HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, November 5, 1959.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, intimated his assent to the following Acts:

Exchange of Land (Hundred of Noarlunga).
Statutes Amendment (Public Salaries).

QUESTIONS.

CONCESSION FARES TO PENSIONERS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier further information following on the question I asked recently regarding the provision at country post offices of application forms for country pensioners who desire to participate in the concession recently granted for off-peak travel while in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. J. N. Keynes, General Manager of the Municipal Tramways Trust has now reported:—

Concession fares application forms are available to pensioners at some 250 post offices situated in the metropolitan area, where the very large majority of pensioners likely to apply for the concession reside. To make the application forms available in all country areas would involve supplying forms to a further 600 post offices and post office agencies. As we have received only about 30 requests from country pensioners to be supplied with forms since the scheme was introduced, the distribution of forms to country post offices and agencies is not warranted. Country pensioners will be supplied with application forms by merely posting a request for them to the Tramway offices at Victoria Square.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I point out that the present procedure will involve country pensioners in some expense: at least two sets of postage stamps will be required, firstly to secure a form and secondly to return it when completed. Many pensioners are not well-versed in filling in forms and possibly they could be assisted by police officers. If it is not practicable to make these forms available at post offices will the Premier ascertain whether they could be made available at country police stations, because I know that police officers in country towns greatly assist pensioners at present? No doubt such an arrangement would assist the position in the major country towns.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think the suggestion would be acceptable and I will have the matter examined to see whether it is possible to have some forms sent to police stations so that they will be available.

STUART ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. SHANNON—Before I ask my question I convey to the Premier our hearty congratulations upon his 21 years of continuous office as Premier and Treasurer of this State. It is a remarkable performance, in the reflected glory of which we want to take a little share. We realize that it is the Premier's outstanding qualities that have brought about this remarkable achievement.

Can the Premier indicate the attitude to be adopted by Cabinet when the report of the Royal Commission on the notorious Stuart case is tabled? Has Cabinet decided whether or not to justify the Government and the Supreme Court Bench of South Australia by taking the steps that the Premier indicated previously might be taken against the publishers and editor of *The News?*

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I thank the honourable member for his personal remarks. As to his question, I think it would be more appropriate to await the report of the Royal Commission before making any decision on the matter raised. I do not know when the report will be presented or, of course, what it will contain. I think it would be proper to consider future action when the report has come to hand and the opinion of the Crown Law office has been obtained, particularly on the matter referred to by the honourable member.

COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE POLICY.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I have in my possession a letter of a kind that seems to have been prepared in large numbers which was sent to a person who insured under a comprehensive policy a motor vehicle obtained on hire purchase. The insurer is obliged, under the agreement with the hire company, to insure with the one insurance company. After having insured in this way the man had an accident with his car and was told by the insurance company that it could not continue the policy unless he signed an agreement, which was attached, indicating that he would, in the event of future accidents, pay the first £20 of costs incurred. Will the Minister representing the Attorney-General ascertain whether this is correct in law and whether people obliged to insure can be protected against this sort of thing?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

STOCK SLAUGHTERING RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. HEASLIP—As previously stated, primary producers appreciate the work being done by slaughtermen at the Gepp's Cross Abattoirs, but during the last two weeks there have been certain restrictions on the delivery of stock for slaughter. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether next week, and in the weeks to come, there will be restrictions on the delivery of stock?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—There will be no restrictions on the abattoirs market on November 11. There will, however, be a restriction on country markets to the extent that no lambs will be accepted *ex* country markets until further notice and no sheep will be accepted *ex* country markets or from private bookings until further notice. Private bookings of lambs will be accepted for the week commencing November 22. The Abattoirs Board expects its works to be cleared by the beginning of next week. That is the position in brief—that the abattoirs market is unrestricted, although there are certain restrictions on deliveries from country markets. As a matter of interest, for the seven days ended November 102,300 sheep and lambs were slaughtered, and the total since August 31 is 811,940.

MINING OPERATIONS AT OPAL FIELDS.

Mr. LOVEDAY—In reply to a question I asked on October 27 regarding the names of companies engaged in bulldozing for opals at Andamooka and Coober Pedy the Premier said that a preliminary survey indicated that the bulldozer cuts referred to were left by a machine operated by three prospectors who did not hold any mining titles. The incident occurred in a cutting they had left. Will the Premier make available the report he promised as it would appear that by this time it should have been completed by the inspector?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not yet received the report but I will see whether I can obtain it by next week. For many years everyone in that area was operating without a licence and it was only when some established companies came in that applications were made. Most of the prospectors have never been licensed and the granting of licences in this area is a recent matter.

GOVERNOR'S TERM OF OFFICE.

Mr. HUGHES—It is contemplated that His Excellency the Governor (Sir Robert George) and Lady George will be leaving South Australia to return home in February next. Both His Excellency and Lady George have endeared themselves to all sections of the people in South Australia, especially to those living in country districts. As a country member, I can speak from experience on this. They have strengthened the affection and loyalty of the people of this State towards the Throne. At the cost of great physical effort they have gone out of their way to meet people and to see at first hand the actual working and living conditions of the people. Their sympathetic and understanding manner has caused people genuine regret at their approaching departure, and many people ask whether their stay in this State as Her Majesty's representatives could be further extended. If this is possible, will the Premier take up with the Prime Minister, the Governor-General, or whoever it may concern the matter of extending the Governor's term of office? I ask the Premier to do this subject, of course, to the approval of their Excellencies.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member's remarks will be taken into consideration.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. STOTT—Some time ago I asked the Minister of Lands a question regarding the unexpended portion of money received from the Commonwealth Government for soldier settlement in South Australia, following on a statement by Dr. Forbes in the House of Representatives that £800,000 provided for soldier settlement in South Australia had not been spent. I understand that that figure is fairly accurate. In reply to my question the Minister said he would try to get some figures showing the portion not spent. Has he those figures?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have not the figures available, but the position is that a certain amount of money is allocated to the State each year for soldier settlement purposes. The suggestion has been made that we should use it because we have it, but we can only use it in connection with soldier settlement, and in different areas there has been a balance not expended. I feel that the honourable member is under the impression that we are getting a great deal of money and not using it, but we are using what is allocated to us only for soldier settlement.

MULCHING MATERIALS.

Mr. LAUCKE—Following on my question of Tuesday last concerning the encouragement to use mulching materials in home gardens in the

interests of economy in water consumption, I have had inquiries about access to supplies of seaweed. Will the Minister of Works state whether there are any restrictions on the public taking seaweed from our beaches?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—As far as I am aware, there is no reason why people should not take a small amount of seaweed in their cars when coming home from the beaches. As a matter of fact, I think the authorities concerned would be only too pleased to get rid of some of the accumulated seaweed along their beaches. However, I have not had an opportunity to check with the authorities on this matter, so what I have said is subject to correction. It may be that licences have been issued to certain persons and that those activities are controlled in some way, so I will check with the authorities to see whether or not it is freely available. I think there is merit in the suggestion that, if seaweed is available, the public might use it.

CLUBS FOR AGED.

Mr. McKEE—In this morning's *Advertiser*, under the heading "Subsidized Clubs for Aged Urged," the following appeared:—

Government subsidies for clubs for aged people in S.A. and other States were urged at a conference here today. Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Old People's Welfare Council of Australia, the President (Sir Giles Chippindall) said the fight against loneliness was one of the basic steps in the campaign to improve the lives of the aged. Aged people's clubs were numerous in Britain and more than 50 were now established in Victoria under a State Government subsidy, and 17 in N.S.W., including five in Sydney. Today's national council meeting decided to press for similar subsidies in all other States and it was probable that the Federal Government would be approached to help meet general administrative costs.

Earlier this session I asked the Treasurer if he would subsidize such a club at Port Pirie, and he replied that owing to financial stringency the Government was unable to assist. Unfortunately, however, none of us can avoid growing old, and, as these people are the pioneers of our country, I feel that we owe them plenty and that every effort should be made to relieve them of loneliness and help them enjoy the evening of their lives. In view of the action taken in Great Britain, New South Wales and Victoria, will the Treasurer reconsider this request?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It was not lack of sympathy with this request that prompted me to answer as I did; it is purely a matter of finance and the Government is putting all the money it has available, to the last penny, in the erection of houses which it believes come before clubs. The Government used over £300,000 recently in providing homes for old folk at low rentals, which it believes is an infinitely better plan than providing a club for old people who may not have a home.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. JENKINS—Since the Commonwealth Government ceased providing money for land settlement there is a feeling abroad that land settlement for ex-servicemen has been discontinued altogether. However, the Land Settlement Committee receives reports each week of single-unit farms allocated to ex-servicemen, and I think it would be useful if the Minister of Lands would provide information on the amount expended on land settlement during the last 12 months, the number of men settled, and the total sum expended.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I shall be happy to provide those figures.

Mr. BYWATERS—Can the Minister of Lands say whether applications are still being received for soldier settlement in relation to single units, as was mentioned today?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Unfortunately no more applications for single units are being accepted. The reference made today was regarding applications which were received before the closing date and are now being completed.

YEARLY COST OF MAINTAINING PRISONERS.

Mr. FRED WALSH—The report of the Gaols and Prisons Department tabled on Tuesday records that the average yearly cost per prisoner in the year just ended was £501 compared with £455 in 1957-58. Can the Premier, representing the Chief Secretary, indicate the main contributing factor in this seemingly large increase in the average yearly cost per prisoner?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Gaols and Prisons Department has recently undertaken much additional rehabilitation work for prisoners, and without giving precise figures I would think that partly accounts for the additional cost. Apart from that, additional amenities have been provided for good conduct prisoners, and I believe there has been a very much altered approach to the periods of sentences. Another matter that may contribute is the alteration in the basic pay of warders. I will obtain a report for the honourable member with the precise figures.

DEVELOPMENT AT NANGWARRY.

Mr. HARDING—An article in today's *Advertiser* refers to an announcement by the Premier on plans for the expansion of the State's softwood industry in the South-East. Has the Minister of Forests a progress report on the site and building of the new power station at Nangwarry, and can he say whether the improvements to the Nangwarry sawmill, such as suitable administrative offices, water supply and reticulation services for the sawmill and the houses, and the shopping facilities and sporting arenas are in keeping with the expansion of the industry in that area?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I have a report here dealing with some of those questions. Firstly, approval has recently been obtained for the building of new administrative offices at Nangwarry, and the drawing up of the specifications is in hand. Regarding water supply, it is expected that tenders for the new overhead tank will be called for in the next two or three weeks. Tenderers for the new shopping area at Nangwarry have been approved and advised accordingly, and at present there is one vacant shop for which it is expected tenders will be called. A tender has been accepted for the new power station.

BORDERTOWN WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. NANKIVELL—Has the Minister of Works a reply to a question I asked on October 27 about the cause of the delay in the Bordertown water reticulation system?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Engineer-in-Chief reports that the water scheme referred to consists of the laying of 7,440ft. of 4in. main and 6,370ft. of 3in. main at Bordertown, at a total estimated cost of £8,000. This work was approved in February, 1959, and the pipes have been delivered to Bordertown. It has not been possible to make a start on the laying of these mains up to the present time as a trenching machine has not been available for the work. All of the trenching machines for the district are in constant use, but it is anticipated that unless one of the existing machines breaks down, it will be possible to send a trenching machine to Bordertown during the first week of December. This should enable a start to be made on the laying of the mains before the end of the year and it is anticipated that they should be completed towards the end of February, 1960.

HILLS RAILWAY SERVICES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Has the Minister of Works an answer to the question I asked during the debate on the Loan Estimates regarding the conversion of the Bridgewater line to "red hens"?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My colleague, the Minister of Railways, indicates that the new timetable will be introduced on Sunday, November 15. An advertisement will appear in the daily press, giving details of the country services altered and advising passengers for metropolitan travel that sheet timetables will be exhibited at suburban stations before that date. The small card timetables (pocket size) are now coming off the press, and it is anticipated that each suburban station will have a supply before the alterations become effective. The south line suburban trains will be operated by diesel railcars ("red hens").

COUNTRY TEACHERS' ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. BYWATERS—As president of the Murray Bridge High School Council, I am approached almost every year by school teachers requiring accommodation. This position is not peculiar to Murray Bridge and some time ago a combined committee of school committees and councils met, approached the department, and suggested that some form of accommodation—either hostels or self-contained flats—be provided in large country towns for teachers. I understand that similar requests have been made by other districts and that the Minister is acquainted with the position. Can he indicate whether it will be possible soon for such accommodation to be provided for school teachers—particularly women teachers—in the large country towns?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—In recent years and in recent months—and almost in recent weeks—I have received several individual requests as well as requests from school committees and State-wide organizations for the construction of hostels and flats, particularly for women teachers, but it has not been possible to comply with the requests nor do I think it will be possible for a considerable period. We have such a tremendous school building programme that any money which is made available for hostels will have to be taken from the money in the pool for school buildings. I do not hold out any hope for hostels being erected in the near future.

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT ACCIDENT LIABILITY.

Mr. LOVEDAY—A constituent has informed me that on June 19, 1959, he left his car parked and when he returned he found that a Highways Department tanker had reversed

down a hill and crashed into the front of it. The driver admitted his fault and said that the tanker had got away from him. The car was unoccupied at the time and the man reported the matter to the police and the tanker driver said he would do so. Repairs to the car cost £12 and the man sent the account to the Highways Department. He received a letter from the department dated June 24 saying that he would be further advised. He received another letter on October 21 to the same effect. As it is now November, will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads take steps to have this matter expedited?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Yes.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. STOTT—Some time ago I asked whether Cabinet would consider taking steps to provide drought relief to farmers, if it became necessary. I understand a question has been asked in the Federal Parliament whether the Federal Government would assist the State Government by providing feed for sheep and other requirements to farmers suffering through the drought. Has the Premier communicated with the Federal Government about this matter; has the request been considered, or has he any further statement to make about the provision of drought relief?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The question I took up with the Prime Minister primarily was whether sufficient wheat could be made available to meet South Australia's requirements because of the severe drought in our wheat lands. I received a reply from the Prime Minister this morning stating that the request had been passed on to the Wheat Board. I am not clear about the implications of one paragraph of his reply, but it appeared to me that we would have to pay additional amounts for wheat supplied to us. I am not sure whether that was the precise meaning of the letter and I am having it studied and also ascertaining whether it would be proper for additional charges to be made to this State. Until quite recently—and well after it was realized that this would be a dry season—wheat has been exported from the Adelaide division and it seems rather anomalous that we should export wheat and sell it overseas at about 13s. 2d. a bushel and then have to pay 14s. 8d. or 14s. 10d—the home consumption price—to bring wheat into the Adelaide division. I am having that aspect examined at present.

CLAPHAM AND UNLEY SCHOOLS.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—In the Loan Estimates for this year provision was made for the erection of a new primary school at Clapham. Can the Minister of Education say when the school is likely to be commenced and, also, can he indicate the progress being made with the new Unley high school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—My colleague, the Minister of Works, advises that tenders for the erection of the new Clapham primary school will close on December 16 and will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration. If a satisfactory tender is received a contract will be let and construction will commence as soon as possible in the new year. The honourable member is aware that the new Unley high school is now nearing completion, and the Architect-in-Chief expects that it will be ready for occupation at the beginning of 1960.

STEM RUST IN WHEAT.

Mr. HALL—Has the Minister any information regarding the matter of new strains of rust coming to South Australia and affecting our wheat crops?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The honourable member asked a question about our varieties of wheat being resistant to these new strains of rust. I have a report on that matter but it is too long to read in full. In brief, it points out that our best known wheat varieties are resistant to only one of the strains of stem rust, that there are two other strains to which they are not resistant, and that because of this new varieties of wheat are needed. The Roseworthy College breeding programme has been adjusted to meet the situation. In view of the length of the statement I ask leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without its being read.

Leave granted.

Resistance of Wheat Varieties to Stem Rust.

The variety Gabo and the backcrossed varieties like Dirk 48 and Insignia 49 are resistant to the strain of stem rust designated 21-1. This was the prevalent strain of the disease occurring in South Australia in the period immediately prior to the season 1958-59. A marked change in the relative frequency of rust strains was observed during 1958-59. In the previous season 21-1 was the most common strain in southern New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. The strain 21-2 was the prevalent one in northern New South Wales and Queensland. In 1958-59, however, 21-2 was found to be the most common stem rust strain in all States except Western Australia.

Several varieties are resistant to this new strain but none of them are grown widely

in this State at the present time. Warigo, Glenwari and Eureka are old varieties possessing resistance. Spica, Festival, and the new Western Australian variety Moora are also resistant. There may be some tendency for these varieties to be grown more widely, but as serious rust attacks are not common in this State, it is unlikely that many farmers would drop a susceptible variety in favour of a resistant one which is lower yielding under rust-free conditions. Of the varieties mentioned above, Spica and Moora have not been fully tested in this State. The others do not compare well in yielding ability with Gabo, Insignia 49 and Dirk 48.

It is apparent, therefore, that new varieties are needed of high yielding ability and with resistance to the newer strain of stem rust. Another strain, 34-2, has also been recorded in South Australia, and resistance to this and other strains which are present in eastern States would also be desirable.

The breeding programme at Roseworthy College has been adjusted in the light of the present situation. Advanced hybrids will be tested for resistance to the new rust strains and resistant varieties have been used as parents with the specific aim of incorporating rust resistance.

Variety trials being conducted by the Department of Agriculture in many country centres will determine whether rust resistant varieties bred in other States are sufficiently high yielding and well suited to our conditions to be recommended for sowing by farmers in South Australia.

TRANSPORT CONTROL BOARD LEVY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier obtained any further information about the charge imposed by the Transport Control Board on tourists travelling by bus to the Flinders Ranges?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the charge on tourists to the Flinders Ranges were lifted it would be tantamount to allowing open competition with the two licensed services. The major one of these has informed the board that it is quite satisfied with the existing licence and would oppose any change in board policy, as it has spent a considerable sum of money in other States advertising the tourist attractions of the Flinders Ranges. Regarding the inability of the railways to serve the tourists, the board points out that there is an excellent railway service from Adelaide to both Port Pirie and Port Augusta, either of which points would be admirably suited for commencement of road tours to the Flinders Ranges. The board points out that perhaps it might be criticized for allowing duplication of railway for almost 500 miles and therefore cannot see that the charging of the present fee is unreasonable.

RAIL STANDARDIZATION.

Mr. STOTT—I should like some further information regarding the deadlock or the misunderstanding that exists between the Commonwealth and State Governments regarding the construction of a railway line, which matter the Premier said he was thinking of taking to the High Court. Can he say whether the total figures of South Australian requirements have been worked out and whether they are in the possession of the Commonwealth authorities? Is it true that the Commonwealth Government would have considered constructing the railway if the South Australian Government had not refused to co-operate at the time the Albury-Melbourne line was under discussion?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think it would be proper to say that the basic difference between the Commonwealth and State Governments in this matter is probably the question of the branch lines in the Peterborough division. I believe, although I am not sure, that the Commonwealth Government may be prepared to carry out the agreement to standardize the main line from Port Pirie to Broken Hill. Of course, the unification agreement was to cover the standardization of all South Australian lines. If we agreed to the suggestion contained in Mr. Hannaberry's report and had the 3 feet 6 inches gauge on the Gladstone to Wilmington line, and the same gauge on the line from Peterborough to Quorn, we would have in our railway system, not two gauges, which would be bad enough, but three, and our Railways Commissioner has said that it would be impossible to operate the system at all efficiently. That appears to me to be the big problem between the Commonwealth and State Governments at present. In my opinion the Commonwealth wants to depart from the standardization agreement, pick out one line in which it has an interest, and treat it in isolation apart from other lines.

Mr. Stott—In your opinion is that a departure from the original agreement?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is a complete departure. The original agreement covered the standardization of all lines in South Australia except those in the Eyre Peninsula division, which is separate from the mainland divisions. That is the real point at issue at present. I can realize Mr. Fargher's anxiety in this matter. The more recent proposals of the Commonwealth Government involve us not only in what I have mentioned, but also in an additional rail track from Terowie to Peterborough, which would mean

a duplication of gauges on the one line. Members must realize that it presents a difficult problem to the Commissioner in the efficient working of the railways.

Mr. O'Halloran—There would be three different gauges in the Peterborough yard.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. and we should have two different lines completely isolated from any connection with servicing depots, which would present an impossible situation. However, ever since the agreement was signed the South Australian Government has been anxious to proceed and to carry it out. It does not now desire to depart from it, but is anxious to continue with this agreement that was consented to by both parties.

TARPEENA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. HARDING—Will the Premier obtain a progress report from the Electricity Trust regarding the extension of electricity supplies from Mount Gambier to Tarpeena, where difficulties are being experienced, especially at the hotel, which has difficulty in keeping up with the demand for electricity?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier any information about the cost of maintaining patients in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have a report from the Director-General of Medical Services that at present it is almost impossible to segregate the costs because so many are foundation costs as against treatment costs being undertaken by the same people. It will not be possible to get accurate costs of the treatment of patients until the hospital is fully occupied and fully established. The Director-General doubts whether it is advisable to go to considerable expense merely to produce figures of doubtful accuracy. I will let the honourable member have the report in due course.

KINGSCOTE HARBOUR ACCOMMODATION.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the final report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence, on Kingscote Harbour Accommodation.

Ordered that report be printed.

DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

PASTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

HIDE, SKIN, AND WOOL DEALERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

SOUTH-EASTERN DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee's report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

THE AUSTRALIAN MINERAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORIES BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 4. Page 1417.)

Mrs. STEELE (Burnside)—This is a Bill that I think must capture the imagination of every member, indicating as it does the forward-looking of those who are directing and developing the mineral resources of this State. This is shown by the fact that mineral production has increased tenfold in the past 12 years from £2,600,000 to £25,000,000 per annum. I was privileged recently to be taken over the research laboratories at Parkside, in my own electorate, and the Metallurgy, Chemical Engineering and Engineering Workshops at Thebarton, by the Director of Mines in company with an American geophysicist attached to the Innamincka project. This gentleman was obviously impressed by the projects he saw being developed at these two places and expressed the view that they were in his opinion fulfilling a unique purpose.

I think it may be interesting to trace the steps that led to the establishment of these integrated services. Existence of uranium at Radium Hill has been known for at least 50 years, but it was worked in a very small way. It was financially unsuccessful because the extraction of uranium from the ore was both extremely difficult and expensive. Interest in the field waned until 1944, when the United Kingdom Government asked the Commonwealth Government if it would undertake to investigate the possibilities of uranium production from Australian ore deposits. Sampling of the old mine workings, collecting of bulk samples of ore and concentrate for treatment tests, and geological and geophysical surveys

revealed that Radium Hill had promising possibilities. More important, it was obvious that successful development depended on an efficient and economical process for the extraction of uranium from the complex and unusual ore. These promising results largely influenced the South Australian Government to continue its programme of uranium research and development. Work undertaken up to 1951 indicated that the lodes under review were comparable with many of those being exploited in other parts of the world. Whilst this field work was proceeding, the problem of developing new methods of extracting the uranium from the ore was being investigated by the Mines Department and by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. With these processes finally accepted, a pilot plant to check the chemical extraction process was established at Thebarton.

In addition to serving the requirements of Radium Hill, these pilot plants and research facilities were able later to assist in the planning of the Rum Jungle treatment plant for the Zinc Corporation Limited. Thus began the stockpiling of information on various difficulties associated with uranium treatment problems, facilities which the Government placed at the disposal of the mining industry and industries associated with it. That the reputation of these services stands very high in the estimation of those associated with the mining industry, not only throughout the Commonwealth but overseas as well, is indicated by the companies for which work has been undertaken in recent years. These include a Philippines company (the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.), the Eastern Mining and Metals Co. of Malaya, and Brunswick Mining and Smelting Corporation of Canada, as well, of course, as many private industries throughout Australia. For instance, the Mary Kathleen uranium mine presented peculiar difficulties, and these were resolved by an entirely new process, which was then operated successfully on a pilot scale. These investigations were then applied to the design and specification of the large plant now in operation at Mary Kathleen. A similar pilot plant for the separation of ilmenite at Capel in Western Australia was built and operated successfully at Thebarton, after which a mill built to the specifications of the Research and Development Branch was constructed. The extraction of sulphur for the manufacture of sulphuric acid from the Nairne Pyrites deposit was yet another process which was developed to pilot plant operation which resulted in the large scale operation at Nairne being established.

To undertake similar research in the future is the aim of the newly constituted Australian Mineral Development Laboratories which, as the Premier has already told the House, will consist of two members to be appointed on the nomination of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, two to be appointed on the nomination of the Minister of Mines, and three to be appointed on the nomination of the Australian Mineral Industries Research Association. I have very little doubt that the work undertaken will bring further credit to the laboratories and the highly qualified officers who serve those interests. There are, however, some aspects regarding the status of officers employed by the Research and Development Branch of the Mines Department which are causing some concern to members of the Public Service Association in South Australia, and which I ask the Premier if he could perhaps clarify.

I have very little doubt that he can resolve the doubts about which the Public Service Association seems to be worried. Although the Bill provides that the officers to be taken over under the terms of the new arrangement will retain their rights in respect of sick leave, long service leave and superannuation, it is felt that it should also specify the retention of their rights regarding recreation leave. Another point which has been raised is whether members of the laboratory staff who will be granted leave of absence during the initial trial period of five years and who, as they are still public servants, can apply for vacancies in the Public Service, will also have their right of appeal guaranteed. Again regarding seniority of salary, can this doubt be resolved by the same procedure as was followed in determining these matters for officers who were transferred to the Radium Hill undertaking and elsewhere, namely, the Uranium Mining Act, which provides that the Public Service Board shall determine the salaries under the Public Service Act?

Yet another matter raised is that the Government should guarantee that those who are on an incremental scale in a range of salary will receive the annual increments until they reach the maximum, as in fact they would do if they had continued in the Public Service. No mention is made of living wage adjustments but I presume it can be understood that these apply where they occur. Perhaps the Premier

could clear up this point too. If the services of any member now employed by the Research and Development branch of the department is no longer required, will the Government undertake to place him in employment elsewhere in the Public Service? Finally, regarding the officers holding cadetships and scholarships, will these officers be able to continue their courses and obtain study leave to enable them to complete the degree or diploma requirements, and will those members of the staff who are under bond be at no disadvantage regarding forfeiture under the new arrangement?

To me, such expansion from a purely State undertaking to one of Australia-wide importance is exciting and indicates a broad vision which could well be emulated by other Australian States in other directions. Besides the wide national vision which it shows, it is a wise move because, having developed the service to the high standard which it attained in developing the State's mineral resources, the laboratories could not be economically maintained at full capacity unless greater use was made of the facilities and equipment provided by them. These in many instances are the best and the only ones of their kind in the Commonwealth, and they have been built up over the developmental years. To put these services at the disposal of the mining industry throughout Australia, thus sharing the expense of maintenance and further development with both the Commonwealth Government and the new company, is a sound financial proposition. That the State should possess an establishment which can carry out a project for the physical and chemical examination of raw materials through research in the laboratory to evaluation of pilot plant processes should be a matter of pride for us all. I support the Bill.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa)—I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. Our economy generally is gaining greatly from our mineral resources. It is very pleasing to note that the gross value of mineral production in South Australia has grown from £3,224,000 in 1944 to £8,500,000 in 1954, and that last year it was worth about £25,000,000, excluding uranium. Those figures indicate that our mineral resources are being developed in a remarkable way. The current value to the economy is emphasized when taken in relation to the gross earnings of our primary economy generally. These total earnings in 1956-57 were £183,500,000. Of that total I note that agriculture accounted for £65,000,000, the pastoral industry £69,000,000, dairying £14,500,000, the poultry industry £3,700,000, mining £24,500,000, and other primary interests £6,700,000.

Minerals therefore return about 13.5 per cent of our gross return from the soil in some way or another. The annual value of factory production in recent years has been £126,700,000, which brings the total gross income from primary and secondary interests to £310,200,000. Of this total income, eight per cent is derived from our mineral resources. I have stressed these figures so that due recognition of the importance of our mineral assets may be given and to indicate the steep increase in the production of mineral wealth over the past 10 years. This increase has direct relation to the activities of the Mines Department, and particularly the Research and Development Laboratories at Parkside and Thebarton. A continuation of the activities of these laboratories is essential for further development of our mineral resources.

I recall very clearly an inspection I made with a Parliamentary party to these laboratories about two years ago, and how greatly impressed I was then to note what was being done by their very keen and skilled staff with machines which rather amazed me in their modernity. One could sense efficiency, drive and endeavour to find out as much as possible in the methods of handling minerals, particularly newer discoveries in our mineral resources. The cost of the laboratories at £225,000 a year has reached the stage where it is a burden on the State's finances, and with the arrangement which this Bill brings about with the Commonwealth and private interests the burden will be reduced to the State by £90,000. That is a very good thing. The Commonwealth will benefit from the activities of the laboratories, and the individual companies which have had access to the laboratories for assistance are now taking their part in the liability of running the organization. Collectively the State, the Commonwealth and the mineral industries will have a set-up from which each participating party will receive benefit, without an undue financial burden being placed on this State alone.

The achievements of these laboratories are very real when one considers that through them we had the ability to use our uranium resources at Radium Hill. The concentrates at Radium Hill had problems peculiar to the type of material in which they were found; it needed

local research to evolve some system of handling these concentrates, and these laboratories undertook to find how best the concentrates could be processed. The efforts of the chemists have been crowned with success, and have led to the finding that sulphuric acid was a major ingredient in the process of handling davidite, the raw material from which uranium is taken. The need for sulphuric acid in large quantities—together with the requirements of superphosphate—no doubt led to the investigation of the Nairne pyrites deposits with a view to the production of acid from those deposits, and the acid so produced has enabled the Port Pirie plant to be established and conducted efficiently, and to extract uranium from the ores with the process as found by these laboratories.

We therefore know that through the activities of these laboratories we have an economic and efficient use of a very important mineral. Through the processing of the mineral a second industry has been created, namely the pyrites industry at Nairne, so there is a cumulative effect all emanating from the activities of this very excellent organization—the Mines Department Research and Development laboratories. I do not for one moment question the expenditure of moneys herein noted when I realize the firm advances made in our mineral production generally in the last 10 or 15 years. The increase in our production and the value thereof generally is in no small measure attributable to the activities of these laboratories, and our money has been well spent. I commend the Government for its activities and for its success in reaching the stage of presenting a Bill to the House providing for partners in this venture. I feel that what has been achieved in the past will be achieved in greater measure in the future, to the good of our mining and mineral industries generally and I support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Commencement."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—South Australia is required to provide £135,000 annually for each of the next five years and the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Mineral Industries Research Association Limited £45,000 each annually. The fact that the Act will not be proclaimed until the Governor is satisfied that the necessary financial arrangements have been completed by the other two parties to the agreement should be sufficient protection, but I would like the Treasurer's assurance before agreeing to the clause.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The Act will not be proclaimed until the necessary financial arrangements have been made. Actually I am satisfied now that the arrangements have been made and that the money will be paid. We cannot appropriate other people's money, but I am assured that both parties will meet their obligations. They have already appointed their directors and we shall benefit greatly from the fact that the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization is actively associated with the undertaking, as well as many of the leading mining companies.

Clause passed.

Clauses 3 to 7 passed.

Clause 8—"Members of Council."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—As South Australia is finding the bulk of the money required to maintain this organization it seems to me that South Australia is not adequately represented on the council. We must find £135,000 annually but have only two representatives on the council, whereas the other two parties, who find £90,000 annually between them, have five representatives. Can the Treasurer explain this?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We shall experience no difficulty in having our views expressed by two representatives—the Director of Mines and the Under Treasurer. Two Commonwealth authorities are primarily interested in the activity—the C.S.I.R.O. and the Department of Development—and each will have a representative. Members will realize that there are several types of mining activity and we do not think it unreasonable for the three principal groups to each have a representative. The council has been working under a provisional arrangement pending the passing of this legislation and it has done so effectively. There has been no conflict between members, who are all anxious to ensure that the laboratories are efficient and properly maintained. We have no grounds for worry about South Australia being outvoted because the interests of all parties are the same.

Clause passed.

Clauses 9 to 16 passed.

Clause 17—"Staff of the Organization."

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

In subclause (4), after the word "pay" where first appearing, to insert "to the Organization for payment."

This is a small drafting amendment which clarifies the position.

Amendment carried.

Mrs. STEELE—Can the Treasurer clarify the points I raised earlier regarding the rights of officers to recreation leave, the right of appeal in respect of vacancies in the Public Service, security of salaries, living wage adjustments, and the question of cadetships and scholarships and officers under bond? If officers are not taken over by this new organization will they be found positions in the Public Service?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We have sought to protect officers of the Public Service if they transfer to this organization. If the council decides that the work they perform should carry a lesser salary the Government will supplement it to their present rate of pay. I believe that our rates of pay are higher than those paid by the C.S.I.R.O. and other laboratories and that we shall have to supplement these salaries. They are protected in every way.

Clause as amended passed.

Clause 18—"Banking."

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved:—

In subclause (1) to delete all the words after "advances."

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (19 to 23) and title passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 28. Page 1297.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill makes one alteration to the principle in the Act. It does not alter the basis of contributions by members of the police force, and does not in any way affect the benefits provided under the Act, but it does alter the basis on which Government contributions to the fund are made. It means the adoption of an important new principle in connection with the fund, although it has obtained with the South Australian Superannuation Fund since 1927. Formerly the Government paid into the Police Pensions Fund an amount certified by the actuary as being sufficient, together with contributions by members of the force, to meet pension liabilities from time to time. It meant that the fund accumulated annually to a large extent. For the year ended June 30, 1959, the main items of income were subscriptions (amounts by contributors) £65,000, subsidy from the State Treasury £162,000, and interest £52,000, making a total of £279,000. Pension payments for the year were:—To police officers £89,000; to dependants £30,000; making a total of £119,000. Cash payments to officers on retirement totalled £27,000 and to widows of officers £2,000, making £29,000 in all. The total of the charge on the fund for the year was £148,000, as against an income of £279,000. This sort of thing has gone on to a greater or lesser extent ever since the fund was established, and the amount now in hand is £1,303,000.

As a layman I find it difficult to follow the actuaries in devising the amounts payable. I know the principle insisted upon, but I do not know whether it was necessary to use the principle in a fund of this nature. It meant that the liability of the Government would become greater and greater and the amount in credit would increase proportionately. I have shown that contributions increased at a greater rate than payments from the fund. The effect of the amendment is that the Government, instead of having to contribute £162,000, as it did last year, would on the actuarial suggestion for this year contribute £90,000. That would be a large saving to the Government on the basis of last year's contributions. As time goes on there will be a further saving, but probably not to such a great extent, until eventually the Government may have to considerably increase its contributions to meet pensions accruing to members of the force who are now joining at early ages, and to provide for pensions for the increased number of persons who will join the force as our population grows. I would like to see the principle contained in this Bill adopted for the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund. I see no reason why it should not be. There is less justification for changing the principle in the Police Pensions Fund than for changing it in the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund. Such a change would give a greater measure of justice to members and their dependants without increasing the cost to the Government or to members. I support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 passed.

Clause 6—"Contributions by Government."

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture)—On behalf of the Treasurer I move:—

In proposed new section 11, line 1, after "shall" to insert "out of moneys to be provided by Parliament."

This will make clear the origin of the moneys needed.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I take it that this will not be an appropriation and that the necessary moneys will be provided by Parliament each year.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I am advised that the purpose of the amendment is to make it clear that the moneys will be provided by Parliament and that an item will appear in the Estimates each year.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with an amendment.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

(Second reading debate adjourned on October 28. Page 1305).

Bill read a second time.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I move—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the Whole House that it has power to consider new clauses to repeal section 8 and sections 34 to 42 of the principal Act.

I realize that I must keep strictly to the terms of the instruction, and I shall endeavour to do so in the knowledge that you, Mr. Speaker, will keep me on the path if I begin to wander therefrom. May I first explain the purport of section 8 and, having done that and having shown the facts, show the purport of the other sections that I hope will in due course be repealed. The marginal note to section 8 is "Power to obtain information," and subsection (1) provides:—

For purposes of this Act an authorized officer may require any person—

(*a*) to furnish him with any information which he requires; or

(*b*) to answer any question put to him; or

(*c*) to produce at a time and place indicated by the authorized officer any books, papers and documents (including balance sheets and accounts), relating to any goods or services, whether declared or not, or to any land or to any other matter arising under this Act.

The powers given under that subsection are just about as sweeping as any powers that could be given to anyone; it empowers the Prices Commissioner to ask for information from any person about any matter. Subsection (2) provides:—

The authorized officer may require the information to be given, or the question to be answered on oath or affirmation, and either orally or in writing, and for that purpose may administer an oath or affirmation.

In other words, an authorized officer under this Act may require the information to be given either on oath or otherwise, just as he himself desires. Subsection (3) provides:—

The authorized officer may, by notice in writing, require the information to be given, or the question to be answered, in writing and at the place specified in the notice.

In other words, he can call any person to any place he likes and require him to answer the question there, either orally or in writing. Subsection (4) makes it an offence not to comply with any of the requirements that may have been put to him in the preceding subsections. Perhaps for the sake of completeness I should refer to subsection (5), which has obviously been put in as a sort of sop; it provides:—

A person shall not be obliged to answer orally any question unless he has first been informed by the officer asking the question that he is obliged to answer by virtue of this Act.

That really means very little. The purport of the section is to give to the Prices Commissioner or to any authorized officer under this Act the most sweeping powers that can possibly be imagined to extract from any person any information that the Commissioner or the authorized officer may require and under any circumstances. That is the power that is given by this Parliament annually to the Prices Commissioner.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: the honourable member has moved for an instruction to the Committee to discuss certain matters. Is he in order in discussing these matters before the instruction is given?

The SPEAKER—I think he is in order in stating his reasons for asking for this instruction, and he can refer to the particular section that he seeks to have repealed—that is, section 8 of the Prices Act—as a guide to the House on whether it should grant the instruction he seeks.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—On a point of order, I seek your further ruling, Mr. Speaker. It is one thing to refer to what he wants to do, but another to debate what he wants to do. If that is allowed the whole of the matter can be debated before the House has agreed to hear him.

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member must be allowed a certain amount of

latitude in this because I think the House is entitled to know what he seeks an instruction for. I will allow him to refer to section 8 and to deal, I might say, briefly with it without debating it in full.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I thank you for your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I again give the assurance I gave at the beginning of my remarks that I shall confine myself strictly to the terms of the instruction. All I have done is to go through the section and point out what it means. I will keep strictly to section 8 and give the reasons why I think I should be granted this instruction, and I will do likewise with the other sections mentioned in the motion. This section is not vital to the whole working of the Act. I must now reluctantly concede that by passing the second reading the House has endorsed the principle of price control in this State for another 12 months, but I point out that under the provisions of section 9, as supplemented by section 12, the Prices Commissioner has, I suggest, ample power to inquire into any matter.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I must again ask for your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member is debating the question, not explaining to the House what he is seeking to do. If we allow a debate on a motion for an instruction we have a debate on a matter not before the House.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is out of order in referring to other sections.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I have finished that now, Sir.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member not to do that, but to confine his remarks strictly to the sections in respect of which he is seeking an instruction.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—May I ask whether I am now permitted to give the reasons why I seek this instruction?

The SPEAKER—Yes.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Thank you, Sir. I suggest that section 8 is absolutely contrary to the general rule of the criminal law in this State with regard to the administering of questions to persons. The general rule of the criminal law is that there must be no form of third degree to get a man to incriminate himself; there must not be any cross-examination or inducement in his making a statement. Many people are unaware that they do not have to answer questions other than specific questions laid down in our law, such as questions about drivers of motor vehicles, etc. That is a fair statement of the general law, and I think the Opposition at least will acknowledge that.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It has nothing to do with the instruction. The honourable member is now debating the general question.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am giving the reasons why I am asking for the instruction.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member can give his reasons, but I ask him not to debate the matter. That is a matter for the Committee to consider.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—That is substantially why I ask for the instruction on this section. The present section gives the most sweeping and complete power to the Prices Commissioner, is entirely contrary to the general tenor of our law, and is unnecessary to the administration of the Prices Act. The other sections mentioned in my instruction—sections 34 to 42—are under the heading "Land transactions." I propose only to refer briefly to their purport. When a Prices Bill was first introduced in 1948 the Premier, who was in charge of the Bill, said:—

I turn now to the provisions dealing with the control of prices of land. These provisions, as I mentioned before, are based on the Economic Organization regulations of the Commonwealth and follow the same general principles, but do not cover so wide a field. The Government does not propose in this Bill to control the prices of factories, shops, offices, and warehouses, nor of licensed premises, nor building blocks exceeding an area of one acre. The regulations provided for the control of all leases of country land for however short a period.

The SPEAKER—Is this dealing with the sections?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Yes. The Premier continued:—

The basic principle of the control of land transactions will be found in clause 34. This clause says that the control extends to purchases, options to purchase, the granting of leases, the transfer or assignment of leases, and other acquisitions of land.

In other words, these sections give the most complete power to the Government by virtue of the Act itself, not by orders or proclamations under the Act, to control the sale and other transactions dealing with land.

Mr. Stott—You are explaining it, not debating it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am explaining the purport of these particular sections. I could not choose better words to explain them than the words of the Premier himself when he first introduced it; I am sure even the Premier will acknowledge that.

Mr. O'Halloran—Are you trying to get us to vote against your instruction?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I seem to be subject to all sorts of discouragement from other parts of the House. As I said, that is the most sweeping control of land transactions under the Act. Having said that, I need say no more than this: those sections still remain in the Act, and they could, in fact, be restored to operation at any time. On September 22, 1949, the Premier, as Prices Minister, issued a proclamation suspending the operation of those sections, and, in fact, they have not been in operation for more than 10 years. However, they still remain upon the Statute Book, and they could, by Executive act of any Government, be restored to full force in this State. I believe it is entirely undesirable that that should be so. I believe that these sections are a dead letter, and that they should be cut out.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is clearly debating the question; he is not explaining what his instruction is at all.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member to be succinct and confine his remarks to the actual sections by way of explanation, setting out the reasons why he wants an instruction.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Very well, Sir. If it will relieve the House, I can say that I have now stated all the reasons. Briefly, to sum up the reasons: these sections refer to land transactions; they have been a dead letter for 10 years, and I believe it is undesirable that they should stay on the Statute Book. I therefore ask the House to grant the instruction which I seek both on section 8 and on sections 34 to 42.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—I want to explain my attitude on the vote I intend to give on this motion. It has been my practice ever since I have been here never to refuse a member the right to move for an instruction to a Committee to discuss a clause. I have always held that at least the House should be given the right to hear the explanation, and that the proper time should be when the House has agreed that the instruction should be given. I am firmly of the opinion that an abuse of privilege has been allowed today.

The SPEAKER—Order! I think the honourable member is reflecting on the Chair.

Mr. RICHES—Well, Mr. Speaker, I feel that a procedure has been allowed which has not been allowed before, and which is contrary to the practice we have observed over the years. The explanation has already been given, and I feel that if I vote now for the instruction to be given it is tantamount to supporting the argument that has been adduced, and I cannot possibly do that. I oppose the granting of the instruction.

Motion negatived.

Bill taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 29. Page 1313.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I support the Bill, which gives the trustees of the Savings Bank the legal power to do, in relation to the officers of the bank, what has been done by the directors of other banking institutions in South Australia for some years, namely, to contribute to medical benefits schemes. It is a worthy objective. The amount to be provided under the scheme contemplated by the trustees is very limited, and I think in some cases is something less generous than that provided by the private banks. Nevertheless, it will be of great assistance, particularly to those officers of the bank who unfortunately become subject to serious illness from time to time. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1343.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I support the Bill and do not intend to address the House at length upon it. It is consequential upon an amendment to a Bill which was passed in this House last year and which I introduced to provide for Saturday closing of banks in this State. At that time the Premier moved an amendment which provided that the Bill should not come into force until arrangements had been made for the keeping open of trading banks in this State until 5 o'clock on Friday afternoons.

Negotiations since that time have shown that there has been some objection from some trading banks that are afraid of the situation that will arise in this State, consequent upon Saturday morning closing, with the Savings Bank agencies remaining open in South Australia. It is felt that that situation might

be used as a precedent for legislation in other States. Although an undertaking has been given by the Commonwealth Bank that it does not intend to use a situation in South Australia as any precedent, nevertheless there has been no action yet by the trading banks to keep open on Friday afternoons, although it appears that there is no great objection upon their part to doing so.

The proposal now is that the term under the Act which provides that the condition for the proclamation shall be the keeping open of trading banks shall be altered to the keeping open of savings banks. It is well known that the Savings Bank of South Australia is prepared to comply with the wish of the Government as expressed in the passing of the Act last year. It is well known, too, that the Commonwealth Bank, in consequence of an exhaustive report prepared for the director of the bank by a committee which he set up, which inquired in every State and to which I made certain submissions when it was here, favours Saturday morning closing. Although that report has not been made public it is well known that the Commonwealth Bank is satisfied that the needs of the public will be met, and all that is necessary is some reorientation of the banking services. That reorientation has been going on in South Australia in anticipation of Saturday morning closing, and it is clear that it will be completed very shortly.

In these circumstances the savings banks operating in South Australia—the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the South Australian Savings Bank—are almost certain to close on Saturday morning upon this legislation being passed, and to arrange to stay open on Fridays. The only other savings bank now in operation in South Australia is the bank operated by the Australian and New Zealand Bank Limited, which at the moment is operating only in the existing bank premises, so far as I am aware, and which has not an extensive business. Of course, when the provisions are made by the other savings banks it will be likely to fall into line. In those circumstances it is likely that the proclamation will not be far distant upon the passing of the legislation now before the House, and the Saturday morning closing, first mooted in this House in a Bill which I introduced in 1957, will at last come to pass.

May I say, in all fairness to the Premier, that I appreciate his efforts in this matter and his honouring of the intention which he stated to the House at the time he moved his amendment to my Bill last year. It appears that Saturday morning closing for bank officers in South Australia is near at hand and that they will have the facilities that are granted to many other workers in this State.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1346.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I agree with the opening remarks of the Premier in introducing this Bill when he said:—

> 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 vividly recall that the speed limit provisions included in last year's Bill received much support, but when certain Government members voiced their disapproval of these proposals the Bill was relegated to what is called, in Parliamentary parlance, "Annie's room." The Premier decided, when introducing this Bill, that he would leave this contentious subject out of the proposed legislation. Of course, we will probably have to debate it later. It seems to me, after examining this Bill, that the sooner the consolidation of our Road Traffic legislation is accomplished the better, because it is difficult to follow the amendments in this Bill when one has to wade through the present Act. In the limited time at my disposal I have done my best to understand the various proposals, but I speak subject to any errors of omission or commission which may be due to my own lack of knowledge to understand road traffic laws and my lack of time to obtain a considered opinion from some person who does. I suggest that few people really understand the fundamental principles that should be expressed in such legislation. However, I am prepared to admit that the State Traffic Committee, the Parliamentary Draftsman, the former Parliamentary Draftsman, or whoever

advised the Government on this legislation has overcome some of the difficulties that exist in the Act.

Clause 3 confers a discretion on a court which may be obliged to cancel a driver's licence because of the severity of a traffic offence. The court is enabled to postpone the cancellation for a brief period to assist a man who, full of hope, has driven to the court not anticipating that his licence would be cancelled, who receives the severe shock of a cancellation, and who has no possibility of driving himself home again. This will not weaken the law and it will overcome what could be a real hardship, particularly in some country areas. Clauses 4 and 5 combine the offences of unlawfully using and unlawfully interfering with motor vehicles. There is no difference between the two offences and, as was pointed out by the Premier, the consequences to the unfortunate owner of a vehicle may be more serious in the case of unlawful interfering than in the case of unlawful using. With the amalgamation of the two offences the same penalty and the same rate of compensation are provided. However, I am not happy with the provision in clause 4 that enables a complaint for an offence against this section to be laid at any time not later than two years after the commission of the offence. I cannot understand the need for this long delay.

Mr. Millhouse—Up to two years.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. It is obvious that, the longer the period away from the alleged offence, the more difficult will become the defence against that charge.

Mr. Hambour—They won't always chase the offender to another State: that is the unfortunate part.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not know that they won't. I am not opposing the provision of a lengthy period, but I suggest that two years is too long.

Mr. Millhouse—Under the Criminal Law there is no time limit at all.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I hope we are not going to regard the Road Traffic Act as an ancillary of the criminal law.

Mr. Millhouse—Surely this is tantamount to a criminal offence.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It may be, but I believe the period is too long. While I am on the side of law and order I am also on the side of justice and my conception of justice is that a defendant should have reasonable opportunity of producing evidence either in complete defence of his offence, or in mitigation of it, and the longer the period between the commission of the alleged offence and his being brought to court, the more difficult the provision of that defence becomes. In Committee I will move to reduce the period to 12 months, which I think is a reasonable period. Clause 6 provides for disqualification up to 12 months in addition to a monetary penalty for drivers who drive vehicles which contravene the provisions relating to the overloading of vehicles. I support this wise provision.

Mr. Hambour—Often it is the employer's fault and the employee will suffer. That is a consideration.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It is a consideration, but often the employee is a willing accessory and if the employee knows that one consequence of facilitating the offence will be the loss of his licence he will not be such a willing accomplice of his employer. Clause 7 deals with the difficulty of estimating the weight of loads. This has been brought forcibly to our notice as the result of a recent serious happening at one of our river punts—a happening that might have been attended with serious consequences, but which, fortunately, was not attended with any loss of life although there was considerable damage and loss of property. This provision facilitates the estimating of weights of loads on vehicles and it authorizes persons in charge of ferries to become inspectors under the Act. This is necessary because many of our river punts are miles from a weighbridge or from means of testing the weight of a vehicle. A puntmaster will have power to force drivers to remove tarpaulins so that he can examine a vehicle's load and this is a step in the right direction.

Clause 10 defines "intersection" and "junction." This is similar to legislation in most States, the only exception being in Western Australia. These seem to be more simple definitions than those in the present Act and I recommend their acceptance. Clause 11 vests control of traffic light signals in the Highways Commissioner with the right of appeal to the Minister. The power to establish traffic lights is taken away from local governing authorities and is vested in the Highways Commissioner. This is no reflection on local governing authorities and the provision is necessary in order to bring about uniformity. If there is anything in the Road Traffic Act in respect of which we should have uniform conditions, it is surely the matter of

traffic signs and lights. This is a satisfactory proposal. If any council believes its application has been capriciously refused by the Highways Commissioner it has the right to appeal to the Minister. Clause 12 substitutes a new code of rules to be observed where traffic is controlled by lights. This is an important but complicated clause, although I think the meaning is reasonably clear. Should these things be in the Act or covered by regulation? I do not suggest that we consider this matter in relation to the Bill, but many machinery provisions could more easily be amended if covered by regulation.

Clause 14 deals with flags and signs at pedestrian crossings when put there by authorized persons. It mainly deals, I understand, with school crossings, or crossings established to protect children when crossing streets and roads on their way to and from school. The clause has my wholehearted support. We have had tragic occurrences in this State in recent years when school children have been killed and in many cases injured by thoughtless motorists. These accidents are most unfortunate for the parents of the children killed and for the children who suffer long and serious illness because of the accidents. Most motorists appreciate the need to observe the conditions associated with such signs, but a few selfish people still ignore them; consequently we have to pass stringent laws in order that they may be punished severely for breaking the law. In this way we can educate them to observe the rules. Some rules set out in the clause are already in the Act. Those set out in subsection (11) of section 130e are to be covered by regulation, and some are of vital importance. The sub-section says the Governor may make regulations:—

(*a*) prescribing the methods of marking pedestrian crossings on the surface of roads;

(*b*) with respect to the marking, placing, erection and removal of road markings, lights, signs, and other devices on or near or in advance of pedestrian crossings;

(*c*) declaring that any specified pedestrian crossings, or any class of pedestrian crossings, shall be operative as such only during prescribed hours or while prescribed signals are displayed or in other prescribed circumstances;

(*d*) prescribing any other matters necessary or convenient to be prescribed for giving effect to this section or for protecting persons or property on or near pedestrian crossings;

(*e*) declaring that any regulations made under this subsection shall apply only to pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of schools or to any other prescribed class of pedestrian crossing; and

(*f*) prescribing fines recoverable summarily and not exceeding twenty-five pounds for breach of any regulation made under this section.

These matters should be covered by regulation. Although I believe that powers of control are necessary, the control should be exercised with much caution. I have often seen flashing lights indicating to motorists that a school was nearby, yet the lights were working when no children were about and likely to cross the road. I have even seen the lights working on a Saturday morning.

Mr. Hutchens—I have seen them on at 11 o'clock at night.

Mr. Millhouse—The idea is to have them on a time switch.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That may be so, but the greatest care must be exercised to see that the warning signs are used only for the purposes intended. A feeling is growing amongst motorists that the lights do not mean anything, and they should be taught to have a greater respect for the lights by knowing that there is a law with teeth in it controlling the matter. Clause 15 deals with the right of way when a vehicle enters a road from a private road. That brings us to the saying that the Englishman's home is his castle, but when he emerges from his castle he should have respect for other people on the road. I have seen people backing out from their gates without having any regard for other people approaching them on the road.

Clause 16 enacts new section 132, which deals with the speed at intersections in municipalities, towns or townships. This will create a standard provision, with which I entirely agree. Because of the new definitions of "intersection" and "cross-over" there will be a more smooth working of this provision in our traffic laws. Clause 17 imposes a speed limit of 15 miles an hour when a sign has been exhibited by an authorized person showing that roadworks are in progress or an accident is being investigated. The need for this was brought home to us forcibly by the accident in a suburb not so long ago when one of our eminent doctors was fatally injured while attempting to succour the victim of a previous accident on a roadway. So far as I know, the person who killed the doctor has never been brought to book. We must teach people who show a callous disregard for necessary things to be done on a roadway, and the provision in the clause is worthy of support. It is necessary to have a law dealing with speed

past roadworks. Last year my attention was drawn by the Australian Workers Union, and nearly all the men employed on roads in South Australia are members of that organization, to the fact that some of their members had been injured because motorists sped past the point where they were working. They asked for a speed limit and some action was taken at the time but it was more or less in the nature of a warning. Now, with legal backing for this provision, effective steps can be taken by the Highways Department and local government authorities to protect their employees when engaged on roadworks. I do not intend to refer to any of the other provisions in the Bill but clause 19 is worthy of comment. It imposes a penalty on persons who allow vehicles to stand within 15ft. of an intersection. This has been a controversial matter over the years, and the provision should be approved. I support the second reading.

Mr. HAMBOUR (Light)—I listened with interest to the Leader of the Opposition and I believe that, in general, he gives the Bill his blessing. I appreciate the improvements it will make to our traffic laws but I do not completely agree with two clauses. I doubt very much if the application of the penalty in respect of illegal driving will be an improvement. I have asked the Government to deal more firmly with illegal drivers who take vehicles to other States, but I was told that it was a question of economics; but we should not pass a law if we are to be parsimonious about its administration. A person in my employ had his car stolen. The culprit took it to Sydney and on his apprehension the department asked the owner to provide £50 to bring the culprit back to Adelaide. Subsequently he came back of his own volition and was prosecuted, but he added insult to injury by wearing the shoes of the owner of car, which he had also stolen. The vehicle was valued at about £600. The culprit was known to be in Sydney but the police would not bring him back until the owner provided £50. It is wrong to ask an owner to pay the cost of bringing the offender back to Adelaide. It seems that, although we make a law and provide a penalty, all the offender has to do is to skip across the border to be "home and hosed." He has a good choice: he can go to any of five States or, if he has enough money, he can leave the country. I do not oppose clause 4, but I should like the prescribed penalty carried out and prosecutions launched in every case. I will oppose clause 6 entirely unless the part relating to disqualification of a licence for 12 months is taken out. I believe the existing penalty is up to £100, and I will support any monetary penalty within reason for an offence of this nature. I believe there is a schedule for overloading, and that the penalty depends on the extent of the overloading.

Mr. Millhouse—Do you mean the magistrate has it?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Yes. I also know a certain latitude is extended. I know two honourable citizens who have been prosecuted twice for overloading. These men were in the employ of Her Majesty, and carrying materials under contract. They had no way of testing their load or of being aware of what they are carrying, and they were found guilty on two occasions.

Mr. Millhouse—Were they using their own vehicles?

Mr. HAMBOUR—Yes. They admitted they were guilty, but driving is their livelihood and I venture to say that any magistrate would consider disqualification of licence for a second offence and that, if we prescribe disqualification in the legislation, he would have to disqualify for a third offence unless he had good reasons for not doing so. Members can see what an injury could be done to a man carrying a load with 10 or 12 cwt. excess aggregate because, as is well known, the load could easily shift back and there could easily be more than eight tons over the back axle. In the main, interstate hauliers are the culprits, but under this section the men who will be penalized are employees, and I think members opposite will agree that the person who should be penalized is the one who reaps the profit. In most cases interstate hauliers employ drivers who would lose their licences, and therefore their jobs, as a result of prosecution. All the way through, the employer reaps the reward for overloading.

Mr. Lawn—Hear hear!

Mr. HAMBOUR—I would support a severe monetary penalty, because it is the owner who has to pay, not the driver. I will oppose this clause in Committee and, perhaps, have a lot more to say on it.

Mr. HALL secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.50 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, November 10, at 2 p.m.