

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, May 5, 1960.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Treasurer say whether the Government has considered the fact that Ministerial salaries and Parliamentary salaries and allowances, particularly electorate expense allowances, are considerably lower than those in other mainland States, and whether the Government intends to take any action during the present session to correct those anomalies?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Last session the Government was requested to reconsider Ministers' and other members' salaries and at that time, although an examination of the position showed that the salaries in South Australia were by far the lowest of any of the mainland States, the Government, because of the circumstances of the season, did not desire to bring in amending legislation. However, since then there has been another general rise in salary levels and in expense levels, and under those circumstances the Government is preparing legislation which it hopes to be able to submit to Parliament. Whether it will be able to do so during the coming week will depend on the Parliamentary Draftsman, but I believe that the legislation will be ready for consideration. The background investigation has been completed, and it is only a matter of getting the Parliamentary Draftsman to put into a Bill the conclusions reached in Cabinet. The last Parliamentary salary increase in South Australia was some considerable time ago. The last small adjustment provided only a small district allowance which had long been provided in other mainland States. In view of the general rise in all salaries as a result of the 28 per cent increase in margins, the Government feels it is justified in bringing this matter forward for consideration.

#### RESERVOIR INTAKES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Can the Minister of Works say what effect the recent good rains have had on the intake in metropolitan reservoirs?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Up till this morning there has been some useful run-off from the catchment areas into the reservoirs, and up till yesterday morning we had increased our storages to, speaking from memory, about

3,200,000,000 gallons. The Engineer-in-Chief advised me by telephone this morning that the rain last night had produced the best run-off yet, and that in the 24 hours up till this morning we had received a further intake of 100,000,000 gallons. That would indicate to me that the catchment areas are now in a reasonably wet state, and that further rain will produce useful runoffs, probably greater in relation to the amount of rain falling than has hitherto occurred. As a matter of interest, the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline pumps were closed down this morning because of the useful rains and useful intakes. The position is being very closely watched, but the Engineer-in-Chief is taking the opportunity, with the breathing space now afforded him, to have the pumping units overhauled. The House will appreciate those units have rendered extremely reliable and valuable service. During the last year, from June until within the last week or two, they had been running continuously practically 24 hours every day. That is an exceptionally good performance, and I think it reflects much credit on the designers of the equipment and on the personnel—the engineers and others—who have been entrusted with the maintenance and servicing of these pumps from day to day. We now have a breathing space. The pumps have been closed down and will be checked. In the event of their possibly being required next spring if the rainfall does not measure up to expectations they will then be ready for such an eventuality should it unfortunately occur.

#### HOUSING LOANS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Treasurer has told us of the housing conference that is to take place soon. Although I realize the need for building new homes, will the Treasurer, in the course of that conference, request the Commonwealth Government to consider making some moneys available for the purchase of good substantial homes that may be 20 or 30 years old?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Commonwealth Government makes the money available to the States under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. In my opinion, it is not additional money, because at the Loan Council meetings the general programme is approved, and then each State decides how much of its allocation will be deemed to come under the agreement. The only advantage the States get, as I see it, from the agreement, is that a slightly lower rate of interest applies to the money provided under the agreement than to money not provided

under it. The total sum appears not to be increased by the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, because the States themselves decide how much they will put under the Agreement after the money is allotted by the Loan Council. The policy regarding whether the money is available for old or new houses is not a policy dictated by the Commonwealth: the State Government has to take full responsibility for it. The Commonwealth desires that a certain amount will be made available to building societies, but it leaves the terms under which it is made available to the building societies in the hands of the State Treasurers; consequently, it would be wrong to assume that this programme of new houses is insisted upon by the Commonwealth. It is a State policy and one that I do not desire to alter. At present I do not think it is nearly so important to the State to finance the change of ownership of a house as the erection of a new house. If we make money available for the purchase of an old house we are merely financing the transfer of an existing house from one owner to another, and I do not think that is nearly so important at this time as to have a new house built and additional accommodation provided. Under these circumstances I cannot offer the honourable member any substantial hope of a big departure from present policy.

#### RECREATION GROUNDS.

Mr. CUMBE—Some months ago considerable publicity was given to a scheme on the banks of the River Torrens, whereby, by diverting the river and reclaiming certain areas of land, sports grounds could be provided in an area bounded by the St. Peters Council on one side and the Walkerville Council on the other, and advances were made to the Government for assistance, financial and technical. Can the Premier say whether the scheme has proceeded further, and whether the Government has made any recommendations on the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The scheme meant that a substantial sum must be provided for it, and obviously it could not be considered when it was first advanced, because the Budget for that year had been approved by Parliament, and indeed the adverse seasonal conditions made it difficult to keep within that Budget, without considering any additional expenditure. At that time the matter could not be considered and as a consequence it has not proceeded any further. Whether it can proceed further will depend on the finance avail-

able when the Budget is being prepared next month. The Government is sympathetic towards providing recreation areas, but this was much more than a subsidy on what would be the normal purchase of a recreation ground. It was a costly reclamation scheme and consequently it would have to be looked at carefully before we could be committed. I assure the honourable member that when the finances for next year are available and we are considering the Budget this matter will be examined. I will inform the honourable member in due course.

#### HOMES FOR AGED PEOPLE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—My question is related to that asked by Mr. Frank Walsh, and I am, of course, anxious to see new houses built, but I find that there is an increasing number of aged and superannuated people who are experiencing housing difficulties. Is the Premier aware of the increasing difficulties of these people and, if so, will he examine the position to see whether it would be possible for the Housing Trust to build a larger number of the excellent type of house it is now building for pensioners?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Housing Trust has a limited amount of finance available to it, and it has large commitments coming up that will be considered by this House. In connection with the establishment of country industries, we have two instances where the trust has to provide houses for the employees in the industries. I think it is to supply 3,000 houses at Whyalla in connection with the steel industry, which is a big commitment, and in the forthcoming year the Broken Hill Proprietary Company is desirous of increasing the number. I think that at present we are turning out not quite a house a day, but the company has asked for an increase in the quota for next year. The trust has rather a heavy programme of building, but I assure the honourable member that if there is any assistance the Government can give, and there is money that the trust can divert to it, the matter will have the highest priority, because we believe there is a need for housing apart from the economic housing which in the main is meeting the full demand on it. There is a necessity for social housing activity and I assure the honourable member that the matter will receive as high a priority as possible.

#### KANGAROO MEAT.

Mr. HARDING—My question relates to a news item in today's paper under the heading

“Charge in United States of America on 'roo meat sausages.'” Thousands of kangaroos have been killed recently in South Australia and a quantity of that meat has been sent to America. We were of the opinion that it would be used as pet food. The press report says that out of 30,000 lb. of this meat exported in one consignment only 6,000 lb. was used for pet food and the balance went into sausages. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether records are kept in this State in an attempt to know the quantity of meat exported and the purpose for which it is exported?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I will see if I can get the information for the honourable member.

#### GREATER PORT ADELAIDE PLAN.

Mr. TAPPING—Recently I directed a question to the Minister of Works concerning the Harbors Board plan for the serpentine basin in the Semaphore South area, and the Minister replied (which reply I appreciated) that it was in the early days of planning and he could not make an announcement. I am now concerned about the housing in the LeFevre Peninsula and Semaphore South districts. As we understand from this long-range plan, about 8,000 houses are to be built in the two areas. I am being inundated with requests from constituents wanting to know whether, after the Housing Trust has built on the land it desires in the years to come, there will be any land for people wanting to build houses privately. Will the Premier make a public announcement as soon as possible about the area of land that will be available following on the reclamation work, how much of it will be needed by the trust, and how much may be taken up by private people?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I mentioned this matter in one of the broadcasts that members opposite sometimes mention in this House, and it created much interest outside this State. We have been examining proposals for the establishment of an authority to undertake the work. Much of it will be outside normal Harbors Board activities and consequently involves matters that the board does not normally deal with. We have been examining the best way to undertake the work. It is interesting to note that we have had two or three offers from private enterprise to undertake the complete job and to pay to the Government a gross percentage of the takings from the sales. We have not reached any conclusions. It will depend largely on how much money the State Government will have

available next year for a start on the work. If the State Government is able to finance it substantially it will probably set up an authority to undertake the work. Once we get it started there will be something coming in from the sales of land by both the trust and private enterprise. In my opinion it can be assumed that at least half of the land will be available for sale for the building of houses by private enterprise.

#### LOANS BY STATE BANK.

Mr. HALL—Last year the Government instituted through the State Bank a scheme whereby personal loans could be negotiated up to the sum of £500. Can the Treasurer say how many of these loans have been made, and what is their total value?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This particular scheme of the State Bank has been extremely popular and many applications have been approved. It is popular because the money available enables the purchaser to purchase the commodity at the best retail price available. Many hire-purchase proposals have at the back of them the fact that while they charge a certain rate of interest they also insist that the article be purchased through a certain channel. Consequently, although the rate of interest charged by one hire-purchase institution is supposed to be low, there is still a big rake-off in the purchase price in that activity. I can get for the honourable member the total amount of applications but, for general purposes, he may accept that the advances up to the present have totalled about £500,000.

#### ROAD TRAFFIC ACT.

Mr. RALSTON—My question deals with a provision of the Road Traffic Act as amended by the Act of 1959, section 10 of which amends section 119 of the principal Act by defining the meaning of “intersection” or “junction” as follows:—

“Intersection” means the area comprised within imaginary straight lines joining the corners formed by the convergence of the lateral boundary lines or the prolongation of the lateral boundary lines of two or more roads which cross each other, and in principle “junction” has the same meaning.

Section 19 of the amending Act inserts after section 136 of the principal Act section 136a, which states:—

If a person causes or permits a vehicle or animal to remain at rest near the edge of the carriageway of a road within fifteen feet of an intersection or junction, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Further on it says:—

A vehicle or animal on a road shall be deemed to be within fifteen feet of an intersection or junction if any part of it is within fifteen feet of an imaginary line being the production across the road of the lateral boundary of another road which intersects it or joins it.

I am concerned about the proper interpretation of these two sections in view of the policy of most councils to create traffic easements at corners by rounding them to facilitate the easy flow of traffic. In these circumstances it is very difficult for a motorist to determine where the 15ft. prohibited area applies. In the event of a serious accident this could lead to extremely costly litigation unless the prohibited area was clearly defined. In Canberra I understand that this is overcome on rounded corners by defining a prohibited area as starting from the tangent point, which is the point where the rounded portion of the kerbing and the lateral or straight portion of the kerbing adjoins. Will the Premier obtain from his colleague, the Attorney-General, an opinion on these points?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This provision was thoroughly debated in this House last year and a full explanation given at the time. There will be an amending and consolidating Bill on road traffic before the House this year. Last year we amended the departmental side of the Act and separated both sides. The other side will come before the House this year. In the meantime, however, I think I can give the honourable member some advice that will probably satisfy him and his clients, and that is that, whenever you are in any doubt whatsoever, play safe, and go a couple of feet further back and then you will be sure.

Mr. RALSTON—I thank the Premier for his gratuitous opinion, but I place little value on his answer. I have discussed this matter with the Parliamentary Draftsman and the chairman of the State Traffic Committee, who are most concerned to have this difficult interpretation cleared up. I again ask the Premier whether he will obtain information on the matter from the Attorney-General?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This legislation was drafted only last year by Sir Edgar Bean (probably the best draftsman in the Commonwealth for many years) with the full knowledge of all the cases relating to this matter, to deal with contingencies. I have already told the honourable member that a new Bill is to be introduced this session for Parliament to consider so that, whatever interpretation is being placed upon it, it will not be altered until the Bill is finally disposed of.

Under those circumstances I again suggest to the honourable member that, if anyone is in any doubt as to whether the curved part of an intersection should be taken into account, all they have to do is to avoid parking an extra two or three feet closer.

#### NAVAN WATER SCHEME.

Mr. NICHOLSON—Will the Minister of Works obtain a report on the state of progress of the Navan water scheme near Riverton, which my predecessor, Mr. Hambour, had in hand?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will bring myself up to date on that matter and let the honourable member have the information next week.

#### TRAFFIC ISLAND AT ROSEWATER.

Mr. RYAN—Recently, a traffic island was installed at the western approach to the Red Hill overway bridge at Rosewater. In view of the serious accidents that have occurred since the installation and the complaints arising therefrom, will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Roads, consider calling for a report from interested authorities as to the advisability of the retention of this island or any other alternative recommendation?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Yes.

#### CONVERSION OF SALT WATER.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Last session the Minister of Works promised that he would inquire into a statement made by Solar Ray Products Ltd. that it had discovered an economical way of converting salt, brackish or contaminated bore water into usable water in large quantities. Has that been of any practical use in the drier areas and has the Minister of Works had any success in his inquiries?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I have investigated several such possibilities. As I am not able to recall the precise inquiry on which the honourable member now seeks information, I will check upon that and reply further next week. However, from time to time various people make propositions to the South Australian Government and the Engineering and Water Supply Department on this matter. Not very long ago we received an offer from certain people who had equipment that they thought might be of interest to us for disposal, and it was offered to us. I mention that because it is typical of the kind of information we get from time to time. This particular proposition was examined, but had to be rejected because the units offered were not suitable for any possible needs in South Australia.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY FOR MARNE VALLEY.

Mr. BYWATERS—The Speaker will recall that yesterday a party of landowners called upon him and me in relation to an electricity supply for the Marne Valley. They expressed disappointment that they had been somewhat overlooked in the matter of receiving a supply, and especially because many of them were transferring into dairying and supplying the Adelaide metropolitan market. They asked us to request the Premier to ascertain whether there was a likelihood of their being connected soon and, if not, whether he would let them know the approximate date when the supply would be available.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice.

### BACONERS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Reported in today's *Advertiser* is a remark alleged to have been made by the Minister of Agriculture at a display of baconers at the abattoirs yesterday. It is pleasing to note that the Minister saw fit to say that, having looked at the display, one would not think that South Australia had just gone through a severe drought. I assume he was referring to the quality of the carcasses, but could he indicate whether the quantity has been maintained compared with previous years?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I could not say what effect the recent drought had on the pig population in this State. As the honourable member knows, pigs are not usually grazed in the same way as other animals, although there are grazing pigs. I shall try to get some information on this aspect. I was referring to the carcass competition held at the abattoirs, and I should think it was the most outstanding collection of baconer carcasses ever brought together in South Australia, possibly in Australia. It was a remarkable display of high quality carcasses and, although I cannot give actual figures, one long room at the abattoirs was taken up by the carcasses.

### SCHOOL BUSES.

Mr. HUGHES—Can the Minister of Education state whether it is compulsory for drivers of school buses, when arriving at a school to unload children, to stop on the side of the road nearest the school so as to prevent unnecessary walking across the roadway? If not, will the Minister, in the interests of safety, examine the matter with a view to requesting school

bus drivers to stop their buses on the side of the road nearest schools so as to prevent unnecessary crossing?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Replying to the second question, I shall be pleased to do as the honourable member requests and to let him know my decision in due course.

### SUBDIVISIONS.

Mr. LAUCKE—At a recent conference of the Mid-Northern Local Government Association reference was made to the possible circumvention of the Town Planning Act by subdividers outside the metropolitan area in respect of the provision of roads and reserves. Mention of the same matter is made by Mr. Bertram Cox, secretary of the Local Government Association, in today's *Advertiser*. The weakness in the Act lies in the ability to subdivide land into 5-acre farmlets with no provision for roads and reserves. These farmlets could later be subdivided for housing, and this could then place a heavy burden on local government authorities in providing roads and recreation areas. Can the Premier say whether these matters could be investigated before the Town Planning Act is next reviewed?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This matter is not new: it has been before Cabinet on occasion. Up to the present Cabinet has held the view that it is not desirable to place on the whole of the community throughout the State the obligation to get the Town Planner's approval where there is a subdivision of land, and that is what is involved in the question. An area of five acres or more is obviously more than a building lot and under those circumstances Cabinet has not placed the subdivision of a farm under the control of an outside authority, nor does it think it desirable to do so. If a 5-acre block were divided into building blocks the approval of the Town Planning authority would immediately have to be obtained, so I do not believe there is any great problem in the present position. In any case, I do not think it would be advisable to bring out a steamroller to crack a nut.

### SALE OF WHYALLA AERODROME.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Minister of Lands any further information in reply to my recent question regarding the sale of the old Whyalla aerodrome?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—I have received the following report from the Director of Lands:—

The purchase of the area known at Whyalla as the old aerodrome site is now being completed. The total area comprises 605 acres

of which approximately 100 acres has been subdivided for industrial purposes into 90 one-acre lots and 4 quarter-acre lots. These lots will be offered for allotment under the Crown Lands Act this month. An area of about 57 acres has been set aside for recreation purposes and 10 acres has already been decided upon as a school site. Of the remainder, it is proposed to subdivide the northern portion for housing allotments, business sites, shopping areas, etc., but this development cannot proceed until a sewerage scheme is provided. The lower lying portion of the area will be treated later according to the demand and the developmental requirements of the locality.

I realize the urgency of this matter and will do all I can to expedite it.

#### DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Mr. RALSTON—I know the Minister of Agriculture is well aware of the importance of the dairying industry to South Australia. At a recent conference of the South-Eastern Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries Association, officers of the Agriculture Department, including the Chief Dairy Adviser, addressed the conference on various problems relevant to the industry. As the conference progressed it became obvious from various comments made that, to consistently produce first grade cheese, laboratory facilities should be available to test the purity of the various ingredients used.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member must obtain leave to make an explanation.

Mr. RALSTON—Very well, Sir.

Leave granted.

Mr. RALSTON—It became obvious also that the laboratory facilities should be available to resolve the many bacteriological problems that arise and are inherent in this industry. It also appears desirable that mother strains of cheese starter should be tested and, if necessary, cultured under laboratory conditions. The new Mount Gambier hospital will include a well-equipped laboratory staffed by the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science and, without doubt, capable of conducting this type of investigation. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether these facilities will be available to the dairying industry and under what conditions, and, if not, will he confer with his colleague, the Minister of Health, and obtain a report?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—By arrangement at the Mount Gambier hospital, analyses are made when required and advice given through the dairy advisers when it is sought, and this service has been extensively used by cheese manufacturers in the district. To my knowledge there have never been any complaints

about those facilities, which I believe have provided much useful information. In the new laboratories being formed, facilities not less than are already available will be provided, and if there is any need for extended facilities as time goes on their provision will be considered.

#### HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1932-1958. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

It is designed to give effect to the recommendations of the Workmen's Compensation Committee which met very recently and has made its report to the Government. With two exceptions the proposed amendments all relate to increases in amounts of compensation following increases in salary and wage levels over the past two years and certain increases which have been made in other parts of the Commonwealth. The basic amendment effected is an increase in the upper limit of compensation to £3,000 in the case of incapacity and upon this basic figure the other proposed increases are founded.

Accordingly, clause 4 of the Bill increases the amount of compensation payable upon death where a workman dies leaving dependants from £2,500 plus £80 for each child to £2,750 plus £90 for each dependant child and at the same time increases the minimum amount from £800 plus £80 per child to £900 plus £90 per child. Additionally, this clause increases the amount of burial expenses from £70 to £80.

Clause 5 makes a similar amendment concerning burial expenses in the case of a workman leaving no dependants. Clause 6 of the Bill likewise increases the total liability in the case of incapacity from £2,750 to £3,000 and at the same time increases the amounts payable in respect of children from £1 to £1 5s. each

and for a dependant wife from £2 10s. to £3 5s. The weekly payment to a workman leaving a wife or child under 16 has been increased from a maximum of £13 10s. per week to £14 5s. while in the case of a workman without dependants there is an increase from £9 5s. to £9 15s. per week, but at the same time the opportunity has been taken to increase the minimum payment to a workman during incapacity from £4 to £5 per week.

Clause 7 effects a consequential increase of the total rate for schedule injuries from £2,750 to £3,000. Clause 9 increases the maximum costs payable to a workman for legal or medical fees from £15 to £35. The two matters of principle to which I referred at the beginning of my remarks relate to the definition of "workman" in section 7 of the principal Act and the amount of compensation payable in cases of incapacity. With regard to the definition of "workman" section 7 (1) (a) of the principal Act excludes persons whose average weekly earnings exceed £35. This amount will be increased to £45. Section 7 (1) (c) of the principal Act excludes from the definition of "workman" any member of an employer's family dwelling in his house. The committee has recommended that this exception should be removed from the Act and indeed the Government has received representations along similar lines from various quarters. It is accordingly proposed to repeal the paragraph making the exception.

The other matter has been the subject of questions inside and out of Parliament at various times. The Act provides that in the case of scheduled injuries a fixed sum shall be payable as compensation, but that any sums paid during any period of total incapacity shall be in addition to such a fixed sum. In other words, if a workman has been receiving fixed payments to the limit provided by the Act in respect of total or partial incapacity, and if he is found to be suffering from a schedule injury, he is entitled to receive up to £2,750 (after the present Bill £3,000) notwithstanding that he may have received that sum or a lesser amount already by way of weekly payments. Where, however, the incapacity is permanent but does not happen to have resulted from a schedule injury there is some doubt as to whether the total amount of compensation payable whether by way of lump sum or weekly payments or both together may be limited to £3,000. The committee unanimously recommended that any amendment necessary to put both schedule and non-schedule injuries on the same footing should be made to clear up any

doubts that might exist on the matter. Accordingly clause 8 expressly provides that sums paid by way of weekly payments shall not be deducted from any lump sum that may be awarded in respect of total incapacity.

Clause 10 provides that its provision will apply only where the injury or death is caused by an accident after the commencement of the Bill. Thus, the Bill is non-retrospective.

Not all the recommendations included in the Bill were unanimously supported. I think that the representative of employees supported them but the employers' representative did not. Some of the matters brought forward by the employees' representative were not accepted by the committee. The committee's work has been most beneficial. We have both employers' and employees' representatives discussing the matter under an impartial chairman. Of course, unanimity cannot always be obtained. I commend the Bill to members and hope that it will have a speedy passage so that the benefits under it can be made available as soon as possible.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—We have not yet received copies of the Bill and I think we should have them before being expected to speak. I agree that the measure should be given as expeditious a passage as possible, but in order to consider the matter a little more I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

#### STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### SWINE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—I move—

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

Its object is to extend the life and powers of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council

for a further period of three years from December 31 last. The operation of the existing Act came to an end on December 31, 1959. The Government is of the opinion that the problems of co-ordination and provision of public transport within the metropolitan area have by no means been solved and will continue to arise and believes that the council, as the appropriate authority, should be retained. The council has functioned very effectively since its inception and it is thought that no good purpose would be served by altering its constitution or powers.

Clauses 3 and 4 accordingly extend the operation of the Act and the life and powers of the council until December 31, 1962. Clause 5, providing for retrospective operation of the Bill, is designed to avoid any gap in the life of the council. The Act as it now stands expressly provides not only that the members hold office until December 31, 1959, but also that the council should cease to exist on that date. This Bill will provide for the amendment to become effective as on the day before that express provision could otherwise have taken effect.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I offer no objection to the passage of this Bill. As the Minister has stated, it simply extends the life of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council for a further three years. In order to overcome the hiatus between the expiry of the Act and the passing of this Bill, some retrospectivity is introduced. The Bill has passed another place and, although I suppose I do not feel very confident about the scrutiny it received there, I am happy to accept the opinion of the other place on this occasion.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I very much regret that I cannot on this occasion agree either with the Minister of Works in his second reading speech or with the Leader of the Opposition in his support of the Bill. I must, I feel, oppose this Bill, not because I am against the principle of an advisory body to assist in co-ordinating metropolitan transport; I am not. That, in principle, is a good thing, but it is one thing to say that in principle; it is another thing to see how this body has in fact worked during the five years of its life. I suggest that, if we look to see just what the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council has done, we shall find that in fact it has been a failure. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the other place. Apparently, on this occasion anyway, he is relying upon

the wisdom of members there but, if he read the report of the debate there, he would see that the matter was given there, as apparently it was to be given here, only the most cursory examination, and nothing was said and no inquiry was made as to what in fact this council had achieved since it was set up in 1954.

I must make this admission: the other day when I mentioned to one of the Ministers on the front bench that I intended to oppose this measure if introduced and then went on to elaborate my reasons for so doing, he did not answer me directly but suggested I should read a book on clear thinking.

Mr. Hutchens—I am on his side.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am glad to see that the Minister is in the Chamber at the moment and I hope to show by a few well chosen remarks that my objections to this measure are based on clear thinking. But let us see what was hoped of this particular measure when it was first introduced into this Chamber by the Premier in 1954, when he said:—

The object is to provide for the creation of an advisory body to investigate problems affecting the metropolitan public transport system, and to define the powers of such a body.

As I say, nobody could object to that; that is all right. He went on to say this, a little later:—

The problems which arise in connection with the possibility of over-lapping between road vehicles and railways, and in connection with the use of buses as opposed to trams, are well known to members and afford evidence of the need for such a body as is proposed by the Bill.

That is what the council was supposed to do or what it was hoped it would do when it was set up in 1954. At that time there was much discussion as to whether this was Liberal and Country League policy or whether the Government had not grabbed it from the Labor Party, and so on and so forth; but no examination was then made as to just how well or how badly this body would solve the problem of metropolitan transport. However, now we find from the Minister's second reading explanation that the Government is of the opinion that the problems of co-ordination and provision of public transport within the metropolitan area have by no means been solved and will continue to arise, and believes that the council, as the appropriate authority, should be retained. Then he had the audacity—and I use that word advisedly—

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—You mean "effrontery."



Mr. MILLHOUSE—I will use that, with very great respect. He then has the effrontery to say that the council has functioned very effectively since its inception and it is thought that no good purpose would be served by altering its constitution or powers. So the Government thinks that this council has functioned very effectively. The members in another place were prepared to accept that, as is the Leader of the Opposition, but let us see what its record is.

First of all, before I go into the history of its record, may I make this clear: I have the very greatest respect for the three men who form this council as individuals. First, there is Mr. Albert Hannan, a former Crown Solicitor and a former acting Judge of the Supreme Court. Nobody could have anything but the very greatest respect for him as an individual. Secondly, there is Mr. Keynes who, besides being General Manager of the Tramways Trust, is one of my constituents. He lives in the hills in an area not served by the trust's transport. Finally, there is Mr. Fargher, who has done so much to help develop our railways system. I have very great respect for them as individuals and hope that nothing I shall say today will be taken as personal criticism of those three men as individuals. However, I do suggest that as a council they have been a real disaster.

We come to examine the Minister's claim that this body has worked effectively in the solution of the problems of our metropolitan transport system. Although it was set up in 1954, it has considered only two matters in those five and more years since then. What were they? First, it considered in 1956-57 the Henley Beach to Grange railway. I am not qualified to say whether the conclusion to which it came on that occasion was good or bad. The result, as honourable members know, was that the line between Henley Beach and Grange was closed. As I say, that may be good or it may be bad, but I do say—I speak rather feelingly on this matter and honourable members will see the reason later—that this matter was, according to the report that the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council made, referred to it on August 4, 1955, but it took a little over 12 months—and this is the “very effective functioning” referred to by the Minister—to bring in its report, because the report is dated August 20, 1956. The reason why it should have taken 12 months entirely escapes me.

Mr. Hall—It may have had to study trends.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—But it took evidence from 17 witnesses and its report is not seven

pages long. Yet it took over 12 months to come to any conclusion on that matter. If that is “effective functioning” I am staggered and amazed. That is the first thing it had to consider.

The only other matter that has ever been referred to this council is one that is, I must admit, very near to my own heart—the question of the extension or otherwise of the Lower Mitcham bus service. I do not want to go into the pros and cons of that but I simply say that the proposal was to extend the route of the Lower Mitcham bus service for a little under one mile, where it would admittedly run parallel with the main hills railway line. The Railways Commissioner, of course, objected, although he served that area with only two stations and the bus would have had intermediate stopping places and been of great convenience to the people living in this populous area.

There was a problem in the overlapping of train and bus, so the matter was referred to the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council. Again, I stress the fantastic length of time that it took to come to any conclusion, because the matter was referred to it, according to its own report which was tabled last year, on May 29, 1958—and this was, apparently, a minor matter, because it involved less than one mile of bus route extension. Its report is dated June 3, 1959—that is, a little over 12 months, as in the case of the Henley Beach to Grange railway.

I do not want to go into all the steps that were taken, but I have tried my best time and time again through the Minister of Roads—and I am certain that he put forward his best endeavours—to push on to a conclusion on this matter, yet it took over 12 months. And this, according to the Minister of Works, is the “very effective functioning” of this body. But that is only the start.

Mr. Hutchens—Do you not appreciate that it was struggling to cope with a ridiculous request?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—No, I do not, but I do not want to canvass that particular question. All I emphasize is the inordinate time it took on an apparently minor matter. This is even more fantastic still. We have these three men—an impartial chairman (Mr. Albert Hannan), the Railways Commissioner, and the General Manager of the Municipal Tramways Trust. What happened after the 12 months had elapsed? The Railways Commissioner was against the extension of the bus service, while the Tramways Trust General Manager was in

favour of it. True, these two gentlemen may be key figures in their own undertakings. No doubt they are but, when a question arises in which their own interests are opposed, any question of co-ordination goes to the wall. We have the Railways Commissioner against anything that would interfere with his monopoly of that particular area, while the Tramways Trust General Manager was in favour of an extension.

Mr. Quirke—Where did the casting vote go?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Unfortunately, against the extension; Mr. Hannan voted against it. This council was set up to co-ordinate the transport system of the metropolitan area, but has it? It is a complete farce when we get that sort of thing happening. If any honourable member would like to look at it, there is a majority report in Parliamentary Paper No. 14 for last year, and there is a minority report, from Mr. Keynes, on the same matter; yet the Minister says that the body has functioned effectively! That is all we have had out of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council in five years, yet apparently an extension of its life was just to slip through this House. How much has it cost the Government of this State to have this council in being? So that there could be no contradiction, I asked a question on notice only a day or two ago and found that during the five year period the three members were paid £3,398 as remuneration for their services. Apart from this, there was also the time taken, the secretarial assistance and the cost of printing reports, etc; £3,500 would be a conservative estimate of the cost. Over the five years the committee has had two matters to consider and, despite the inordinately long time it took to consider each (a little over 12 months), the members have been paid, not for the sitting time when they have had something in front of them, but for the five years. I do not blame them for this, as there has been nothing to put before them. However, they have been paid for nothing, and this has cost £3,500! Surely we should consider this when deciding whether or not this council should be continued for another three years.

Mr. Hall—How would you handle these problems without the council?

Mr. Clark—The honourable member would appoint a Minister of Transport.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I would not. In the Address in Reply debate last year I said that I hoped the legislation would lapse and, of course, the Government thought so little of it that it allowed it to lapse last December. I expressed

the hope that it would lapse permanently and said that, when a problem such as the Henley to Grange train or even the Mitcham bus service came along, an *ad hoc* committee should be constituted. After all, only two matters have been before the committee in the last five years, and the members of an *ad hoc* committee would be paid for their services.

Mr. Quirke—What would be the use of having the railways *versus* the tramways?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—It is worth nothing now. The Mitcham bus inquiry was a complete farce because each interest was battling for his own side.

Mr. Frank Walsh—That is not the only place where they bat for their own side.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—That is so. Now the Government intends to revive the council by a Bill with retrospective effect. Goodness knows what adverse effect we have suffered in being without this council for the last 4½ months! Will this council get any business now, or is there any business before it now? I should be pleased if the Minister would deign to reply to my remarks and enlighten me on these matters. So far as I am aware, nothing is before the committee at the moment and no reference is contemplated in the immediate future, so why are we to continue with this body which, I suggest, has not worked very effectively? I say advisedly that this council has been no more than an expensive nuisance and I am sorry that the Government intends to extend its life; I can see no work for it and no need for it. I have already put forward my solution to the problem. I cannot help feeling that the real justification for the Bill now before us is that once you have a committee or any organization in being it is difficult even for the Government to abandon it. I cannot help remembering what one member of the council told me when I gave evidence relating to the Mitcham bus service. I suggested that we should give the bus service a trial to see how it worked and one member said, "If you started the bus you would never be able to abandon it." The same thing is happening in relation to the council. I oppose the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I listened to the honourable member with interest, and I do not think I should allow his remarks to pass without comment. He referred to matters inquired into by the council. He did not criticize what it did in relation to the Henley to Grange railway line, and wisely so, because he did not understand the problem.

Mr. Millhouse—I do not say it came to the wrong conclusion there.

Mr. SHANNON—That is so. However, when he got back to the parish pump he was sure the council was wrong.

Mr. Millhouse—I did not even say that.

Mr. SHANNON—If the honourable member did not suggest that the extension of the bus route for a mile in Mitcham was warranted, I understood him to say so. After all, we set up these committees to safeguard the investment of the State in various public transport systems. This council is designed to deal with these problems in the metropolitan area. Would it be in the best interests of the State to give a pocket of people residing in Lower Mitcham the choice of two transport systems when other parts of the metropolitan area are crying out for even one method of public transport? The metropolitan area is growing so rapidly that transport may become a very important problem, and careful investigation is needed of whether it should be handled by the Railways Department or the Tramways Trust. I draw the honourable member's attention to a problem that came before the Public Works Committee years ago in relation to transport in the Henley Beach area. Mr. Goodman (Sir William Goodman as he later was) was then General Manager of the trust, and he had certain plans that would have adversely affected the interests of the railways in the area. I was then a member of the committee, which had a difficult task in deciding which of the two authorities was right. We decided in favour of the railways, because the railway lines were there, rather than that another public service should be permitted to compete with the railways. The honourable member appears to me to be attacking the chairman of the council.

Mr. Millhouse—I am not.

Mr. SHANNON—He appears to be. He has no objection to Mr. Keynes' looking after the interests of the Municipal Tramways Trust as its General Manager or to Mr. Fargher, as Commissioner of Railways, looking after the interests of the railway system. Who does he object to? Apparently to the man who sits between the two contesting sides to decide which has the greater right, and that is Mr. Hannan, who is the chairman and who decides the matter. I cannot see who else he is talking about. That is a strange attitude to adopt; I have always understood that members of the legal profession have prided themselves on their approach to such problems, as they do not want

to favour any side but want to hear the evidence of both parties and arrive at a decision.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The member for Mitcham may be ambitious.

Mr. Millhouse—You need not worry about that.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not charge him with that, but I think I am justified in charging him with being unnecessarily pernickety about the time it took this council to reach a decision on the two matters referred to it in the last five years. My committee has taken much longer to reach a solution on knotty problems, and if any member wants to take me to task I am prepared to justify the time spent. It is not the time spent that really matters but the answer given after the matter is considered. In this instance, apparently the answer given to one question was not the appropriate answer. It would appear to me that the honourable member is speaking for a little pocket of people who wanted two methods of travelling to the city.

Mr. Millhouse—I am speaking in the interests of everyone in the metropolitan area.

Mr. SHANNON—These people want buses to pass their front doors and trains to pass the back so that if they miss a bus they can catch a train. That would be an excellent idea if the State could afford it.

Mr. Hall—Would you say it is a one-sided committee if the Railways Commissioner takes one side and the General Manager of the Municipal Tramways Trust the other?

Mr. SHANNON—I know of no better committee than that consisting of one member, if he is the right man.

Mr. Millhouse—Then you will have to support me.

Mr. SHANNON—If the one member is the right man he will probably give the right answer. I do not support the honourable member; I think he has been unfair to this council of three able men. It would have been better if he had not brought in these minor matters in an effort to wipe out the committee, which may have a wider scope in the next five years. There may be traffic problems that none of us envisage and, instead of having *ad hoc* committees from time to time, I prefer to have people who are well informed. I do not know that we can complain about the qualifications of these three men. Regarding Mr. Hannan, I think it is wise to have a judicial man to weigh up between the two contending parties.

Mr. Lawn—The member for Mitcham would agree there. He is not objecting to what you have said.

Mr. SHANNON—I think the honourable member has been unwise in his criticism, and I support the second reading.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I cannot let the closing remarks of the last speaker go unchallenged. What earthly use is a council sitting in adjudication on the question of whether the service should be provided by the tramways or the railways when two of the three members of the council represent those utilities? The unfortunate chairman did what was absolutely right. He did what the Speaker of this House and what the chairman of a district council would do, and came down on the side of the conditions as they existed, because the council had been unable to make up its mind.

I commend the member for Mitcham for bringing this matter before the House this afternoon, because unless someone is particularly interested in these things they are likely to go through unchallenged. I have not investigated this matter at all, but how many members of this House have done so? How many have delved into the matter like the member for Mitcham did? He is now being ridiculed for what he did, and that is not right. That council of three has had two jobs in five years, but that is not the council's fault, and the member for Mitcham does not blame it because of that. He pointed out that it has cost £3,000 for that council to arrive at decisions on two minor things. I know where we can spend £3,000 on a road and thus obtain much better service than has been obtained as a result of the existence of this council. With great respect to the members of the council, good men as they are, I maintain that the council's existence is not necessary.

The member for Mitcham said there were two stops in a mile on the section of the railway in question. I do not know the location, but it would be interesting to know how many houses and how many people there were in that area. The distance is not very great, but people have a right to ask for alternative transport. I am not criticizing the council for turning those people down and saying that the decision should go to the railway, but the people have a right to ask for alternative transport and the member for Mitcham has a right to support his constituents in that regard. I commend him for what he has done today. I knew nothing about the matter and I wager that nobody else in the House knew anything about it.

Mr. Shannon—And I think the honourable member still knows nothing about it.

Mr. QUIRKE—I know what the member for Mitcham has told me, and nobody has refuted it, and therefore I, too, am going to vote against the Bill.

The House divided on the second reading:—

Ayes (33).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Clark, Corcoran, Coumbe, Dunnage, Dunstan, Hall, Harding, and Heaslip, Sir Cecil Hincks, Messrs. Hughes, Hutchens, Jenkins, Jennings, King, Laucke, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, Nicholson, O'Halloran, Patkinson, Pearson (teller), Sir Thomas Playford, Messrs. Ralston, Riches, Ryan, Shannon, Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Tapping, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Noes (2).—Messrs. Millhouse (teller), and Quirke.

Majority of 31 for the Ayes.

Second reading thus carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Term of office.'

Mr. MILLHOUSE—As the Minister of Works did not reply to the question I asked during the debate, I now ask him whether it is the immediate intention to refer any matter to the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council, and I ask him if he will be so kind to let me know whether in fact any other matter has been referred to the council and is at present being considered by it.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—As the honourable member must realize, the matters to be referred to this council are only such as occur from time to time. The Government does not go around looking for problems to refer to the council just for the sake of keeping it occupied, but the council must exist to attend to such matters as they arise. I do not think the council has any matter before it at present, but questions may arise from time to time.

Mr. Millhouse—Have you any in mind?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I am reminded by the Premier that, in the absence of the existence of the council, matters would frequently arise which would be unresolved and which would lead to the very things the council is set up to avoid. Duplication of facilities would constantly be provided if the parties to the various transport systems were not aware that the matter would automatically come before the council for consideration. Whether

or not there are any matters at present before the council is, in my opinion, irrelevant. The fact is that the council's existence is necessary and beneficial to the overall economy of the State, and therefore it should remain in existence.

Clause passed.

Clause 4 passed.

Clause 5—"Commencement."

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Can the Minister say why this Act was not extended during last session and why the council was allowed to lapse for the period of four or five months?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I presume that it was a matter of oversight, and the present Bill seeks, honestly and openly, to remedy that defect.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment and Committee's report adopted.

#### DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from May 4. Page 394.)

Clause 3—"Definition of dentistry."

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—(Premier and Treasurer)—The period that has elapsed since this Bill was considered by Parliament last year has, I believe, been useful in one respect. It has enabled dentists throughout South Australia to consider the Bill closely and to express, I think, unanimous support, with the one or two very minor amendments that have been brought forward. I move—

In subclause (1) to strike out "Disciplinary" and insert "Investigation."

Frankly, I am not able to appreciate the technical difference between the two words, but members of the profession do not like the expression "disciplinary committee." The amendment is not one of substance, but is brought forward because the term "disciplinary committee" might lead to some suggestion of improper conduct where such does not exist.

Mr. SHANNON—This is a matter of Tweedledee and Tweedledum without a doubt. Similar committees have been set up under other legislation and we should use a similar term for the committee under this Bill. "Statutory committee" is used under the Legal Practitioners Act, and that committee deals with complaints made by the members of the legal profession or other people. It

takes evidence and comes to decisions. I suggest that "Investigation" is a peculiar word to use in this instance. It does not imply that after an investigation action will be taken. If the committee had a statutory title with certain functions it would have a little more force. I suggest that "Statutory" be inserted instead of "Investigation."

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I should be happy if the honourable member moved that way.

Amendment to delete "Disciplinary" carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I ask leave to withdraw my amendment to insert "Investigation."

Leave granted; amendment withdrawn.

Mr. LAUCKE—I support the inclusion of "Statutory." That word is used in the legal profession, and the committee envisaged in this Bill is modelled on the committee operating in the legal profession, and is similar to the Dental Council of Great Britain. "Statutory" is more appropriate than "Investigation."

Mr. SHANNON—I move:—

In subclause (1) to insert "Statutory" before "Committee."

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I oppose the amendment. The word "Statutory" is used in the legal profession and it is a well-known body. If we have statutory committees in various professions we shall have much confusion. It would be better to have another name under this legislation. It could be Disciplinary Committee (but the dental profession does not like that) or Investigation Committee. It would provide a distinction.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

In subclause (2) (c) to delete "radiography" and insert "radiology."

The board has suggested substitution of "radiology" for "radiography" on the grounds that inclusion of "radiography" would prevent X-ray mechanics in the employ of medical practitioners from performing X-ray work in connection with dental work. Substitution of "radiology" would permit such mechanics to continue to do their work while restricting the interpretation of X-ray photographs to medical practitioners or dentists.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

In subclause (2) (g) and (h) to delete "advice."

This clause includes in the definition of "dentistry" the giving of advice. Some members of the profession have suggested to the board that as advice is often given by a nurse employed by dentists the profession would be adequately protected against unqualified competition even if the word "advice" were omitted. Moreover, the giving of dental advice by school teachers, Mothers' and Babies' Health Association employees and the like, is unacceptable.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I support this amendment. During the second reading debate I opposed the provision, but with the exclusion of the word my opposition disappears.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move:—

At the end of subclause (2) to add "or by any person on the instruction of a registered dentist."

Clause 3 (2) ends with a list of things which "dentistry" does not include. It is proposed to add to the exclusions construction of dentures by persons on the instructions of registered dentists. Some members suggested last year that trained persons manufacturing dentures as independent contractors might be precluded from carrying on such operations. That will make it clear that such operations may lawfully be carried on.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I support the amendment strongly. Much was said about the motives behind those who opposed the Bill last year, including Mr. Shannon, who had the temerity yesterday to repeat what he said earlier. This amendment, together with the flock of amendments that the Premier is moving, is entire justification for the stand taken by members who opposed the Bill previously. This amendment deals with the point I raised in my opposition. I said that the subsection would cut out dental mechanics and dental laboratories. I am pleased that the Government has seen fit to accept remarks made previously by members who opposed the Bill.

Mr. RICHES—It seems to me that a dental mechanic will still be precluded from operating in his own right. He will be able to operate only on the instructions of a registered dentist. With all due respect to registered dentists, my experience, as well as that of others, has been that there are dental mechanics who know more about the mechanics of the industry than the dentists for whom they work. They have been associated with more than one dentist and some have had experience in the armed services. The Bill is unnecessarily restrictive. Even today we place too much restriction on dental mechanics. It should be possible for a mechanic to offer his services to the public without the public having to go to a registered dentist, and if that were the case I think the public would get a better service. I suggest that the matter be widened. I would like to see all the words after "artificial dentures" in the final paragraph of subsection (2) deleted. Has the Premier an explanation on this matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member has mentioned dental mechanics, and I believe that one is carrying on business at Whyalla.

Mr. Loveday—No, that is different altogether. He is a licensed operative.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—He is able to work under the close supervision of a registered dentist.

Mr. Loveday—He is not a dental mechanic.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There are only five of the class the honourable member refers to as operating at Whyalla. The amendment will provide for them to continue their work in the event of their losing their present position. However, to enable me to check the position, I move that progress be reported.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.02 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 10, at 2 p.m.