioner approves the council can proceed to erect the lights; if the Commissioner does not approve or imposes any conditions which are unacceptable to the council, the council will have a right of appeal to the Minister of Roads. The Minister must hear the appeal and his decision will be final. The clause also empowers the Commissioner of Highways to direct councils to alter any traffic lights or

sequence of lights for the purpose of securing uniformity or improvement of the signals. Any directions by the Commissioner on this subject are also appealable to the Minister of Roads.

Clause 12 sets out in detail the rules indicated by the lights used in traffic control light signals, and repeals the existing code of rules. Nowadays, when new types of traffic control signals are being introduced from time to time it would probably be better to have all these details in regulations, and at some future time it may be found possible to do this. However, the meaning of the various light signals has been laid down in the Act since 1944. Since then there have been developments that make it necessary to alter and amplify the provisions. Illuminated arrows have been used in a way not contemplated before, and there is at present nothing in the rules which explain the meaning of arrows. Moreover, when the present laws were enacted there were no traffic lights at places other than intersections or junctions, and in consequence no provision has been included in the Act to explain the duties of motorists approaching light signals at places between intersections and junctions. It is necessary that these matters should now be provided for and, in addition, some provision has to be made to ensure that the "Don't Walk" signal, such as is erected near the Adelaide Railway Station, will have legal effect.

Clause 12, therefore, re-states the rules indicated by light signals with the alterations and additions necessary to bring it up to date. I do not think it is necessary to mention all the details of the clause. It has been submitted to the Traffic Engineer of the Highways Department and to the Town Clerk and engineers of the Adelaide Council, and it is regarded by them as a correct statement of the meaning of the lights. Clause 13 is a consequential amendment, striking out a provision rendered unnecessary by reason of the new definitions of "intersection" and "junction."

Clause 14 makes additions and alterations to the present law relating to pedestrian crossings in order to enable school crossings to be established in accordance with the recent recommendations of the Traffic Committee. The basic thing in the Traffic Committee's recommendation was that a special form of pedestrian crossing should be available for use at or near schools, and that these crossings should operate only while flashing lights were turned on. When a school crossing is in operation it will be the duty of motorists to give right of way to all pedestrians on the crossing and if a flag with the word "Stop" is exhibited it will be compulsory for motorists to stop, and not enter the crossing until the flag is withdrawn. The Traffic Committee also recommended, both as regards school crossings and ordinary pedestrian crossings, that when a vehicle was stopped at a crossing for the purpose of giving way to pedestrians, no other vehicle should be permitted to overtake it. At schools where these special school crossings are not established the committee recommended that the present practice of exhibiting a "school" sign, which implied a speed limit of 15 miles an hour, should continue to be in force.

Clause 15 provides that vehicles and animals entering a road from private land must give way to all traffic on the road, and a contravention of this provision will be an offence.

Clause 16 deals with the speed at intersections. The Act at present prescribes a speed limit of 25 miles an hour at intersections, but contains a special definition of "intersection," which has been narrowly interpreted. The definition is that an intersection for the purpose of this speed limit is a place where two roads completely cross each other. It has been thought that if a road which crosses another road is wider on one side of the road which it crosses than on the other, there is not a complete crossing within the meaning of the section, and therefore not an intersection. Even if the interpretation I have mentioned is right in law, it is not a good traffic rule and it is proposed that the speed limit of 25 miles an hour should apply to every place which falls within the definition of intersection, although one or other of the roads concerned may not be the same width on each side of the intersection.

Clause 17 provides for a speed limit of 15 miles an hour past works in progress on roads. It declares that authorities carrying out works on roads may, with the consent of the Commissioner of Police, place signs on the road indicating a speed limit of 15 miles an hour at places where work is going on, and the speed limit so indicated will be binding on motorists.

Clause 18 provides that the Registrar may approve of special types of devices by which a vehicle may be attached to another for towing. When an approved device is used the requirement that an additional man must be on the towed vehicle will not apply. This clause was in last year's Bill.

Clause 19 enacts a general rule that vehicles are not to park or rank within 15 feet of junctions and intersections. For some time local governing bodies have been advocating a general rule of this kind, which they say is necessary for safety at intersections and junctions, but cannot satisfactorily be brought into existence on a uniform basis by by-laws or traffic signs. After a considerable amount of discussion, extending over years, the Traffic Committee finally came to the conclusion that there was a case for this amendment and recommended it to the Government.

Clause 20 is a provision that was in last year's Bill, and provides a maximum height of 14ft. for vehicles and their loads. This type of law has been found necessary for the protection of overhead cables and other structures, and is regarded as necessary by various traffic authorities. The rule will not apply to trolley buses and, in addition, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles may grant exemptions in special cases.

Clause 21 proposes to grant additional exemptions to fire brigade vehicles, ambulances, and police vehicles. Under the present law these vehicles are exempt from speed limits and other provisions of the Act. The Government has recently been requested to submit amendments to Parliament providing further exemptions from the sections of the Act dealing with the following matters, namely:—

(*a*) the 20 miles per hour speed limit for vehicles approaching railway crossings;

(*b*) the provisions as to the mode of making right turns;

(*c*) the duty to move to the left when signalled by an overtaking vehicle;

(*d*) special speed limits on bridges;

(*e*) opening doors of vehicles so as to cause danger.

These exemptions are similar in principle to those previously granted and the Commissioner of Police has reported in favour of them.

Clause 22 alters the law as to vehicles remaining stationary on bridges. The circumstances in which a vehicle is permitted to be stationary on a bridge are widened, but a duty is placed upon the driver as well as the owner of the vehicle to remove it without unnecessary delay. In the enforcement of the Act it has been found necessary to have a clause of this kind placing responsibility on the driver.

In conclusion I might mention that Australian road traffic laws are now undergoing a close scrutiny by the Road Traffic Code Committee set up by the Commonwealth. The committee is doing a good deal of work for the purpose of securing a much greater degree of uniformity in traffic laws throughout Australia. Its members are competent and experienced men from all States, and it is to be expected that it will achieve a substantial measure of success. Its recommendations will be given full consideration in the preparation of the consolidating and amending Road Traffic Bill for the next session of Parliament.

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

MOTOR VEHICLES BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to consolidate and amend certain enactments relating to the registration of motor vehicles, drivers' licences and third party motor insurance, and for other purposes.

Motion carried.

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

SOUTH-EASTERN DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the South-Eastern Drainage Act, 1931-1948, and for other purposes.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to extend the provisions of Part IVA of the South-Eastern Drainage Act, which at present applies only within the Western Division of the South-East, to the Eastern Division. Accordingly, clauses 3, 5 and 7 extend those provisions. Clauses 6 and 11 (which latter clause introduces a new schedule into the principal Act) define the Eastern Division.

The provisions of the Bill are based on a report made by the Parliamentary Committee

on Land Settlement on July 24, 1958. The committee recommended that certain first steps be taken towards the complete drainage of the Eastern Division at an estimated cost of slightly over £3,250,000, such first steps to consist in the construction of the main outlet to the sea at Beachport; additional drainage constructions within the Eastern Division to be submitted to the committee for consideration and further report. Although the committee, in fact, recommended that only the first steps be undertaken now, it contemplated a complete system of drainage of the Eastern Division. The Bill accordingly empowers the undertaking of the complete scheme. The Bill does not appropriate funds and under the existing provisions moneys can be expended only from moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose from time to time.

The Eastern Division consists of an area of 727,000 acres. The area has an average annual rainfall ranging from 32 inches at Kalangadoo to 22 inches at Naracoorte and it is subject to high underground water level in the winter. In addition, the area receives during the winter the discharge of three strongly flowing creeks which rise in Victoria (Mosquito, Naracoorte and Morambro Creeks). The area has no effective natural drainage outlet and consequently many parts of it are inundated for long periods in winter. There is a number of Government drains in the area which have resulted in improvement in some of the higher parts, but in the absence of an outlet the drains tend to accentuate flooding in the lower areas. Agricultural investigations have established not only the urgent need for a comprehensive drainage scheme but also the great economic advantages that might result from such a scheme. The Senior Agricultural Adviser, indeed, reported in 1956 that the flooding of the area had reduced production to at least £2,000,000 per year below what it would have been if the area had been reasonably drained. Moreover, the Parliamentary Committee found an almost unanimous desire among landowners in the area to stand behind the scheme. In these circumstances the Government considers it desirable that the necessary authority be given in principle to the undertaking.

Section 103g of the principal Act concerning the payment of rates on assessment of betterments in respect of the Western Division provided that the landholders should pay to the South-Eastern Drainage Board an annual rate equivalent to 4½ per cent of the value of the betterment assessed in respect of their lands. Clause 9 amends this section by providing that this rate shall apply only in respect of drains or drainage works constructed for the drainage of the Western Division, but that the rate in respect of drains or works for the drainage of the Eastern Division shall be 6 per cent. The rate in respect of the Western Division was fixed in 1948 but, as honourable members are aware, interest rates have increased over the last few years and the Government considers that a rate of 6 per cent would be in keeping with existing conditions. Moreover, the rate extends over a period of 42 financial years and this is an additional factor which has to be borne in mind.

The Parliamentary committee drew attention in its report to the provisions of the existing section 103c of the principal Act, under which assessments can be made only when any drains and drainage works have been "completed." There may be some doubt whether the South-Eastern Drainage Board may make assessments of benefits from new drains in stages as recommended by the committee. Accordingly, clause 8 by subclauses (*a*) and (*b*) provides that assessments may be made, when drains or works have been constructed, in respect of any betterment resulting from the construction of those drains.

Clause 8 subclause (*c*) is designed to empower the board to assess betterment which may result from drains or drainage works where benefits accrue to lands outside the actual areas of the western and eastern divisions. It is clear that benefits may well accrue to land outside either division from the existence of drains within either division. The remaining clauses re-define the boundaries of the South-East to include all lands likely to benefit from the proposed works. The additional lands consist of the hundreds of Santo, Messent, Neville, Wells and Petherick and portions of the hundreds of McNamara, Hynam and Joanna. The new definition also clarifies the position in regard to the boundary of the area of the South East and the Hundred of Rivoli Bay. The definition is covered by clauses 4 and 10 (which latter clause re-enacts the first schedule of the principal Act).

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

VINE, FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Vine, Fruit, and Vegetable Protection Act, 1885-1936. Read a first time.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

FRUIT FLY (COMPENSATION) BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

EXCHANGE OF LAND (HUNDRED OF NOARLUNGA) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

HALLETT COVE TO PORT STANVAC RAILWAY BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 29. Page 1314.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the second reading of this Bill, which provides that the Railways Commissioner may construct a railway line as indicated on the Notice Board in this Chamber for the purposes of the Standard-Vacuum Refining Company (Australia) Pty. Ltd. for its operations in the refinery. Clause 3 empowers the commissioner to acquire compulsorily. The Minister should have indicated whether the Commissioner had to acquire any land, which I assume he did, and, if so, whether he had acquired all the necessary land; if he has not, I think we should have been told. The Bill also provides for the 5ft. 3in. gauge, but will a third rail be added in the event of unification?

One interesting phase is mentioned in the evidence of Mr. Price, the Managing Director of Standard-Vacuum Refining Company (Australia) Pty. Ltd., who, in giving evidence last year before the Select Committee, said:—

> The need for increased capacity in the refining industry has slowed up a bit, but I think it is only temporary and that it will pick up to its normal rate. We will keep the authorities advised as to our progress and I would expect there to be an exchange of information on plans.

We have had no information on that matter. Question No. 72, asked by me, was:—

> Its construction would commence in 1959 or 1960?

Mr. Price replied:—

> That is about as close as you can put it.

I was asking when a commencement was likely to be made on the oil refinery. We have almost completed 1959, and there is no indication at this stage that the oil refinery will start this year or even during 1960. Has the company indicated to the State Government whether a delay is likely?

When we passed the Bill last year, we expected the oil refinery to be commenced either in 1959 or 1960 and completed not later than 1962 or 1963. A further matter to be considered is whether the plant and materials necessary for the construction of the oil refinery will be carried by rail, in the event of the line being completed in time, or by road transport. In the latter event, does the Government plan to widen the South Road for this purpose? It will be necessary to widen this road from Darlington onwards to take the traffic. The Government promised to construct a bridge over the Sturt Creek at Marion, and an early commencement of that work is desirable because that bridge will provide a vital link with the proposed railway. According to the evidence and the plans submitted, the new road would proceed behind the Flagstaff Hotel at Darlington, go underground, and come out near the top of Tapley's Hill. The construction of the new bridge over the Sturt Creek at Marion is a matter of urgency, because the Marion Road will have a vital bearing on the new road to be constructed.

Although I support the Bill, I maintain that the information on any alteration to the proposed plan should have been given. The Bill does not indicate that the refinery will even be commenced in 1960. I ask the Government to consider the matters I have raised, and perhaps provide further information in Committee. I support the second reading.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens)—I, too, support the Bill. I am sure every member is pleased that provision is being made for the extension of an existing railway line at a time when we are passing Bills authorizing the closing of lines. Two such Bills were passed last week, and another may come before us shortly. It is therefore pleasing to see that the Bill before the House authorizes a railway extension that will provide for the further expansion of the State.

The object of the Bill is to authorize the construction of this projected railway line from a point near the present Hallett Cove railway station, branching off the Willunga line

in a southerly direction, and proceeding to a point now known as Port Stanvac, but previously known as Hallett Cove. The Bill authorizes the Railways Commissioner to let contracts and proceed with the job under the terms of the agreement entered into last year between the State Government and the Standard Vacuum Refining Company, the constructing and operating authority. The construction of this line was examined in principle by the Select Committee appointed under the Indenture Bill and debated by this House in principle. It was agreed at that time that this project was an essential part of the establishment of the oil refinery in South Australia, particularly at Hallett Cove which, as pointed out at that time, was the only suitable site for the establishment of an oil refinery of this peculiar type as it enabled deep-drafted vessels to moor, load and unload. The project is therefore not new to this House.

Under the terms of the Public Works Committee's Act it was necessary for the committee to investigate this project in detail and report to Parliament. That was done by means of an interim report. All members will agree on the necessity for the line. In a modern oil refinery much of the product must be moved in bulk, and the most economical way by land is by rail. Although a certain quantity of bulk export from this refinery will go by sea and some products will go by motor transport, by far the greater proportion of the bulk movement will be by rail; therefore, this railway must be connected three or four miles to the existing railway.

It appears that the only question which arose for the consideration of the various committees and which now arises is the question of the better route. In its interim report the Public Works Committee recommended that Route 1 should be the route. The committee was unanimous in that recommendation, which was adopted by this Parliament and incorporated in this Bill. Although Route 1 is slightly more costly in the first instance, its merits are obvious, because it is evident that the running cost and the return to this State will be far more advantageous than it would be on the more cheaply constructed Route 2.

The proposed route will cost £365,000 as against £282,000 for the alternative route, but running costs will be much lower because the total mileage to Mile End is much less—14.8 miles as against 19.5. On the proposed route the grade is one in one hundred as against one in forty-five on the alternative route. This has an important bearing on the matter because locomotives will be able to haul 1,300 tons as against only 500 tons on the alternative route, which would have passed through Reynella—a circuitous and rather steep part of the old Willunga line. It is estimated that the State will save almost £11,000 a year on the proposed route, based on a weekly tonnage of 3,100 tons of freight.

The member for Edwardstown referred to the carriage of the necessary materials to construct this refinery. I understand that it is intended that this railway line will be sufficiently completed to enable most of the heavier plant, equipment and materials to be carried by rail to the site, although some equipment will go by road. I agree with the honourable member that it should be constructed to co-ordinate with the erection of the refinery. It will enable future expansion in that area. In years to come the metropolitan area will extend to this district and I believe that industries and housing projects will be established there. The line could be a valuable contributing factor in the establishment of light and heavy industries in that area.

Although the line does not extend to the pleasure resort of Port Noarlunga, it could provide a link with that area and Christies Beach. That aspect should be considered in the future development of the railway system there. At present the old Willunga line south of Hallett Cove is operating on a restricted basis; certain goods are transported at certain periods of the year. It is not fulfilling the function for which it was originally built and is not economic.

It is important to consider the proposed railway line in relation to the road system that will be developed in the area. It is intended to establish a highway there, but it will be to the east of the railway line and will not cross it. In planning major roads, free ways, or express ways, it is essential that such highways should not cross other major roads more frequently than necessary or cross railway lines with open crossings. The proposed highway keeping to the east of the railway line, will not cross other major roads. Where main roads cross bridges and other major roads the speed of vehicles is reduced and accidents occur. A serious accident happened last week in the Hindmarsh district. I commend the Railways Department, the Highways Department, the Housing Trust and the Town Planner for taking into account the future development of that part of the State when planning this railway line: planning which has been sadly lacking in the past because some areas have just grown, like Topsy, without future needs being considered. Many

people will live in this area and work in the refinery, and their families will require fast transport to Adelaide. This railway system, with the proposed road system, will play an important part. I welcome the Bill and support the second reading.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I do not intend to discuss either the general principles of the Bill or the details of the proposed construction methods, but people who have interests in the area concerned are horrified because the new port is to be designated by a piece of commercial cacophony, namely, "Port Stanvac." Occasionally some queer things have been done by nomenclature committees in South Australia, but why people must have foisted upon them such a name, which is nothing more than an ugly advertisement for the Standard Vacuum Company, I cannot imagine.

Mr. Millhouse—What is ugly about it?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I do not like the sound of "Port Stanvac."

Mr. Heaslip—Others may like it.

Mr. DUNSTAN—If the honourable finds it pleasant and mellifluous I should think he is in the minority: certainly the people living in the area do not like it. I raise my voice in protest. I do not think this is a good basis for choosing names for areas, settlements, or anything else in South Australia, and we are coming to a pretty poor pass when we choose a name that is obviously a piece of advertising. I hope the name will be reconsidered or at any rate that this sort of thing will not be perpetrated in future.

Mr. Millhouse—Have you any alternative suggestion?

Mr. DUNSTAN—Call it North Christies, or O'Sullivans Beach, as it is now called.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—Firstly, I must apologize on behalf of the Public Works Committee for not having the final report on this proposal before Parliament. The member for Torrens, Mr. Coumbe, a member of my committee, has given a good account of the inquiries made into this matter, but there were two small matters that we wanted clarified before we made our final report. Our queries can only be answered by the company's general manager who, I understand, has had to communicate with America, where the headquarters are situated. We are still waiting for that information, which we will pass on in due course to Parliament.

Mr. O'Halloran—Has it any important bearing on this Bill?

Mr. SHANNON—We think it is of sufficient importance to include in our report. This spur line is part and parcel of the project agreed to by the State Government when it came to a decision on the indenture with the company. There are matters which the House should be properly informed on and that is why our final report has been delayed. The committee examined alternative routes for this rail line and considered the interests not only of this company but also of employees who would be engaged in the industry and other industries that might develop there. We took evidence from the Town Planner and other authorities to ensure that the overall planning did conform as nearly as possible to future requirements of the area.

Under the indenture the Standard-Vacuum Company has the right to construct a pipeline from the refinery to Port Adelaide to service the installations on LeFevre Peninsula. The best evidence we could get on this proposal suggested that it is most unlikely that such a pipeline will ever be constructed, for two major reasons: firstly, because of the economics of the proposal and, secondly, because the servicing of South Australia's hinterland will be done by road and railway from the refinery and not from Port Adelaide. It is the practice of oil refineries to supply refined fuel to all distributors whether they are shareholders of the refinery or competitors in the business. That is the sensible thing to do because it saves costs, and it should mean cheaper fuel for the consumer. In looking at this matter of the O'Sullivan's Beach Refinery—

Mr. Dunstan—That's a good name.

Mr. SHANNON—In my opinion the name does not really matter. There have been times when a trade name has been adopted as part and parcel of an advertising scheme for a site selected for an industry, and I do not know that there is much harm in that. I would not care if General Motors-Holdens called its site Holdenville. The name does not matter to me, unless perhaps it has some connection with the past. I do not really like the name "Stanvac." It is not euphonious, but it has historical value. Road tankers will distribute much of the fuel produced at the refinery. Where there is a reasonably short haul the oil will be placed in road tankers to be taken direct to resellers, and in this way there will be a saving in costs, but where the distance to be covered is up to 150 to 200 miles rail tankers will be used. I understand that the Vacuum Oil Company has agreed with the railways to carry its oils at contract rates

and I believe it is a satisfactory arrangement for the two parties. It is the sort of agreement that should be used for other commodities also.

It would be advantageous to the State if our railways were used more than they are at present. Rails do not wear out as quickly as roads, and the maintenance of a rail track is not as great as that of a sealed road. If the company establishing the refinery at O'Sullivan's Beach continues with its rail contract much of its production will go to various parts of the State by rail tankers. The tankers will be supplied by the company, which will also mean a considerable saving to the State. The Railways Commissioner is happy that from its inception the line will pay its way. Inwards freight will be available for a while before there is production by the refinery, and this will provide some revenue, but it was disclosed in evidence given to the Public Works Committee that once the refinery is in production the line will pay its way. It seems that it will be a long time before we talk about closing it.

Mr. Coumbe referred to a matter that was mentioned in evidence submitted to the committee by the Town Planner (Mr. Hart) and the Railways Commissioner (Mr. Fargher). It is certain that other industries will be associated with the refinery and established nearby, because the raw materials needed will be by-products of the refinery. Mr. Hart envisages that in 12 or 15 years' time 35,000 people will live in a closely settled area between Port Noarlunga and the metropolitan area. Mr. Fargher has not had a happy experience with suburban passenger services, because most have been losing propositions. He pointed out that from a railway point of view it would be cheaper to operate an extension of this proposed line to Port Noarlunga rather than operate the old line through Hackham. I am cautious in my approach to the proposal to extend the line for passenger purposes only. During the last 10 years we have pulled up rail tracks and established road transport services and this might happen if we extend the line for passenger traffic only. I do not think members need worry about the effect of the building of the line on the State's economic position. The Bill gives effect to an undertaking given to the company. I regret that the Public Works Committee has not presented its final report on the matter. It has had a lot of work thrust upon it during the past 12 months, but the impossible cannot be done. The committee must take its time over these things, but when the final report on this proposal is available I am sure the House will be satisfied that the right thing has been done.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Incorporation."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am sorry that the Minister of Works is not present. Can the Minister in charge of the House say whether the Railways Commissioner has acquired all the land necessary to build the line, or is there still a doubt about some of the land needed, making compulsory acquisition necessary?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—If the necessary land has not been obtained already there is legislative power to compulsorily acquire it. I will get a more definite statement for the honourable member.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Are we definitely tied to the name "Port Stanvac"? I would not object to its being called Port Playford or another name in honour of a person who has rendered a service to the State. I think it is wrong to link the name with the oil company concerned. I would not object to its being called Port Shannon or Port Ralston, but I am opposed to the present name. It seems that it was chosen in accordance with race course procedure, and portions of two names were joined together. I do not know whether it was done for a special purpose or to satisfy the company. Can the Minister give the reason?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The Nomenclature Committee submitted various names that were not acceptable. The company suggested "Stanvac." After due consideration by Cabinet, because the company was investing £16,000,000, it was decided to adopt "Port Stanvac."

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (3 and 4) and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment and Committee's report adopted.

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

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 718.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I support this Bill, which does two things; firstly, it extends for a further 12 months the control of rents and recoveries of possession of dwellinghouses

to which the Act applies and, secondly, it tightens up certain provisions of the Act that had previously left loopholes for ingenious landlords to find their way through. Whenever legislation of this kind is on the Statute Book of any State ingenious landlords, or ingenious tenants in some cases, find some way to get around its intentions, and every member can applaud those provisions of this Bill designed to tighten up certain sections of the Act and make them more effective. Let me turn to the reasons given by the Premier in introducing this Bill. He said:—

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

If the controls provided by the Act were lifted, the result would most probably be that the rents of houses now subject to control would increase substantially. This has frequently been the case where, under the exemption given by section 6 of the Act, premises are let upon written leases for terms of years. That the demand for rental houses is not abating is shown from the applications received by the Housing Trust.

He went on to give the considerable figures of applications received by the Housing Trust in the last year. The plain position is that the cost of providing rental homes in Australia means that the economic rents of houses cannot be gained from the pay packets of the wage earners in this country. The cost structure is such that money that would otherwise go to rental housing can find a very much better return in other avenues of investment and it is clear that an economic rental that would provide a return for moneys invested comparable with the return that can be obtained from other avenues of investment would be such as to be completely prohibitive for the average wage earner. Therefore, rental housing in Australia must inevitably be provided by public authorities.

I am distressed that the original basis of the provision in the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has gone by the board, and public authorities are no longer required to provide rental housing primarily on the basis of need. That provision has gone and the provision that operated in other States, though never effectively in this State—that houses were to be provided first for the people who most needed them—and the criterion of allotting houses for rental by public authorities—not whether they could pay an economic rent, but whether they needed the houses—are not a part of our requirement for the provision of public housing in South Australia. What then is there that the average working man in South Australia can look to in rental housing—for there are very many families in South Australia now that for some reason or other cannot hope to provide houses on a purchase basis on the present financial basis provided. For instance, the cost of blocks of land in the metropolitan area has risen to such a fantastic extent that average families find it quite beyond their capacity to be able within any reasonable period to purchase a block for the building of a house through finance that they may raise themselves if they have any sort of immediate commitments other than living expenses for a couple. In these circumstances there is inevitably a large class of people that will be looking to the continuation of rental housing, and this class can be expected to get steadily larger for, at the moment, we are building fewer houses a year than were being built through public authorities in 1953. We have not been catching up with the backlag in the demand for housing and the average wait for a rental Housing Trust home for a person in the metropolitan area who does not get a job at Elizabeth is now seven years. That position is not getting better: it has got steadily worse since I came into this House, and we are faced with the fact that in the next 10 years there will be a 50 per cent increase in the number of people of marriageable age in this community.

Mr. Millhouse—I may have missed what you said, but why did you say the wait is now seven years?

Mr. DUNSTAN—On my experience of obtaining rental homes for people in my area. Some people have had to wait longer, but they generally are without families. People with families who apply now for rental homes, other than for emergency homes for which they also have to wait a long time, have to wait, on an average, about seven years.

Mr. Millhouse—That means that few people who have applied since you have been a member have yet received houses?

Mr. DUNSTAN—That is perfectly true. Many people in my district I have advised to apply are still waiting, and most people who have been given rental houses in my area since I became a member have either gone to emergency homes or had made applications before I was a member. That was not the case in the first 1½ years after I came into this House, as people were then able to get timber-frame houses under the scheme then operating, but that scheme finished soon after I came into the House and has not been repeated. In consequence, there has been an astoundingly long wait for rental houses in the crowded metropolitan area. I might add that my district is the most closely settled of any in the State and that it is to a very large extent a rental housing area.

Mr. Millhouse—How many people who apply for Housing Trust rental houses subsequently get other accommodation, in your experience?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I think only a small proportion, from my experience. I have not gone through my lists, which are very long ones, to take out the figures. It would perhaps be an interesting exercise to do that.

Mr. Millhouse—It is a pity you did not do it before this debate.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I saw no reason to do it. I know from my experience how difficult it is for many of these people to get satisfactory housing. I know what has happened to many people who have not been able to get Housing Trust rental houses and have not been able to continue in the rental accommodation they are occupying because of the relaxation of the provisions of the Act. Many of them have been faced with the most unsatisfactory of housing conditions. I have had people in my district living in cellars not fit for lice, and families broken up because the husband has had to get work in the country and the wife and children have been dispersed among relatives.

Mr. Lawn—I have them living in caravans.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes, and I have them living in caravans at Stepney in extraordinarily bad conditions. In my district there are slums but the local authority tends to wink its eye at the existence of conditions of this kind because it knows that if it enforces the ordinary provisions usually demanded by local boards of health the people will be out in the street. They do not want to do that in these circumstances. What happens to the people within the district able to go to rental houses owned by private persons? The answer is that they pay such rents that the average family cannot manage to continue to pay them and adequately feed and clothe the children for whom the breadwinner is responsible.

Mr. McKee—In some cases the wife must work.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes, but in some cases she cannot go to work because she has young children she cannot leave. People in my district have approached me because of the situation of children in schools in the district who are ill-clad and undernourished because their parents are paying for poor accommodation such high rents from a wage-earner's wage.

Many houses have been allowed by Government provisions to have rents charged for them that are out of all proportion to a fair return to the landlord for those premises. In fact, because so many houses have by the provisions of the Act been released from control, the landlords have been able, in the housing shortage which the Premier admits exists and will continue to exist in the foreseeable future, to exploit the market in a most unconscionable fashion. Two houses in Austral Place, Norwood, were within a stone's throw of the Norwood Town Hall; they were the only places that two families in my district could get, and many people competed for them. Those people were required to put money down to get the leases and to pay a substantial sum for the leases; they were required to keep the premises in good and tenantable repair. The floors of the places were so badly worm-eaten and ant-eaten that when they went into the kitchen of one of them they literally risked their necks crossing from one side of the room to the other. There was a cellar underneath, and the people of the house were literally falling through the floor; yet they were paying £5 5s. a week for that place out of a wage of little over £14 a week, and, in addition, they had to pay for the cost of repairs. The tenant had to keep a wife and several children in those circumstances. The Premier himself said that it certainly was not worth that rental, and that the original investment of the landlord could not call for a return of that kind.

I have known numbers of houses in the district which had been in poor condition and which had been patched up slightly, and for which very large sums of rental indeed were charged, increases of as much over the controlled rental as 400 per cent. Nobody can say that that is a fair increase. The controlled rental, after all, is 40 per cent on the 1939 value, plus the extra cost of outgoings over the 1939 cost of outgoings, and, if we

add 400 per cent to that, it is an increase which is so much greater than the increase to any other section of the community consequent upon the decline in the value of money.

Mr. Millhouse—What would you think would be the decline in the purchasing power of money?

Mr. DUNSTAN—Since 1939 the decline in the purchasing power of money, in my opinion, has been about 150 per cent. An increase of 400 per cent since 1939 is quite absurd, and 400 per cent on 40 per cent above 1939 is completely out of proportion. In these circumstances we are faced with the fact that we are allowing within a community a section of the people to exploit the market to an unconscionable extent. I do not for one moment suggest that all landlords are guilty of this sort of thing, for some landlords deal perfectly fairly with the tenants of their properties; they have required increases, but increases of a nature that nobody could really cavil at. When, however, one sees people, as in my district, who proceed to demand £6 10s. a week for a three-roomed house which is of such a standard of accommodation that, when the bath plug is pulled out of the bath, the bathwater runs into the kitchen, and for which the previously controlled rental was 27s. 6d. a week, something funny is going on that we should not allow to go on.

It has always been a principle in a democratic country that a man shall not be allowed to exploit the misfortune of other people, and certainly not allowed to corner markets and exploit people in the way some of these landlords are seeking to do at present. We have allowed certain premises to be released from control in South Australia, but nobody could suggest for one moment that the increase of 100 per cent upon the controlled rental would be an unfair increase to landlords. After all, the increase to landlords since 1939 has been 40 per cent plus the extra cost of outgoings, and if we add 100 per cent to that we are not giving an unfair increase to landlords, but a very fair one. We provided for the decline in the value of money.

Mr. Millhouse—Sufficiently?

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes, certainly sufficiently, and indeed that fact was admitted in this House, when I last raised this matter, by the Premier himself, who said that nobody could suggest that such an increase was unfair to landlords, as it was very fair indeed. Although previously in this House it was pointed out that this would be a fair increase and we should not allow greater increases than that, this House has allowed the sky to be the limit in the exploitation of the metropolitan shortage of rental houses. The shortage is working a very real hardship upon many families and poor people within the State. I have, in consequence, a proposal I shall seek to put before the committee to see that this situation is coped with, that fairness is done to the landlords who have been given some relaxation of rent control, but also that some reasonable standard of rentals is maintained within the community. If we do not do that, then we simply say that some landlords in South Australia who are able, through their personal circumstances, to use the sections of the Act to get control of houses, are able to charge the limit and the others are bound to a controlled rental.

I have previously given the House my views on the necessity for the control of rentals, and I will not recapitulate them. It is plainly necessary that we retain control of rentals in South Australia, and this being the case we ought not to favour a small section with the right to unconscionably exploit the misfortune and difficulties in housing of other people. In those circumstances I hope the House will proceed favourably to consider the proposal I intend to bring before the Committee. I support the Bill.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—Some time before this debate began today I heard a member say, "Oh well, this is just one of those annual debates; everything that should be said has been said already, and there is no need to debate it again." I do not believe that that is a proper way to look at this debate, nor do I believe that everything that should have been said has been said. Circumstances change from time to time and are, indeed, changing all the time, and I make no apology for again stating my views, even though that means butting my head into the rather solid wall of the front bench, a process which I do not enjoy but which I find necessary sometimes.

May I first of all—because, after all, this is a new Parliament with new members on both sides of the House—say why I am opposed to the continuation of this legislation in South Australia. Firstly I believe it is the right of every owner to choose his tenant and name his rent. Secondly, I believe that the war time emergency has long since passed, as it is now 14 years since the war ended, although I do not for one moment say that there are not hard cases brought to the notice of all members,

because that is common knowledge, among metropolitan members anyway. I emphasize that I do not think that a temporary measure adopted during a period of war is the correct answer to the present cases of hardship which we have been told by the member for Norwood exist and of which we all know. I hope to be able to give the correct answer in the course of my remarks this afternoon.

The third point I make—and one I have made before—is that the very presence of this Statute in South Australia prevents and discourages private investment for rental purposes. We hear, from members on the other side of the House especially, that in fact houses let for rental since 1953 have not been subject to control. The answer to that, of course, is that so long as this Act is on the Statute Book it in itself is a discouragement. Landlords have not the shortest memories in the world, and it will take a long time to erase the memories of the controls to which they have been subjected in this State over the last 20 years or so.

Mr. Dunstan—Why does it not have the effect on business premises which you say it has on private dwellings?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Business premises are decontrolled, whereas private dwellings are not all decontrolled.

Mr. Dunstan—Not all business premises are decontrolled.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—The member for Norwood has had his chance in this debate and I suggest he now gives me mine.

Mr. Dunstan—You won't answer questions.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes, I will.

Mr. Dunstan—Why don't you?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I have already given the answers.

Mr. Dunstan—You know perfectly well that some business premises in this State are not decontrolled.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—That is not so. Many dwellinghouses are still controlled, and that is the answer I give the persistent member for Norwood. My fourth point—and again, this will not appeal to members opposite—is that the discouragement of private investment through the controls in this Act means that the Housing Trust has become the largest landlord in the State. Although I imply in my remarks no criticism at all of the Housing Trust, it means that in the matter of housing we are, as members opposite advocate—and we heard the member for Norwood do it this afternoon—on the road to Socialism in this matter, because once the State or a State instrumentality is the owner of houses then we have Socialism in this field.

Mr. Ryan—Do you object to that?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes, most strongly. I do not expect that that is an argument which will appeal to members opposite, but it certainly is one which bulks large in my mind.

Mr. Dunstan—What is wrong with the community's providing houses.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Nothing, but I object to the community's owning the houses it provides. I have no objection at all to the Housing Trust's building houses for sale. That is a good thing, but I do not like its being the biggest and only landlord in this State through the provision of rental houses.

Mr. Dunstan—Why don't you like it? What is wrong with it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—The honourable member knows that between him and me on this point there is a great gulf fixed and I do not intend on this occasion to give all the reasons why I oppose his particular brand of Socialist policy.

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member would be out of order.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I defer to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. My fifth reason—and this perhaps will appeal more to members opposite, as I hope it will to members on this side—is that because of the control, in spite of the meagre concessions made over the years, our stock of older houses is depreciating because landlords either cannot or have not the will to keep them in proper repair. We had a prime example of that this afternoon when the member for Norwood referred most touchingly to the kitchen without a floor. That, of course, is a direct result of these controls. Our stock of older houses is depreciating because people do not desire to keep them under repair: the return is not good enough nowadays to do it.

Sixthly, I suggest that the controls are, as we must all admit, a restriction upon freedom and in themselves they breed all sorts of evils because people try to evade the controls—landlords on one side and tenants on the other. That creates all manner of moral evils that we should try to avoid. Seventhly, it is totally unfair that some tenants should have the benefit of this control while many others have to pay what could be termed an economic rent. That cannot be denied, even by members opposite. What rhyme or reason is there for some people to have the benefit of the Landlord and Tenant Act while others, who occupy Housing Trust houses which are not subject to control or houses built since 1953, have to pay

an economic rent? There is no rhyme or reason for that any more than there is for landlords of houses subject to control having a greatly reduced return from their investment in comparison with those whose properties are not subject to controls. I think they are sufficient reasons to show why this control is totally undesirable.

Having looked at it from the negative aspect I turn now to the more positive aspect. I believe that private enterprise will function at its highest efficiency only in free market conditions. I point out that the abandonment of these controls will not in any way lead to a reduced stock in the total number of houses available for habitation in this State. That, of course, is axiomatic. The same number of houses will be available without control as there are under control and the abandonment of control will remedy the evil of under-occupation. The member for Norwood speaks for his own district and draws his examples therefrom. I wonder how many houses in good condition and subject to control are now occupied by far fewer people than they need be occupied by: a married couple, for example, whose children have grown up and who do not want to leave that place because they would then lose the advantage of a low controlled rent. That is the evil of under-occupation and I do not think the member for Norwood would deny that that must occur in many cases. That is something that aggravates the housing shortage, and does not ameliorate it.

This Act is class legislation of the worst type. I do not think I can put it more plainly. I have said it before and I think all members admit it. It means that one section of the community is penalized for the benefit of the whole community. Those who own these houses and use them as an investment are penalized because their returns are artificially depressed, apparently for the benefit of the whole community. This is class legislation and it is exceptional in the legislation placed before Parliament by this Government.

Mr. Quirke—It perpetuates the existence of homes that would be better wiped off the face of the earth.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Quite so. That is a separate point, but it is perfectly valid. I hope to say something on that presently. In the course of his remarks the member for Norwood referred to the decline in the value of money and suggested that a ceiling of 100 per cent above the present rate of rentals would be a sufficient return and I asked him what he thought had been the depreciation in the value of money since 1939. He said, "About 150 per cent." I cannot give those particular figures, but I can and do refer members to the change in the basic wage since then. I suggest that that is a pretty fair guide and that perhaps members can bear it in mind when considering the remarks of the member for Norwood. According to the Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics, which I believe is accurate, in September 1939 the basic wage in Adelaide was 78s., but in June 1959 it was 271s. I am no mathematician, but the member for Torrens (Mr. Coumbe) is, and I asked him to convert those figures into a percentage increase. He has informed me that the percentage increase in the basic wage is 347 per cent.

Mr. Ryan—You believe in control on that, don't you?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—That is an irrelevancy that I will not pursue because I know you, Mr. Speaker, would not allow me to. I can see no rhyme or reason why the returns to landlord investors should be below 347 per cent.

Mr. Dunstan—I am not suggesting that they should be.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Oh yes, the honourable member is. He said 100 per cent on the 1939 level plus 40 per cent.

Mr. Dunstan—Plus the extra cost of outgoings.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes.

Mr. Dunstan—If you worked that out you would find it comes to almost the same figure.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—What, 347 per cent?

Mr. Dunstan—That is right.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—If the honourable member can convince me that that is so and that he is not trying to depress—as this legislation must do—the returns on this type of investment, I will seriously consider his amendment, but until he can show me that that is so and that the return he suggests is not proportionately less than the difference in the two basic wages, I am not prepared to accept it. Let us examine the experience in some other parts of the Commonwealth and I refer to Queensland, which had many years of Socialist government. In August, 1958, it started to emerge from that long Socialist night and among the many reforms the present Liberal and Country Government initiated was one dealing with the question of landlord and tenant. I have a small pamphlet entitled *New Laws explained. Justice for Landlord and Tenant. The Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1957*, from which I propose to quote

short extracts because it puts the points I am trying to express rather better than I could put them. Under the heading "Social Injustice" the following appears:—

Upon the shoulders of one section of people in the community there has been a financial burden which cannot be justified on any rational, economic or moral ground. Under the previous Landlord and Tenant Acts rentals of houses which were in existence at February 10, 1942, continued to be controlled on the basis of capital values as at that date. The fact that the purchasing power of the pound had shown a tremendous deterioration during the 15 years which had elapsed since February 10, 1942, was ignored. No Government worthy of its salt could allow such a social injustice to continue.

Three types of persons are affected by the housing problem. There are persons who need homes, persons who occupy privately-owned dwellings and persons who own dwellings rented to others. The hardship suffered by the first class is obvious. In the second class there are no doubt some individual cases of hardship, but there are numerous examples of persons who, because of unfair provisions of the law, have enjoyed privileges which amount, in effect, to limited ownership to the exclusion of the real owners.

That cannot be denied. The article continues:—

The third class of people, consisting mainly of elderly people who had invested their life savings in rental houses, have suffered grossly unjust treatment by the operation of the rental clauses of the Landlord and Tenant Acts.

The reasons given by the previous Government for its failure to change its unrealistic and uneconomic policy was the fear that any relaxation of rent control would result in a considerable artificial increase in the basic wage. That fear has been over-emphasized.

Mr. O'Halloran—Are you quoting from "On Our Selection"?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am not ashamed to quote this, and if the Leader would care to listen he would receive some instruction from it. It continues:—

In Queensland and throughout Australia the majority of houses are owned by the occupiers, and only a minority are occupied by tenants. Only a proportion of those who pay rent will be affected by this amendment of the Landlord and Tenant Act.

I will not go further into that, because it goes into the details of the Queensland legislation, but here is the basis for rent fixation in that State. The article further states:—

The amendment provides for an alteration, effective from March 1, 1958, of the basic valuation date of February 10, 1942, to a new basic valuation date of July 1, 1948. This new basic valuation date for rental purposes will apply to all dwelling houses which existed at February 10, 1942, and to all dwelling-houses erected between February 10, 1942 and July 1, 1948.

That was the proposal introduced into Queensland at the end of 1957. The Government has stood by the sentiments expressed in that publication and the proposals which it then made. The following is an extract from the *Advertiser* of August 13, 1959, under the heading "Brisbane Letter":—

Houses for rent still are not plentiful, either in Brisbane or in some of the bigger provincial cities, but, contrary to expectations, the almost complete decontrol of rents, announced a few months ago, has not greatly affected cost of living figures.

That has been the position in Queensland. I do not suggest that conditions there are exactly the same as here, for because of the long socialistic rule they are worse. That is my opinion, and an opinion that is widely shared. That is how a Liberal Government tackled the problem in that State, and I have shown the result. Another example is one that I mentioned last year when a similar Bill was debated. I pointed out the position in Great Britain and referred to the considerable relaxation that had been undertaken by the British Government in 1957.

Mr. Ryan—A socialistic Government.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—No. I suggested last year that if it could be done in Great Britain, where the same form of control had been in force ever since 1915, it could be done here. Last year I said:—

I well remember that in November last, when this Bill was being discussed in this House, the member for Norwood said—although not in this House—that there had been a great revulsion against the decontrol of rents in Great Britain. I well remember the word he used, because it so well described what he wanted to say.

I thought that was a pretty compliment to pay the honourable member. Then the *Hansard* report of my remarks continued:—

At that time the stocks of the Conservative Government in Great Britain appeared to slump and people said it was because of decontrol, but we now find that the legislation has been entirely accepted by the British people. The Socialist Party is again in the doldrums.

Mr. John Clark—Is that why it won all the by-elections?

Mr. Riches—Is that why it won the municipal elections?

Mr. Millhouse—Let members opposite answer the Gallup Poll figures.

Mr. Riches—Read the figures for the municipal elections.

Mr. Millhouse—I am not talking about them.

Mr. Loveday—The stocks of the Prime Minister have never been lower.

Mr. Millhouse—His stocks have never been higher.

I feel that the general elections held in Great Britain a few weeks ago vindicated my remarks rather than the interjections made by members opposite. The legislation had been entirely accepted in Great Britain and it worked and showed that the Jeremiahs, who are to be found everywhere when measures of decontrol are advocated, were wrong. What did members of the Labor Party in Great Britain say? Members opposite may have heard of a paper entitled "Labor Housing Policy," issued in 1958. It said that thousands of people would become homeless in October, 1958, but that did not happen, and in spite of everything said by members opposite, and even by members on this side, it would not happen here. What is the position in South Australia? Mr. Dunstan said that there is a wait of seven years for a Housing Trust rental home. I asked him what he based that on, and he indicated that it was on his own experience. It has not been my experience that the wait is anything like that.

Earlier this session I asked the Premier a question about the number of houses for which the rent had been fixed since the last rental increase was allowed in 1957, and he told me that 3,197 rental fixations had been made by the Housing Trust since 1957. I asked the question for a purpose. It seems to me that most landlords who see an opportunity to increase their rents, as permitted by the Act, will take that opportunity and apply for a new fixation. The Premier said that 3,197 landlords had applied since the Act was amended in 1957 to allow for a 40 per cent increase in the 1939 rent level. That is probably a fair guide to the number of houses still under rent control, because most landlords would take the opportunity to have a reassessment made if they thought they could increase their rents. For one reason or another it may be that a number of people did not take the opportunity. If we assume that half the landlords did not bother about a new fixation, probably not more than 6,000 houses are still under the rent fixation provisions. It is estimated that the number of dwellings in the metropolitan area at the end of 1958 was 158,000, and in the country 97,000, or a total in the State of 255,000. This information was obtained from the *Statesman's Year Book,* which is issued by the Chief Secretary. For the sake of scrupulous fairness I take out the number of houses constructed by the trust, namely, 37,000, because they have not been subject to rent control. I want to be as conservative as I can in this matter.

On the assumption that there are still about 6,000 houses under rent control, then only about 3 per cent of the total number of dwellings are still subject to control. Members may attack the calculations I have made, but I think that is a fair way to tackle the problem. We have only a botched-up Act when probably not more than 3 per cent of the dwellinghouses in this State are still subject to rent control.

Mr. Corcoran—It is a wonder that the Premier bothers about it!

Mr. MILLHOUSE—The honourable member has never said a truer word. That is the very thought that runs through my mind; why we do bother to keep in being this junk heap of legislation, if I may borrow a phrase which was used by the bench to describe the Local Government Act and which I think equally well describes the Landlord and Tenant Act. I do wonder why we keep it, because there is another point—I am sure the member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) will agree with me on this—that the amount of work done by the Local Court in Adelaide pursuant to this Act has decreased tremendously. In fact, on Mondays it probably takes no more than an hour now instead of, as at one time, a full day or more.

Where do we go from there, what conclusions do I draw from all this? First of all, I am against the continuation of this Act; I am against it for one final reason, which is the most serious of all—that its continuation every year diverts our attention from the real problem of housing in this State. We keep on this legislation and hide behind it and say, "We have a housing shortage. There are shocking cases, exceptional though they may be. What else can we do? We will not do anything else than keep on this landlord and tenant control." In that way we hide from ourselves the real solution of the housing problem.

I suggest that the real solution to this problem, a problem for one reason or another brought about as a rule by our weaker brethren, people who generally are not able to fend for themselves and who exist in any community, is a concerted drive on slum clearance. I put that suggestion very seriously before the House. That, I believe, is what we should be concentrating on now. It has,

of course, already been begun in a very small way in this State. I refer to the issued *Quarterly Notes* on the work of the South Australian Housing Trust dated October 1, 1959, in which we find this at page 18:—

Arrangements are well advanced for demolition of the temporary "flats" at Springbank converted in 1947 from R.A.A.F. hutments for emergency occupation.

I do not want to offend the member for Edwardstown (Mr. Frank Walsh) or ask him to make any comment on this if he does not wish to, but I do suggest that there are no greater slums, no greater blot on the landscape, than the Springbank hutments.

Mr. O'Halloran—But is not the member for Edwardstown constantly urging its removal?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes; I do not want to embarrass the member for Edwardstown in any way, but the Housing Trust feels it is now ready to go ahead with the removal of that camp; and that is only a small beginning to what we should be doing in this State.

I refer honourable members to the *Twentieth Annual Report of the Housing Commission,* Victoria, on this matter, because in that State we find there is a concerted effort at slum reclamation. This is a short extract from that report, which I commend to the attention of the Minister in charge:—

The rapid increase in the Commission's slum reclamation activities was maintained during the 1957-58 year. Throughout the year the Commission gave a great deal of thought to the pressing need for expanded slum reclamation and the handling of the problems of acquisition, re-housing and re-development inherent in every reclamation area. With regard to the problems of acquisition and re-housing, the Commission, being deeply appreciative of the effect that reclamation can have on persons residing within reclamation areas, appointed officers to specialize in the housing problems of these people. The activities of these officers, working in close conjunction with officers experienced in dealing with the problems of acquisition, has resulted in speedy progress in the clearing of many reclamation areas. As a result, the Commission can now approach large-scale reclamation with the knowledge that it will have the co-operation of owners and residents of properties within any proposed reclamation area, and that problems of acquisition and re-housing will be settled both speedily and satisfactorily.

When I was listening this afternoon to the member for Norwood, I could not help wishing that some such scheme operated here for the areas in his electorate and in other metropolitan electorates, where it would do the most good and is most needed, because I believe that is the answer to the problem.

There is another point besides the clearing of undesirable areas of dwellings, for that is the negative side: there is the problem mentioned by the member for Norwood which we must acknowledge, that there will always be in the community people, families perhaps, who for one reason or another are unable to pay an economic rent for the decent premises into which they are moved from the slums. We must acknowledge that and I believe that in every case an inquiry should be made. If it is a genuine case of inability to pay an economic rent, then the State must make some allowance and to the extent necessary subsidize the rent for decent accommodation for such people. That, I believe, is the answer.

Of course, that would not be a new principle, for I again refer to the *Quarterly Notes* of the Housing Trust dealing with pensioners' or "cottage" flats for elderly persons with very limited means. That is a scheme of much the same type as the one I am now advocating; it is a scheme most desirable and working well. That, I believe—I have been taunted by honourable members on both sides in previous years for not putting forward any alternative—to be the alternative to the continuation of these controls. It would be a positive step towards improving housing conditions instead of the negative step of control, control, control, letting the worst cases grow worse all the time.

Mr. Dunstan—What is your proposal for financing the extension of State housing in this way?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I must be quite frank and say that I have not yet worked that out. I do not intend to do any more at this stage than put forward the suggestion. I ask the goodwill of members to try to find some solution to the problem. I hope that even the member for Norwood will not deny there is some merit in the scheme I am now putting forward—that is, slum reclamation and, for those who are unable to fend for themselves, assistance with the rent for a proper standard of housing. That is the alternative I put before the House in opposing the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I rise on a matter of personal explanation. During my speech, in the course of reply to an interjection by the honourable member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) who asked me what I thought the decrease in the value of money was since 1939, I gave him an immediate guess, which was wrong. In fact, the decrease in the value of money since 1939 has been something over 300 per cent.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support this Bill. The member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) said that it is class legislation; as it relates to two classes—landlords and tenants—we have two classes immediately. I think it should be remembered that the amendments brought in from time to time have been introduced by the Government. Although I cannot give chapter and verse relating to each amendment, one of the most important was that passed in 1953 to provide that any home not previously under the control of the Act would not come within the ambit of the legislation if let. Since then any home that has become available for rental has been entirely free from control.

Let us examine some of the opportunities that have presented themselves under the legislation. Amendments have provided for increased rents to be granted to landlords plus council and water rates and an allowance for keeping the homes to a certain standard, so it can be seen that landlords have been adequately compensated for any capital expenditure. I agree that there has been a considerable reduction in the number of homes under control. In the city of Adelaide a few years ago lived 16,000 or 17,000 electors; I doubt whether there would now be 8,000. This has been brought about because demolitions have taken place due to the progress in industry and as a result fewer city people benefit from this legislation.

Another amendment introduced by the Government freed more homes. Under this amendment people who were paying rents were told by landlords that, if they were not willing to sign leases that would give an automatic increase in rents, the properties would be sold and they would have to leave. Although the legislation protects the tenant if the sale does not take place, who will police the matter to see that a lease is not signed instead of a contract of sale? I have proof of cases in which tenants who came under the provisions of the Act had to sign leases or get out. When these people find they are up against it because they have not applied for rental homes, they automatically pay the higher rents demanded. The member for Mitcham said that 6,000 homes could come under this legislation but, if he considered the number of homes erected since 1953, apart from the number erected by the trust before then that were not under rent control, that figure would be much too low.

Let us see what has happened with this class legislation, as the member for Mitcham described it. If we can take notice of what appears in the press from time to time—and probably on this occasion we can—the Chamber of Manufactures has already indicated in no uncertain manner that it will now challenge the basic wage in the Arbitration Court. Although I do not say that most people protected by this Act are basic wage earners, that wage has an effect on the fixation of rents, and we cannot under any circumstances afford to have a reduction in the basic wage of even one shilling a week. We all know that this State's wage lags behind the cost of living figure, and the Chamber of Manufactures would be the first to desire this. Excluding the War Service Homes Division, those people buying homes in the metropolitan area are paying about 6½ per cent interest, so any reduction in the basic wage would have a serious effect on the economy of this State. Those people who were able to purchase a home for £2,000 or even a little less a few years ago—and there are some such people in my area—are in a good position compared with people purchasing homes today, as the majority of homes now coming on the market, particularly Housing Trust homes, cost over £4,000. Even according to the Chamber of Manufactures, a decrease in the basic wage could have a serious effect on the economy, not only of the individual, but of the nation. Under no circumstances should we consider reducing the basic wage in any way.

The member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) mentioned the demolition of sub-standard homes. We have had many reports on these matters, but we have never been able to catch up with the recommendations made. Much demolition has taken place in the city of Adelaide for commercial and industrial purposes, and the people have had to go to suburban areas, including the emergency homes at Springbank. Early in January this year I had correspondence with the Premier regarding these converted Air Force huts. Some of these places have been demolished, not one moment before such demolition was due. The Premier has indicated that it is the policy of the trust and the Government, after these huts have been demolished, to erect a more suitable type of home in its emergency housing areas, and I think that such a step to establish reasonable standards will not take place one moment too soon.

The honourable member also mentioned assistance for these people by way of subsidy. I do not know what plank of his platform provides for such a subsidy; I know it is on

the Labor Party platform; it is not poppycock, either, but an advertised policy. The Opposition can claim that the present Government during wartime, with the assistance of the Opposition, agreed to amendments in the Housing Trust legislation to provide for the system of averaging rents. God help some of the tenants taking over new rental homes today if they were to be charged on the basis of the capital cost compared with the basis on which the trust was able to let its homes prewar for as little as 12s. 6d. a week. There would be a big public outcry, even though such a provision does not appear in the platform which the member for Mitcham is so pleased to present to this House from time to time. I remind the honourable member that even though his Party's constitution does not provide for any housing subsidy, this Government has recognized such a need, and whether or not the member for Mitcham is in step with his Government's view is not my concern. He appears to be out of step with the booklet that he is so often prepared to quote in this House. He is a very good example of certain legislation referred to in this pamphlet.

Mr. Lawn—Which pamphlet? The one he prepared on electoral reform, or something else?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have read a special article on it which may have dealt with price control. I believe that the averaging of rents has worked in the interests of tenants of Housing Trust homes. The trust has done an outstanding job in trying to house the people, although I believe more homes are needed in the metropolitan area rather than at Elizabeth. It has shown mercy to those who have been embarrassed when trying to get a home. This action has applied particularly to widows and age and invalid pensioners. Although I cannot agree with the suggestion of Mr. Millhouse, we should agree to amend the Act. I admit that it could be improved upon, but owing to the weight of numbers against us, Opposition members must accept what is offering.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I support the Bill. I do not know that anyone likes it, but until a solution is found, this legislation will have to be continued. I know the attitude and sentiments of the member for Mitcham. He pointed out that only a small portion of the community was being penalized. That is true.

Mr. Millhouse—Would you agree with the numbers I gave?

Mr. HAMBOUR—If you gave them, I am sure they are right. In my opinion a solution lies in providing homes for those in such circumstances that they are not able to pay the rents required on a new home today. We embarked upon a project last year which would have answered the question had more money been available. Interest-free money would be required to enable people to be housed at a rent they could afford. I am a little concerned about some of the tenants who enjoy protection under this Act and whose income is often much greater than that of the landlord. I do not know how we can deal with them. I do not think they are entitled to protection not afforded many others. It was said that only a small percentage are affected under the Bill. Many people paying current rents are afforded no protection, yet these other people referred to who occupy homes at rents fixed in 1939, plus subsequent increases, are driving around in big cars and enjoying much greater pleasure and leisure than the landlords themselves. I cannot see any warrant in protecting such people. The Housing Trust in fixing rents, does not consider the financial position of the parties concerned. In 1931 the Marley Commission commented as follows:—

> In imposing control upon those who own or have invested their money in house property, Parliament is imposing on one section of property owners restrictions which it is imposing on no other; wherever restrictions of this kind are imposed in the general interest, cases of great hardship among the class controlled are bound to occur.

I doubt whether one honourable member does not admit that there are anomalies and that there are landlords who suffer hardship because of this legislation.

Mr. Millhouse—Why don't you do something about it then?

Mr. HAMBOUR—If the honourable member will join with me I am sure we shall be able to find a solution. I think we should eliminate anomalies where the tenant can pay. If a man can afford to pay the current rent, I am not prepared to say that we should protect him and give cheap rental at the expense of his landlord.

Mr. Shannon—That is what we are doing.

Mr. HAMBOUR—That is correct. We should empower the rent-fixing authority to investigate the financial position of the tenant, and if he is in a position to pay the existing economic rent, he should be made to pay it.

Mr. Fred Walsh—You mean apply the means test?

Mr. HAMBOUR—I accept that. I think I have a point—

Mr. Fred Walsh—You are the only one who does.

Mr. HAMBOUR—I think that at least one third of the 6,000-odd people affected by this legislation should be eliminated on economic grounds, because I believe they are in a position to pay the rent in accordance with the value of the house provided.

Mr. Dunstan—How much is that, and how are you going to fix it?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Those who are in a position to pay should be removed from control.

Mr. Dunstan—In that case they would be paying more than a fair rent.

Mr. HAMBOUR—There are many people in South Australia who are paying more than a fair amount of rent.

Mr. Shannon—The answer to that objection is the question of how many who are not under rent control are paying more than an economic rent?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Exactly. If we examine the 6,000 on the waiting list we can whittle them down. If those who can afford to pay present-day rents are eliminated we are left with about 4,000. A project could be started to build more homes and they could be subsidized. There would be nothing unusual in that because the State subsidizes tram fares, train fares and other items. Let the State bear the cost, not a few landlords. Why should a few landlords carry the unfortunates? People who cannot afford to pay an economic rent today are unfortunates.

Mr. Dunstan—Why didn't the Government adopt that scheme under the 1945 Housing Agreement?

Mr. HAMBOUR—I was not here then, but it might have been better if I had been here. If the 4,000 remaining on the list were suffering hardship that would mean there would be 4,000 on both sides suffering hardship, because the landlords would suffer too. The State could provide cottage homes even if it had to subsidize the rent. However, there should be no need to subsidize the rent because a little could be added to the dead weight interest charge of £6,000,000 that already exists. The State could provide money from Loan funds and allow the interest to be found from Revenue until the position is rectified. A total of 140 homes was built for £360,000 last year and those homes could be let at a rental of £1 to £2 a week. Any tenant can afford £1 a week rent or not more than one-sixth of his income. Those homes cost about £2,500 and they are four-room cottages with every convenience. Honourable members who have them in their electorates will admit they are of excellent construction and ideally suited for people living in retirement. The trust gave a service free so why can't the State give a service free and provide houses at a reasonable rent of, say, £1 a week? Two pensioners living together would pay a rent of 30s. a week. If this problem were thoroughly examined it would be found that it would not cost the State very much to assume this responsibility. Under this form of control some houses would be demolished because they were sub-standard, and in this way two services would be rendered. An anomaly would be removed by providing for the landlords who are at present penalized, better homes would be provided for the unfortunates who cannot pay higher rents, and the State would be rendered a service by the elimination of sub-standard homes. This is a proposal which should be pursued and it is one which will appeal to everybody.

Mr. Ralston—Do you think the position would be relieved if we had a 35-hour week?

Mr. HAMBOUR—No. I am dealing with what I think is a reasonable solution within the capacity of the State to accomplish within three to four years. If anyone were to ask the Treasurer how long this legislation should be re-enacted I do not think he could answer. It will be on our Statute Book until enough homes are provided. Tenants of limited means get older and pass away, but others in similar economic circumstances move in, so the problem will always remain. I saw a housing project in Singapore where the Government had built flats for people who would be on much lower incomes than anybody in this country, including old age pensioners. Those flats were buildings that we would be proud of. I did not go inside them but the exterior was everything that could be desired. Surely this State could do something like that in its building programme. The Housing Trust made a profit of over £400,000 last year. That money could be used to house poorer people because there would be some return on it. The trust would get £1 to 30s. and in some cases £2 a week. Some could pay even 50s. a week.

Mr. Bywaters—The trust is using that money, isn't it?

Mr. HAMBOUR—For what?

Mr. Lawn—Building homes.

Mr. Shannon—Would there be any greater disability in averaging the trust's overall

costs in providing these cheap homes as it is at present averaging the rents over a period of years?

Mr. HAMBOUR—No. Let us deal with the Housing Trust's profit. The member for Murray said the trust is using that money, but it is using it to further the existing proposals, not for cheap rental propositions. The profit the trust makes each year could be used for construction and the houses could be let at interest-free rates. In other words, they could be treated in the same way as the cottages built last year. About 200 homes could probably be built out of the £460,000 the trust made last year. That number could be increased in future years and a housing proposition would be developed that would have no interest burden. The State could subscribe a similar amount out of revenue, plus a small sum out of Loan moneys and the overall liability on each one would be small. The rental cost of a house is made up mainly of interest on capital.

I sincerely submit this proposition because if houses could be built in this way they could be let to people at a rent they could afford. The Commonwealth Government accepts responsibility for pensioners in part and the State has to make its contribution. Surely an approach could be made to the Commonwealth Government to join in a scheme of this kind on a pound for pound basis.

Mr. Bywaters—National credit could be used for that purpose.

Mr. HAMBOUR—The asset would be there. That would be a great thing for the State and the people who would tenant the houses and it would ease the burden on the landlords who are penalized under the legislation. I support the Bill and hope an answer can be found so that this legislation may be removed from the Statute Book.

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

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I support the Bill. Had it not been for the opposition to the Bill by the member for Mitcham I would not have participated in this debate but would have left the Bill to pass—as I hope it will—without further discussion. But, in view of the opposition to the Bill, I feel that I am obliged not only to rise and give lip service to the fact that I support the Bill but to give reasons why the Bill should pass. In the last few days we have seen the Government Party without its leader and this afternoon was no exception. He was absent, probably opening some tin of jam somewhere or other, but we could see the differences of opinion that existed on that side of the House while he was absent and it was amusing sitting here to hear Government members differing among themselves. I refer at the moment, as one example, to when the member for Light rose to support the Bill. Some of his colleagues attempted to pickle him and heckle him, and that has been evident in this House for a week or more. That the member for Mitcham is a budding leader to take over from the Premier when he retires is, I believe, a fact. I think he is looking forward to giving some leadership or attempting to do that to his colleagues and to convince them that he is the man to take over from the master when he retires.

The SPEAKER—What clause of the Bill is the honourable member speaking to?

Mr. LAWN—The whole Bill. The member for Mitcham said he was opposed to the State's owning homes. He said it was Socialism and other than that he gave no reason. Even though he was challenged by members on this side to give some reason he could give none for his objection to the State's owning homes other than that he linked it up with Socialism, and as he is a bitter opponent of Socialism that would probably be his reason. I make no bones about the fact that I support Socialism and I see no reason why the State should not own homes, but we do not suggest that this is nationalization and that we are taking over all the homes from people who own the homes today. This is just competition—free enterprise—which the member for Mitcham advocates, but he objects to the people collectively doing exactly what he or others as individuals do. It is all right, according to the member, for one individual or two to buy a home and let it with the object of making a living from rents but, if the people collectively do it, it is wrong. No wonder he gets up here in the House and says he bashes his head against the wall. It is obvious from the arguments he puts to the House that he is bashing his head.

Then he gives as another reason for no need for this legislation that there is very little business before the courts these days—only for an hour on a Monday. He does not think that we are a mob of dumbclucks, does he? I have been a member for 10 years, which is only a short period, but I have seen this Act amended time and time again by the Government's easing controls—making it easier for the landlord to gain possession. Only two or three years ago we saw the Act altered so that all the owner had to do was

to give six months' notice to facilitate sale and, when the case came before the court, there was no hearing other than the owner having to prove to the court that he had complied with the Act, given the requisite notice of six months, and that he required the house because vacant possession would facilitate sale, and the magistrate had to grant the application. So, I would expect court proceedings to fall off to a minimum. Prior to these alterations, whereby the Act was eased, the tenant could prove hardship and resist the application of the landlord, and those arguments took time. Now it is very difficult for a tenant to contest an application in the courts because the Government has continually eased the Act.

We hear members on the Government side of the House—and my memory goes back over the years—getting up and saying anything that seems to suit them. The member for Mitcham argues that the Act is no good, that it should be cancelled forthwith, and that there should be an open go for some people he represents. I remember another occasion when an amending Bill was before the House to abolish controls on business premises and on houses built after 1953. A member on the Government side of the House—not on this side of the House—said:—

Now we have the amazing situation that we propose to continue controls over domestic premises, where there has been a creditable attempt to overtake the shortage, but to throw the businessman to the wolves and leave him without protection. This aspect should certainly be considered.

That was said by a member of the Liberal Party, the then member for Torrens (Mr. Travers). He said that we had an amazing proposition before the House to lift controls from business premises, throwing the businessman to the wolves. Of course, Government members, as well as Labor members, know why the then member for Torrens spoke that way: because the business people were throwing him out of his office and he had to get out of the office he held in Pirie Street and go around to Currie Street. The member for Mitcham did not tell this House that as a result of the freeing of controls on business premises his firm of solicitors had to vacate their offices because they could not pay the rent that the new owners charged. They have gone from Victoria Square around to Leigh Street, Adelaide. Mr. Travers had to shift, but he was at least open enough to tell the House why he opposed a provision. The member for Mitcham didn't. Now, just as the then member for Torrens protested about what was being done to him as a business man, so, Mr. Speaker, because of the people I represent (and not because it affects me personally as it did the member for Torrens when he was speaking), constituents of my electorate in regard to their residences, I protest against the opposition to this Bill and I ask that the House finally and unanimously endorses it.

The member for Mitcham protested about the restrictions. He did that recently. I heard him make some quotation about restrictions from a rule book, but I have a rule book of the Liberal Party and I have looked carefully through it. I do not know—I may have missed it—but I could not find the references he quoted on that occasion. He said the rules of the Liberal Party provided for the strictest limitation of powers to impose bureaucractic controls upon the liberty of individuals. The honourable member may have had a different rule in mind. It may have been convenient for him to have one—a sort of horses for courses.

Mr. Millhouse—You can look at a copy of our constitution in the Parliamentary Library.

Mr. LAWN—I have a copy of it, and I cannot find the matter to which the honourable member was referring. I can find on page 2 one thing to which he objected, but I think he must have imagined the other. Apparently he cannot give me a reference, so he can concoct something to suit himself when it is required. The honourable member objects to restrictions, or does he? Of course, he does not. He does not believe in restrictions on a certain section of the people—the people who own houses and let them. He does believe in restrictions on wages, and the people who have to go to the court to seek a fair wage. That brings me to another remark by the honourable member and another member of that side when they were heckling the member for Light. They said, "What is a fair amount of rent?" How do we fix a fair amount? That brings me to the position of the wage-earner. The Arbitration Court has to fix a fair amount. The wage-earner says the amount fixed is not fair, just as Mr. Millhouse says the amount of rent fixed is not fair. One might well say to the court, "How do you fix a fair amount of wage?"

Mr. Nankivell—You do not have to stick to the amount fixed. It is a minimum amount.

Mr. LAWN—The honourable member does not know what he is talking about. The worker has to stick to it, or else. If he goes on strike his union can be summoned before the court, and in recent years unions have been brought before the court and fined for striking against

a court award. That also happens under our Industrial Code. If employees do not accept the wages fixed by the proper tribunal they are up for a breach of the Industrial Code.

Mr. Heaslip—What has that to do with this Bill?

Mr. LAWN—I said earlier that members on the other side asked what was a fair amount to be charged and how it was fixed. I am pointing out that these things are not raised in connection with other issues. The people who pay rent have a fair amount fixed for their wages. According to the interjections, I do not know how many members opposite will oppose the Bill, but Mr. Millhouse painted a picture all his way in support of the poor landlords. I challenge the honourable member and other Government members to deny that the value of old homes has appreciated considerably. Many of the derelicts of 1939 have been sold to oil companies at 100 times their earlier value. Many of them were good homes, some of 10 rooms and others of two storeys. Prior to the second World War some of these homes were put up for sale at £100 and £200, and were not sold because they were not considered to be worth that money, but in recent years they have been sold for as much as £3,000 or more.

Mr. Dunstan—I had a case in my district where a house was offered for sale at £97 in 1939, or the exchange of an old piano, but it was not sold. A couple of years ago it went for £2,500.

Mr. LAWN—We know of these cases. The owner of the house in the case quoted by Mr. Dunstan was referred to by Mr. Millhouse this afternoon as a poor landlord. This afternoon Mr. Millhouse sobbed tears of blood for the poor, oppressed landlord. He did not point out that the value of these homes had appreciated considerably. I can speak at length in this way. I want now to refer to some of the Premier's statements in explaining the Bill, and I will give factual support for some of his remarks. He said:—

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

Government members advocated freedom from control in 1953 and prior to that. Some said that if there were no control there would be an added incentive. That is a word which we have heard from members on the other side, from vested interests and from employers of labour. They said that if houses were freed from control there would be an added incentive for people to build homes for rental. So, in 1953, the Government freed all homes built after that date. There we have the Premier of the State, who should have had the facts before him when he made this statement, and he says that that has not eventuated. He makes the statement not only in this House under privilege. In the *News* of Tuesday, October 27, he is reported as having opened a real estate conference. The heading of the article is "Few Homes for Rent Built Now." The report reads:—

There was now a considerable amount of investment in flats in South Australia, and very little investment in houses for renting, the Premier, Sir Thomas Playford, said today.

He was addressing people engaged in real estate. Despite what they said in 1953 and before, the Premier only recently told them that what they said had not eventuated: they have not invested money in homes for rental because of the freeing of controls. I suggest to the House that it is not the control that is stopping people from investing money in building homes for rental. If one considers the price a person will have to pay for a block of land, the cost of building a home, to which must be added his interest charges, the cost of maintaining that home, all the outgoings, such as council rates, water rates, and land tax, then when a rent is fixed I suggest it would be beyond the reach of the average wage-earner today to pay it. That is the reason why money is not being invested in homes for rental. The Premier went on in his second reading speech to say:—

If the controls provided by the Act were lifted, the result would most probably be that the rents of houses now subject to control would increase substantially.

I have already indicated what happened to the premises occupied by the firm of Millhouse and other solicitors who had offices in Victoria Square. An insurance company bought and then demolished that building. It erected a large, modern building and offered accommodation to that firm of solicitors, of which the

member for Mitcham is a partner. They said they could not pay the increased rent, and they had to get out of a good office in Victoria Square in the centre of Adelaide and go down to a side street not far from the railway station and lease premises there. That is the sort of thing that happened with business premises. Many other similar instances have occurred. Deputations from business people have come here telling us what happened regarding increased rents. Every honourable member here knows what has happened about houses freed under another section of the Act, whereby houses are freed from rent control if they are subject to a lease. Some houses let for £2 10s. under rent control are today let at £7 for half the house, or £14 for the full house. Of course, we know people would be fleeced and their earnings would be filched if there was an open go in regard to rents today. Then the Premier told the House—we do not want to forget what was said when this Bill was introduced:—

During the year ended June 30, 1959, the trust received 5,385 applications for rental housing and 1,331 for emergency dwellings. During the preceding financial year the figures were 4,828 and 1,938, respectively.

During the year ended June, 1959, the total applications received by the trust were 6,716; and the total applications received by the trust for the year ended June, 1958, were 6,766—a difference of 50. Therefore, if it was right last year for legislation to be passed to continue the controls for another 12 months, then those figures justify their continuance for a further 12 months.

I desire to bring before the House some recent applications to the Housing Trust, to prove that the stories that we on this side of the House tell of the hardships of our constituents are not fictitious. Here is an application sent in to the trust in October of this year—a case I referred to by way of interjection when the member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) was speaking this afternoon. It was made on behalf of a married couple with three children who occupy a caravan at the rear of a house in New Mile End, and they are paying £5 a week for it. This family is prepared to accept a home and go anywhere. The application for a trust home was made two years ago. The Housing Trust tells me in its replies to correspondence, "Six years is the waiting time." That application has not yet been replied to by the trust.

Another case is that of a deserted wife with three children living with her mother and her own brother—that is two women, the brother and three children, making six in all—and they are living in two bedrooms and a kitchen. This woman was deserted 20 months ago. Her husband had made an application to the Housing Trust four years ago and when he deserted this family the Housing Trust said to this woman, "You make a fresh application and we will allow you some portion of that period of 3½ years which would have been credited to your husband's application had he stayed with you." There are six people living in two rooms and a kitchen.

Mr. Nankivell—Is that a sub-letting proposition?

Mr. LAWN—I do not know what the honourable member means by "a sub-letting proposition."

Mr. Nankivell—Are they renting those rooms from somebody else?

Mr. LAWN—This woman's mother and brother and her children occupy those premises—two bedrooms and a kitchen.

Mr. Nankivell—That is, the full premises.

Mr. LAWN—That is the full premises. When this woman was deserted by her husband she had nowhere to go but back to her own mother, and she and her children overloaded those rooms in which her mother and brother were already sleeping and living. Despite the fact that her husband had made an application four years ago, the trust tells her, "You make a fresh application and we are only going to allow you some portion of that period of your husband's application," which means that because a man deserts his family, the wife and children are penalized in their application to the Housing Trust for accommodation. Is that justice? Don't tell me it is just to lift all controls, take the roof off, and say, "Open go, survival of the fittest." This Parliament is supposed to represent the people. We ask for the Divine Blessing upon all our legislation when we commence a sitting. Surely we are not a lot of hypocrites.

Mr. Shannon—Ha, ha!

Mr. LAWN—The member for Onkaparinga may speak for himself, but I suggest that most members are not. Do members suggest that the cases I mentioned do not justify control for a further 12 months? If they do, let them say so. The trust tells us that six years is the normal waiting time in the metropolitan area, but here are the facts of a decent honourable person whom I have known for many years; I know that some members opposite know him, and these are the facts of his

application to the trust. He made his application in 1947—12 years ago—but, as he told me, and I mentioned in my letter to the trust, he was not in an urgent position, his owner was not pressing him to get out and, because he knew there were many other families in more urgent need of accommodation than himself, he did not go near the trust and worry it, although he had an application in. However, 12 months ago the owner gave him notice to get out, and he went into the Housing Trust, but the trust has not been able to find him accommodation in the last 12 months. Although the trust says six years is the normal period, he had his application in for 12 years and did not press the trust because he was not in dire need of accommodation but, when he was in dire need of accommodation, he went in 12 months ago, taking with him his notice to quit, and asked the trust what it could do, yet 12 months later the trust said it could not do anything for him. This man was five years in the Australian Imperial Forces in the last war, and he and his wife have six children. That letter is awaiting a reply from the Housing Trust; I do not know what it will be.

I have some further cases about which I can quote the replies of the trust. An invalid pensioner, a lady who applied for a flat in 1952, has regularly visited the Housing Trust office every month since then. The reply of the trust to this letter is:—

Many hundreds of applications were received for pensioners' cottages or flats, and there has been a constant flow of applications ever since, but the trust has been able to provide only relatively few of the flats for individuals. The case has been investigated and is among the large number which has to be considered whenever flats are available. It is realized that this lady is in need of suitable accommodation but, unfortunately, there are many others whose need is certainly not less urgent. This lady may be assured that her application has had consideration and will continue to be given all possible attention as circumstances permit, but I am afraid no indication can be given as to what is likely to be the outcome.

That lady is a single person, an invalid pensioner, and they are the circumstances of her application. There are so many hundreds of people like her that the trust says it cannot indicate what may be the outcome! Another case is of a family that lived for 19 years in the eastern end of the city and, as members know, the eastern end of the city has had its fair share of houses being purchased for business in the last two years, people being given notice to get out, and buildings being erected. This family is in that group. They have been 19 years in that area, and I suggest to the member for Mitcham that they must have been good tenants. They have a daughter and, when they had to get out of their home, all they could do was to live with their daughter in the city, where they have been for about 18 months. The daughter and her husband and two children sleep in one room while this family sleeps in the other. In reply, the Housing Trust advised:—

I am afraid there are a great number of long-standing cases being pressed on the trust's attention for immediate housing and many of these are from persons who have lived under most difficult conditions for long periods.

Doesn't that justify the continuance of this legislation? The letter continues:—

This case is listed for early investigation and they can be assured that their application will have all possible consideration as suitable accommodation becomes available, but under existing conditions it is impossible to indicate when they might be assisted.

That rings a bell along the lines of the previous correspondence I have read. Another case: here is a married couple with four children living in the city of Adelaide who made an application in September, 1955. They have now received a notice to quit, six months' notice being given, as the property is required to facilitate sale. This is the reply of the trust to that application made in 1955:—

There is a very large waiting list of applications for the trust's permanent rental homes in the metropolitan area because it has never been in the position to build sufficient homes to keep pace with demands made upon it. Many of the long-standing cases which are waiting are also urgent and the only fair way is to deal with the applications as nearly as possible according to the date of receipt. This applicant's case will have every consideration as soon as it is in line; but I am afraid it is not possible to give any indication as to when this will be, except that it is unlikely to be this year. They can be assured that their need of accommodation is realized by the trust and that they will not be overlooked when circumstances make it possible to assist them.

Another case concerns a married couple with three girls who live in one of the suburbs: they are living with another family and the place is overcrowded. In fact, this family—the three girls, the mother and father—on whose behalf I wrote, occupies one room in a home in a suburb of Adelaide. That room is in a house occupied by another family and, as in many instances we find, friction occurs.

The people who occupy the home cannot tolerate the three young children because of the noise and laughter that goes with children playing around the home, and there is consequent friction. The trust, in its reply, said:—

This is a very recent application and it would appear that there is very little prospect of the trust being able to provide these people with an emergency dwelling in the near future. However, the trust is arranging to investigate the circumstances in which this family is living at an early date.

I think I have justified my remarks by the correspondence I have placed before the House. I challenge members to deny that in justice to the community in general, not merely one little section of it, we must, if we have any conscience at all, vote to continue this legislation for another 12 months. I support the Bill.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I, too, support the Bill with the same degree of discomfort as I have always supported it. I am continually looking forward to the time when this legislation is no longer on our Statute Book, but I cannot reconcile myself to the direct action suggested by the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) although I do not think he is entirely wrong. Other places have abolished this type of legislation without the dire consequences forecast here tonight.

This measure was introduced by the Government but one would think, hearing some of the speeches tonight, that the Government intended to abolish the legislation instead of prolonging it. The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) supported the Premier at the end and endorsed his remarks, but he had to introduce some disparaging remarks at the beginning for which I did not see any necessity on this proposed amending legislation. The member for Mitcham is the bad boy amongst Government members. He said he wanted to abolish the legislation, but he admitted that there were bad cases. He then put forward what he considered to be a remedy. Then the member for Light (Mr. Hambour) supported the measure; he gave further very good reasons why it should be supported today, and then he also put forward a practical proposition on how to get rid of it.

Would anybody here want to continue the legislation if the conditions were such as to render it unnecessary? That is the point: nobody wants this thing. If there were plenty of houses the legislation would not be here and nobody would be advocating it. These hard luck cases occur not only in the city, but in the country. I have grown to appreciate that the activities of the Housing Trust today tend to absolve people from responsibilities which they may have taken upon themselves before the advent of the trust. We hear of cases where people have had an application before the Housing Trust for 12 years and it has been refused. The Housing Trust is perhaps not willing to accept those people as tenants; possibly those people have no initiative but are prepared to go on for the rest of their lives waiting for the trust to provide them with a house, or their own income will not allow them to proceed with the building of their own house. If the latter is so, their income will not permit them to pay for a Housing Trust rental home. Many married men in South Australia have incomes of only £14 and £15 a week, and the basic wage is even lower than that. Many men working for the Highways Department do not receive £15 a week.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Most people do not get it.

Mr. Hambour—That's stretching it a bit. The member for Burra may be right in saying that some people do not get more.

Mr. QUIRKE—Many bridge builders with the Highways Department are not tradesmen and they do not receive £15 a week. To a man with a family £15 a week is not sufficient. The member for Light was saying how we should subsidize people's rents, and I am now attempting to show that we should have to subsidize thousands of people in that way. A man with a wife and three or four children and earning only £15 a week cannot buy a home, nor can he afford to pay £3 10s. a week rent, wherever he lives, and I defy anyone to say that he can. That adds to the problem. We have to be realists in this matter. I support the measure because I know that it will be necessary for some time to come, although I hope its necessity is decreasing.

People can be put into various categories. Some people today who could possibly launch out on their own and save money to buy a Housing Trust home prefer to do other things with their money and are waiting for the trust to give them a rental home. Every honourable member has met those people, and there are plenty. These people are a direct burden on the Housing Trust, and they are the people who very often say, "I have had an application in for seven years." Some of those people, had they been prepared to put money into a house instead of other things, could have had their own house. People in another category are those who do not want to move out of the conditions under which they are

living. It must be admitted that there are people in that category. I heard from a Minister of the Crown in Sydney that when the authorities set out on the slum clearance there they first of all built blocks of flats on vacant land and then shifted the people from a slum area into those flats, but some people resolutely refused to leave the rat-ridden and louse-ridden conditions under which they were living and live under decent conditions. One of the big difficulties the authorities had was to get those people out of the areas before they bulldozed them. Some of those people had been there for many years and did not want to be moved. Drastic action was taken, and those people either had to move to the flats provided or go to sleep on the harbour wharves. That is the way they were treated, and it had its effect. We know of people, such as women without a bread-winner and left with two or three children, and deserted wives who are living under horrible conditions. It is a reflection on us. They are the people who should be subsidized.

Mr. Hambour—The average wage for the general worker is £20.57 a week.

Mr. QUIRKE—I know that some workers living in country towns in my district do not get over £15 or £16 a week and some working in the Highways Department are paid even less than £15; and these are men who are building bridges. Only one or two of those on the bridge job at Clare get more than £15 a week, and the rest receive less. There are no tradesmen amongst them, but they do all the forming and the concrete pouring and do a faultless job under the direction of a very good man. However, they do not receive sufficient to build their own homes. We are told that there is only one thing that denies such people a home and that is that we have not sufficient money to build it. It is to our eternal disgrace that a country like Italy proposes to build homes here for its people who come to this country.

Mr. Dunnage—Why don't they house their own people in Italy?

Mr. QUIRKE—They are all housed, whether or not the conditions are the same as they are here, but they propose to build homes here, and are we to deny them that right?

Mr. Hambour—Next to Asia, the position in Sicily is the worst in the world.

Mr. Quirke—They do not lack money. When anyone attempts to do anything, usually he finds it cannot be done because of the lack of money. In West Germany many people were bombed out of their homes, their cities were smashed, and the whole country lay desolate, but they have been able to build homes. Were they short of money?

Mr. Fred Walsh—How much did America put into it?

Mr. Hambour—Wouldn't it be grand if Australians worked as well as they did?

Mr. QUIRKE—Even if Australians wanted to work as hard, there would not be sufficient money for them to build homes.

Mr. Hambour—Rubbish!

Mr. QUIRKE—There are people here willing to work as hard as those in West Germany to build their houses, but how hard is it to get money to do it?

Mr. Hall—But how would you increase the number of houses?

Mr. QUIRKE—Does the honourable member mean to say that Australia is building the maximum number of houses that can be built? Of course we are not, nor anything like it. We have not even touched the fringe. In fact, house building in South Australia is slow compared with what can be done.

Mr. Hambour—Do you know any builders out of work?

Mr. QUIRKE—No, and I do not know those in work. When we want to do something in this country we are told we have no money to do it.

Mr. Hambour—What about people building their homes?

Mr. QUIRKE—If a man wants to build his own home, tell me where he can get the money?

Mr. Hambour—From the State Bank.

Mr. QUIRKE—What is the bank's limit and where does it get its money? It is loan money.

Mr. Dunnage—How does a man get it in West Germany?

Mr. QUIRKE—I don't know. All I know is that there they get results.

Mr. Dunnage—The same principle applies.

Mr. QUIRKE—All I know is the result. Evidently the principle works a lot better there than it does here.

Mr. Hambour—The people work much harder.

Mr. QUIRKE—It is no use our sticking our heads in the sand. We are working very slowly.

Mr. Hambour—The truest words you have ever spoken.

Mr. QUIRKE—There is only one answer to the problem of rent control: put people into houses. To do that you have to build them. There are many genuine cases, and also plenty of rat holes in South Australia, and as soon as the present occupants leave, such homes should be bulldozed out of existence by the council and never allowed to be rented again. We always come back to the same question. A member can talk of anything he likes in this House from Sputniks to whale fishing in the Antarctic, but as soon as one talks about a little extra money, one finds apologists for our present system. Everyone knows that the system is bad. How much money could the Minister of Education and the Minister of Works spend if it were available? If there is talk of water extension in the country we are told it will cost so much and that it could not be done this year or even next year. All these things come back to the basic principle that we cannot do the work because we have not the money. This also applies to the building of homes. Until we can overcome this position we shall not be able to do away with rent control. If this Bill has the effect of enabling a roof to be placed over the heads of those in dire need, no matter how poor they are, it is a good reason why I should support it.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I rise not to support the Bill, because I believe there are better methods by which we could achieve better results than it will achieve and what its predecessors over the years failed to achieve. Mr. Quirke and Mr. Hambour, and I think Mr. Millhouse, all said that we have many sub-standard houses of a type that is a disgrace to a civilized community. I think that we shall have to return to the policy of homes for people on limited incomes. I believe that if the plans of an ex-member of this House—Mr. Horace Hogben, who is still a member of the Savings Bank Board—were energetically pursued we would overcome many of the problems with which we are faced and we would definitely relieve one section of the community from carrying the burden for the whole community. It is obvious that some people are feeling the pinch—those people who own a home or two and subsist on the rents thereof and whose costs are up by 300 per cent but whose rentals are up by only 50 per cent on the base year of 1939.

In the last few years the controls have been eased and certain categories have been removed from rent control, but not one member who has propounded the merits of rent control has been able to illustrate a rapacity among the home owners for an extortionate rent. If this legislation is so necessary as part of our social service set-up, why has it not been disclosed that a grievous error was made in removing rent control from some categories of housing? Obviously the ills that some members foresee do not occur.

I do not agree with the suggestion of the member for Light that we should subsidize the rent of a person on a limited income. I favour the approach made by this House when it received £350,000 from the Commonwealth Government as an unexpected handout. The Premier decided to allocate that money for the erection of cottage type homes—lovely little homes of which I have too few in my electorate. The basis of rental for these homes is one-sixth of the family income and not less than £1 a week. That is a reasonable approach in these days. In the late 1930's we built homes and let them for 12s. 6d. a week, and if we equate that amount to the value of money these days I suggest they would be worth at least 37s. 6d. a week, yet we are letting homes for £1 a week. Members will say that there is no interest charge on them. That is true. I am not complaining that we are letting these homes to people of limited income, but when the State has the capital—and in this instance it was a gift—it should do more of this work. I think it is the limit of the State's responsibility to find homes for people in such an income group that they cannot find a home for themselves. I think that is where the State should start and finish with the building of homes. I would only be interested in providing homes for people who, because of their circumstances, could not otherwise find a home they could afford to live in.

The member for Burra referred to some substandard homes, the tenants of which pay a low rental. If invited to go into a good Housing Trust home they would refuse because they would rather remain in their sub-standard homes and pay 25s. or 27s. 6d. a week instead of £3 for a good home. It is not that they cannot afford to pay for a reasonable home: they elect to live under those conditions because it saves them money. They perhaps spend it on a television set. I could take members to parts of our outer suburbs where some of

these homes exist and they would see more television antennae than are found in some of the better suburbs.

Mr. Quirke—I do not disbelieve you.

Mr. SHANNON—It is not economics that makes these people elect to live in these homes. It is because they are too mean to pay a proper rent to keep their families in better conditions.

Mr. Fred Walsh—That's a bit tough.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not say that that is the general thing, but there are a few black-sheep in every family, and I know that many people who occupy these homes are getting more than the workers mentioned by the honourable member for Burra. This Government has been charged with failing to grapple with the housing problem. Mr. Millhouse gave the number of houses affected by the legislation.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. SHANNON—No, I have a better remedy. The State Bank in the last yeat received £2,750,000 for housing purposes. Under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement it also received £1,100,000, as well as a special grant of £850,000 at the end of June this year. That gave a total of £4,700,000 to one authority for housing. The building societies had a fairly steep increase to £400,000. The State Savings Bank had available £5,800,000 for housing. From all sources, including Government loans, rents, repayments of purchase money, etc., the Housing Trust had available £10,302,000 available for new homes. This made a grand total of £21,202,000. The Commonwealth Bank also advances money for homes. There is such a thing as a Government guarantee under the Homes Act. Under it the applicant can get up to 95 per cent of the purchase price of a new home, which is guaranteed by the South Australian Government. The amount advanced is not to exceed £3,000 if there is a 95 per cent advance. If it is £3,500, a 15 per cent deposit is required instead of 5 per cent. This is a tremendous help to people who want to get their own homes. If a young man entering on married life has a steady job he is not taking a great risk. He has to pay £1 or 25s. a week more to cover interest and repayment of principal over a 30-year term, but he finally owns a home. It is a forced method of saving.

The Government has provided homes for people who in normal circumstances would have to fossick around and get homes for themselves, and many people are now doing just that. Many housing activities have been channelled to assist people who do not really require Government assistance, and should not have asked for it. They have no claim on the privy purse, but there is always a section of the community that is unable to pay the normal rent for a home. They conspire to make it impossible for a family to pay the normal rent and they are the people that Mr. Hogben had in mind when he proposed the building of homes for them. We should direct our sympathies towards them.

I agree with Mr. Millhouse regarding this type of legislation. It tends to blind us to the true facts and to salve our conscience. We think we are holding the fort by doing something for a section. It would not hurt us very much to direct Housing Trust activities to providing homes for the section of the community that cannot, because of certain circumstances, get their own homes. Money should be set aside for the purpose. The Housing Trust is really a Government activity as the Government appoints the members and directs the policy. The trust runs its own affairs, but it is not beyond the Government's power to say to the trust that of the sum available so much should be spent in building cottage homes for people with limited means. If we did that this legislation would be dropped, and no-one would know that it had been dropped because the need for it would have disappeared. Instead of expecting these people to live in shanties we would be providing them with better homes.

I think the approach to the matter is entirely wrong. I do not like criticizing my own Government because, after all, it has done a great job in housing. I am the first to admit that. Any unbiased, observant person coming to this State and seeing our housing projects would readily concede that we lead the Commonwealth in this field. I do not want to be hypercritical of my own Treasury benches but, I believe if we set aside one or two million pounds of our funds for the purpose of directing our policy into proper channels, our troubles would begin to fade away.

I cannot support this legislation. It is against my policy to make a small section of the community carry the burden for us all. All taxpayers should take their fair share of the

burden instead of the small person with a little nest-egg being overloaded. I do not want such people to shoulder my burdens for me. I am not a property owner; I do not invest in homes. That would be the last thing I should put my money into today, for it is about the poorest investment one could select from the point of view of the return, one reason being that we grab the poor unfortunate landlord by the throat so that he cannot get a fair deal. Perhaps if we gave him *carte blanche* to go ahead, build a house, and ask an economic rent for it, more homes would be built.

I point out, first of all, that we are aiming at a goal with an unloaded gun. Let us put something in the barrel and shoot it so that we shall reach our destination and achieve something rather than hoodwink ourselves into thinking that we are solving a problem that in effect we are not dealing with at all.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—Basically, I am opposed to this legislation and have been for the past three years. I retain my views on this matter but will concede that I am concerned about indications and instances of hardship occasioned to certain tenants able to pay only a small rent who would suffer if this legislation were completely written off our Statute Book. I agree with the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) that this State has a wonderful record in the housing field. In fact, we have exceeded the average Australian building programme *per capita* by some 17 per cent in recent years, but a small core, some 6,000 of our population who own homes and have owned them for many years, today receives only a 40 per cent higher return by way of rent, plus the reimbursement of costs of repair and so on, than in 1939. In that year a three-roomed trust home was let at a rental of 11s. 6d.; today the rental for that home is 32s. 6d.—that is, a 300 per cent increase. In that period the basic wage has risen by 346 per cent, so the increase in rental for a trust home from 1939 has been in proportion, approximately to the basic wage increase; but for the landlord of a home purchased before 1939 the return on his investment is not in proportion to the increase in the rental of a trust home.

Mr. McKee—Is that a three-bedroomed trust home?

Mr. LAUCKE—No, a three-roomed home; but the increased return to the landlord is not in accord with the increases in the basic wage and Housing Trust rentals. Those landlords number only 6,000 *ex* a population of the State of 955,000.

I object to a small minority of the public having to carry a burden that could better and should be carried by the community as a whole through the Housing Trust organization for those unable to pay an economic rent. I am reluctant to speak forcibly in condemnation of the continuation of this Act having in mind possible hardship to certain people who cannot afford an economic rent. The provision of homes for people on low incomes, pensioners and so on, in various country towns and in the city too at a rental of £1 or one-sixth of the husband-wife income is indeed a wonderful move.

Mr. Fred Walsh—What would you rate that three-roomed house at today?

Mr. LAUCKE—The three-roomed house which in 1939 was let at 11s. 6d. would today be let at 32s. 6d. Those figures are taken from the *Quarterly Notes* of the Housing Trust, dated October 1.

Mr. Fred Walsh—That is a three-roomed house?

Mr. LAUCKE—Yes.

Mr. Fred Walsh—There are very few of them about.

Mr. LAUCKE—The demand for rental accommodation continues apace. It shows no sign of abating, as instanced by the figures that the Housing Trust has supplied for the year ended June 30, 1959. In that year the Housing Trust received 5,385 applications for rental houses and 1,331 applications for emergency dwellings. During the preceding financial year the figures were 4,828 and 1,938 respectively. It indicates that in spite of all the building activity—and this State is achieving better results than any other State in the Commonwealth—there is still a lag in homes for those urgently seeking them.

Since 1953 any home erected could be let without control under the Act. It is significant to note that there has not been any great building activity for rental purposes following this freeing of control. Perhaps the very threat of control or the fact that we have this legislation on our Statute Book is a damper on the enthusiasm of people to purchase and let houses as an investment. Be that as it may, I feel that it is undesirable to inflict on a very small minority of the

population a control that should not be imposed. Despite a desire not to have any undue incidence of control over a few, I can see from instances quoted in this House that hardship could be inflicted on certain tenants. I hope that we can achieve a state wherein those who cannot afford an economic rent will have access to one of these low rental homes now provided for pensioners and others on low incomes, but until we can achieve that position I feel I must not insist on my past policy of opposition to this legislation. Having in mind the conditions that now prevail, I am prepared to support the continuance of this legislation for another year.

Mr. HALL (Gouger)—I should like to get my hands on the magic wand possessed by the member for Burra (Mr. Quirke) which he can wave over the public works and moneys of this State and, although the State is in full employment, squeeze many more houses out of it. After I had finished with it for the good of the State, I should not mind using it for my own purposes, but I fear there is some fallacy in his argument. The hard core of this matter is supply and demand, and anyone who has bought or sold goods knows how it affects matters. As soon as we can supply homes there will be no argument. I think the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) laboured the case more than necessary. We all know of the hard cases that exist, but what is his or his Party's solution? Members opposite are advocating a 35-hour week. How do they tie that in with more housing and the reduction or control of rents?

Mr. Bywaters—Let's hear your solution.

Mr. HALL—As pointed out by the member for Light (Mr. Hambour), nobody wants to undermine working conditions in this country, but reducing working hours from 40 to 35 is striking a blow.

Mr. Bywaters—You would like to go back to 1946 conditions.

Mr. HALL—I want conditions to stay as they are. On the one hand members opposite cry for more and cheaper houses but on the other create the conditions that increase the cost.

Mr. Fred Walsh—To follow your argument, they would have to work 60 hours a week.

Mr. HALL—In the Address in Reply debate I put forward a plan that I thought should be put to the Commonwealth Government. I said that there was a big pool of unmarried people wasting their money. If we had some scheme that would encourage them to save more we would have more houses. I reiterate that some tax concessions, on the same lines as we now have for insurance, to encourage young people to save for housing would greatly benefit the whole of Australia. Any measure that helps in the housing problem is good. The solution will not be in one factor, but in many together.

Mr. Hambour—If they can buy a motor car, they can buy a house.

Mr. HALL—Of course. They are wasting their means when it comes to good value. What is good value—wasting your money when young or buying a home? A small deposit only is required on a house.

Mr. Bywaters—Not everyone is left a home.

Mr. HALL—That is true, but can the honourable member deny that a young person who is married at 24 cannot have saved enough to put down as a deposit on a home? Any young man can do that unless there are some special circumstances of family hardship.

Mr. Bywaters—That is easy when left to you.

Mr. Hambour—I think that is off the line.

Mr. HALL—Even though he opposed the Bill, the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) put forward a suggestion for the future. He opposed the Bill as conditions exist today and proffered a solution for the future, and I think he should wait to vote against the legislation until his solution is implemented in the future. I support the Bill.

Mrs. STEELE (Burnside)—I have listened with great interest to the contributions made by members from both sides of the House, and they have only confirmed me in my opposition to the measure. The member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) referred to ingenious landlords who sought all sorts of loopholes through which they could defeat this legislation. Of course, I concede that there are good and bad landlords and good and bad tenants, but I am particularly concerned about the old people who have saved throughout their lives and have shown great thrift with the idea of investing their savings in property to bring them an income in their declining years. I feel sorry for these people, because I think they are among those who have incurred an

injustice. The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) said many of these properties were in a dreadful state of deterioration, but I think that is only natural because, considering the rents that some of these people receive for their properties, they are in no position to keep them in proper repair. Some old people have come to me and have expressed concern because they feel they are not getting an adequate rent. Their only redress is to give six months' notice of their intention to sell with the idea of getting out of the business altogether, and then they have the added worry of trying to find ways and means to invest the money they have realized on the sale of their properties. I feel it is difficult for them to do this in the declining years of their lives. I have made these points because I feel there must be many members who have constituents in a similar position. I therefore feel that I cannot support this Bill.

Mr. NANKIVELL secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.11 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, November 4, at 2 p.m.