

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, May 12, 1960.

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

POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT ACT.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Act.

QUESTIONS.**COUNTRY ROADS.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question relates to assistance to country corporations to maintain roads in their areas. In the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech it was stated that £9,500,000 was proposed to be spent on roads this financial year and it was expected that the amount would be increased next financial year. The onerous task of maintaining roads and streets in country municipalities has become more difficult as the years have passed, particularly with the increase in the number of cars within the municipalities and visiting them for business purposes. Will the Premier state whether the matter will be considered by the Government when the Estimates for the road programme are being arranged for the next financial year with a view to making some increase in the grants to country municipalities for the maintenance of roads in their areas?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I know that the Leader is aware that the money made available to the Highways Department comes from two sources: there is a standard appropriation which comes from petrol tax and which is part of that tax, and the other part is the net result of registration and driving licence fees paid by motorists. The amount cannot easily be increased. As the Leader said, it is over £9,000,000, which is a substantial amount, but any diversion from that amount for new work would inevitably mean a lesser amount available for roads somewhere else. Some time ago the Highways Commissioner, on request, undertook to put down bitumen on main roads through townships, and I believe that that programme has now been almost completed. I will examine the Leader's request, with the qualification I previously mentioned—that the Government at the moment does not want to curtail the road programme seriously by putting money into secondary roads or streets until our main arterial highways have been brought up to what we believe to be the necessary standard.

TELEVISION LECTURES.

Mr. COUMBE—It has been reported recently that the Education Department is considering introducing television lectures for the training of teachers. Will the Minister of Education indicate what type of presentation will be made, what form this type of lecture will take, and what co-operation will be given the department by the A.B.C.?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Australian Broadcasting Commission has offered to provide the Education Department with a limited number of selected telecasts to schools prepared to supply their own television sets and desirous of taking the telecasts. There would be only a limited number and the department would be under no financial obligation and would have no expenses at all. This would be following the precedent set over two years ago in New South Wales and Victoria, where live telecasts and films are shown. For example, live shows in New South Wales are filmed and sent to Victoria, and those made in Victoria are sent to New South Wales. The A.B.C. has offered to supply a set of films from both New South Wales and Victoria free to the Education Department here with no obligation and this would be on a purely experimental and exploratory basis to a selected number of schools. There have been negotiations between the A.B.C. and the Education Department on whether a demonstration class with highly competent expert demonstration teachers in our practising schools could be televised, not for the benefit of the schools, but for the benefit of the 1,600 student teachers at the Kintore Avenue Teachers College, at Wattle Park and in the Currie Street and Thebarton annexes. That would be of tremendous value in the teaching and training of these student teachers, as they would get a practical illustration of a class being taught by a demonstration teacher and, of course, it would be filmed and could be shown over and over again to enable students to pick up the fine points. It is only a matter of negotiation at present. I do not know whether the budget of the A.B.C. for this year will be sufficient to provide for it. I hope that if it is not, either or both of the commercial stations might come to our assistance and co-operate. I feel it would be of outstanding benefit to the teaching service and to the student teachers, because in a few years we will have more than 2,500 students in training at our teachers' colleges, and it would be almost impossible to give them the practical training in small groups.

MILK VENDORS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Agriculture obtained a report regarding milk vendors from the Chairman of the Metropolitan Milk Board?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I have a report from the Chairman of the Metropolitan Milk Board which states:—

An approach was made to the board by the Adelaide vendors, and they were requested to submit to the board figures of their decreased gallonage together with their proposals that a new housing area be allotted to them. It is understood that this information has been submitted to the Master Retail Milk Vendors' Association and that a scheme to relieve the Adelaide vendors is now being prepared by the association for the board's consideration. At the time it was suggested that the Adelaide vendors should apply for licences in the Tea Tree Gully and Modbury area for which applications were then being received, but they were not prepared to do so.

In reply to the second part of the question the Chairman states:—

The number of milk rounds in the metropolitan area is 476. Applicants for licences have not been required to state whether they are owners or lessees. However, records compiled from questionnaires sent out prior to the original allotment of licences indicate that 142 rounds are leased and that 334 are operated by the owners.

In reply to the question regarding how many people own these leased rounds, the report states:—

Complete records are not available but an approximate figure can be extracted. It is the intention of the board to forward a questionnaire to all retail vendors shortly to obtain information additional to that set out in their application forms, and this would include information *re* the ownership of rounds. This will enable an accurate figure to be extracted.

STRATHALBYN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. JENKINS—Has the Minister of Education a further reply to the question I asked yesterday regarding the Strathalbyn primary school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Public Buildings Department has advised that the new Strathalbyn primary school will be completed in about two months' time. The building could be taken into use immediately it is reported as completed. The classes could be transferred from the old school at any convenient time thereafter, and then, at a later date to suit the headmaster and the school committee, the school could be officially opened.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT.

Mr. HUTCHENS—The *Advertiser* on March 9 published an article in which it was stated

that the Town Planner had submitted an annual report, attached to which was an interim plan regarding the general planning of the metropolitan area. It was also stated that the report and plan would be made available to local government bodies to assist them in their future planning. In order that the public might be fully acquainted with the position and that commerce and industry might plan with the greatest knowledge of the Town Planner's intention, will the Minister of Education request the Attorney-General to have the report and plan tabled in this House?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to submit the honourable member's suggestion to my colleague.

SUPREME COURT ACT.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—On the first day of this session I asked the Premier whether, in view of the coming into operation of the Federal Matrimonial Causes Act in July, the Government had considered an amendment to the Supreme Court Act to constitute the Master and his Deputy a part of the court. The Premier at that time replied that a conference was to be held, attended by a senior judge from each State. I understand that subsequently His Honour Sir Geoffrey Reed, representing South Australia, attended that conference. Can the Premier say whether as a result of what I presume was his subsequent report the Government has considered the matter further?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As stated, His Honor Sir Geoffrey Reed attended the conference, accompanied by the Master of the court. On their return I believe the first impression was that no alteration to the Supreme Court Act in this State was necessary. I do not believe that any action has been taken to amend the Supreme Court Act in any other State, but it appears that there is some doubt about the position in South Australia. Our procedures have not been the same as other States, and we have not in this State had a judge more or less solely concerned with this type of work. I am not sure whether or not it will be necessary to amend the Act here to give our Master and his Deputy greater authority. There seem to be two lines of thought: one that it is not necessary and the other that it may be. The matter will be carefully examined, and if it is found necessary to alter the Act it will be done when Parliament resumes later this session.

WAGES BOARD FEES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier an answer to the question I asked earlier this session regarding Wages Boards members' fees?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That matter has not yet come back to Cabinet for a decision. It was sent on to the department for examination, and I can assure the honourable member that the necessary information is being obtained for Cabinet's consideration.

UNDERGROUND WATERS PRESERVATION ACT.

Mr. HALL—Does the Premier expect that any areas of the State will soon be coming under the control of the Underground Waters Preservation Act?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will forward a report on that matter to the honourable member.

LOVEDAY SCHOOL.

Mr. KING—Can the Minister of Education tell me when the front fence at the Loveday school will be erected?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Director of the Public Buildings Department has informed me that the specification for the erection of fencing at the Loveday primary school has now been prepared. It is anticipated that public tenders will be called on May 23, 1960.

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS.

Mr. RALSTON—I have had several requests from Mount Gambier people for information about the conditions under which Commonwealth scholarships are granted, and especially the way in which the means test is applied to successful candidates. Can the Minister of Education tell me how the conditions apply and give any other relevant information?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Throughout the Commonwealth 3,000 Commonwealth scholarships are awarded each year. Most of these are known as open entrance scholarships, and these are awarded upon the results obtained in the matriculation examination of each State. A quota is fixed for each State on a population basis. The quota for this State in 1960 was 271. Applications must be made for Commonwealth scholarships on the prescribed form, copies of which are sent to each departmental and non-departmental secondary school. Entries close on November 30. These scholarships may be used for either full-time or part-time study. Compulsory fees are paid for all successful applicants who undertake a full-time study course. In addition, they may

receive a living allowance which is based on a means test. The amount of living allowance is determined by the family income. As the family income grows the amount of living allowance paid is reduced until the point is reached where no allowance is payable at all to some scholars. In 1960, the maximum living allowance is £338 for a scholar living away from home and £221 for a student living at home. For part-time students compulsory fees only are paid. They are not eligible for living allowance.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can student teachers who have been awarded Commonwealth scholarships obtain the benefit of those scholarships whilst they are studying at the teachers' college in the metropolitan area and receiving a grant from the State Government toward their maintenance?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Most student teachers are debarred from receiving the benefit of the allowance, on two grounds. The first is, in some cases, a means test, and the second is that the Commonwealth will not allow Commonwealth scholarships to be awarded to any person who is under a bond. As our teachers and the teachers in other States are under a bond, they are not entitled to the scholarships on that ground also.

WOOLLEN SHIRTS.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Premier received a report from the Prices Commissioner in relation to the sale of drip-dry woollen shirts?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Prices Commissioner has forwarded the following report in reply to questions by the honourable member and the member for Victoria:—

Woollen goods, other than school, college and infants' wear, were decontrolled on March 17, 1959, following representations made by the clothing trade. It was claimed that decontrol would provide retailers with an opportunity to increase sales promotion of woollen goods and would be of benefit to the wool industry. Retailers also gave an undertaking that reasonable price stability would be maintained on woollen goods, particularly those falling within the lower and medium price ranges. Inquiry has disclosed that the Whitmont woollen drip dry shirt referred to is sold at a standard retail price of £5 19s. 6d. throughout Australia. It is manufactured in Sydney and is 100 per cent pure wool. The price includes a retail mark-up of 49½ per cent. There are several brands of terylene shirts, which are also decontrolled, retailing at £3 19s. 6d. each. The retail mark-ups on these vary from 40 per cent to 45 per cent. The retail mark-up allowed on all men's shirts under price control was 35 per cent. Investigations by the Prices Department have disclosed

that most retailers are applying mark-ups within reasonable proximity of this margin on shirts falling within the lower and medium price ranges.

URANIUM WORKERS' EXAMINATION.

Mr. MCKEE—Has the Premier obtained a reply to the question I asked recently about the medical examination of employees at the Port Pirie uranium treatment plant?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I received the following report:—

The results of blood examinations are treated as confidential between the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science and the medical practitioner of the patient involved. However, if any employee of the Radium Hill project desires more information regarding medical examinations the management of the project will make arrangements for such employee to interview an appropriate medical authority.

LOXTON DRAINAGE SCHEME.

Mr. STOTT—Recently the Minister of Irrigation told me that the urgent matter of a comprehensive drainage scheme for the Loxton soldier settlement area was being negotiated with the Commonwealth. Can he say when the work is likely to commence and whether any officers of Commonwealth or State departments will visit Loxton next week for the purpose of making surveys with a view to getting under way the work on this important project?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—The Commonwealth officer (Mr. McDonald) and Mr. Black of the Lands Department made an appointment to meet Loxton growers today but we had a telegram from the Loxton settlers saying that it was not convenient, so another date has to be arranged. Regarding the approach to the Commonwealth, I have had word from the Minister that he would like to meet me within the next fortnight to discuss plans for the commencement of the drainage scheme.

Mr. STOTT—The Minister of Lands said that Mr. Black and other officers were visiting Loxton this week. I thought that had nothing to do with the comprehensive drainage scheme, but was in relation to the Commonwealth scheme. I suspect that the other inspection may relate to valuations. Can the Minister now tell me whether the Commonwealth officers will be visiting Loxton in relation to the comprehensive drainage scheme?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—I am sorry if I did not make it clear to the honourable member that the Commonwealth members are coming to discuss the comprehensive drainage scheme with me soon.

Mr. Stott—That has nothing to do with the visit this week?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—No.

WALLAROO CLOTHING COMPANY.

Mr. HUGHES—In view of strong rumours circulating among prominent business men in the Wallaroo district that the Wallaroo Clothing Company will cease to operate in that town towards the end of the year, and because of a letter which I understand has been received by all employees attached to the factory at Wallaroo asking whether they would be prepared to transfer to Elizabeth, will the Premier say whether an undertaking has been given to the Government by the company referred to that the establishment of the factory at Elizabeth will not affect the continued operation of its Wallaroo factory?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Representatives of the company interviewed me some time ago with a view to establishing a factory at Elizabeth. I informed them that the Government was not interested in moving an already established company in the country to another location, but said that it would give further assistance to enable the company to extend its activities at Wallaroo. The company said that a number of things prevented its undertaking such an expansion and asked, as an alternative, that it be allowed to establish a portion of its business at Elizabeth, provided it maintained the present business at Wallaroo, and that matter went before the Industries Development Committee. I have not spoken to the chairman of the committee but I have no doubt that the same assurance was given to it. I know the committee would be most anxious for that to be the case. I have no hesitation in saying that the Government would assist in establishing the industry at Elizabeth only on the distinct understanding that it was not in any way at the expense of the Wallaroo factory.

BOOK REPLACEMENTS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have been informed that some children at the Marion high school have not received the same consideration as is to be extended to children at the Forbes primary school in respect of property lost because of fire. In particular, some children at the Marion high school did not have their first year books replaced as they were on the point of going into the second year. Can the Minister of Education ascertain the facts? If he can, will he let me have them by correspondence during the recess?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to do so. Speaking from memory, I think it was only a few weeks ago that I saw a lengthy report from the Director of Education embodying the reports of the then headmaster of the Marion high school and of the Superintendent, and everything appeared to be satisfactorily concluded. I was asked to approve the recommended final payment. The total amount to be paid out under the several headings was shown, and I approved it. There was no suggestion of any dissatisfaction or inequality there. However, I shall be only too pleased to investigate the matter and, if the honourable member could obtain details for me, I should be pleased to take those up specifically.

HOUSING LOANS.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I have been approached by two of my constituents who have applied to either the State Bank or the Savings Bank for loans to build houses on blocks already purchased, and they have been advised that the bank is not now making advances. I learned subsequently—I do not know whether it is true—that the banks are making advances to suitable applicants beyond a radius of 15 miles from the General Post Office. Can the Premier say what is the present position?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yesterday, I told the honourable member for Norwood that the State Bank and the Savings Bank had had to close their application lists to new applicants for the time being until finance was available, because applications had banked up severely. I believe both those institutions have continued to allow applications from country areas to come in. They have always given some preference to housing in country areas and they are still taking applications where housing is necessary for production in the country. I hope that immediately after the Loan Council meeting (which I believe will be held next month) I shall be able to make some financial adjustment which will probably enable the State Bank again to receive applications. But, until some finality is reached as to what amount of money will be available for next year, in view of the commitments for major works already started and in hand, I prefer for the moment not to make any adjustment until we have some solid ground to stand upon. I can give the honourable member an assurance that as soon as possible I shall make an announcement.

BIRKENHEAD BRIDGE.

Mr. TAPPING—On April 6 I referred to the frequent openings of the Birkenhead bridge and the chaos they caused to traffic. The reply given to me from the Commissioner of Highways, through the Minister of Works, was as follows:—

The making of regulations to limit openings of Birkenhead bridge is at present under consideration and when the extent of my powers under the Highways Act has been ascertained I will submit a recommendation.

I am bringing this matter forward again because in the last fortnight restrictions have been imposed on vehicles over 5 tons using Jervois bridge and this traffic is now being diverted over the Birkenhead bridge. Further, on June 26 tramways buses that normally use Jervois bridge will be diverted over the Birkenhead bridge and this will cause further chaotic conditions. Will the Premier, as Acting Minister of Roads during the Minister's absence overseas, take steps to stabilize traffic over the Birkenhead Bridge?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE.

Mr. RALSTON—Has the Minister of Education a reply to a question I asked on April 21 about the disparity that existed between the £7 10s. charged by the Education Department and the £165 charged by Tractor Training Service for a correspondence course?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Unfortunately, the organization mentioned by the honourable member and the course it conducts do not appear to be subject to the requirements of the section of the Education Act which governs the licensing of private technical schools. I should like to quote two relevant sections of the Act, which provide as follows:—

59f. (1) Subject to this Part, if the Minister is satisfied that any school in respect of which a licence is applied for is provided with competent instructors, suitable accommodation and sufficient equipment for the teaching of the trades intended to be taught, and is furnishing or is prepared to furnish proper instruction in those trades, at reasonable fees, the Minister shall grant the applicant a licence to conduct that school as a private technical school for the teaching of those trades.

This section, as honourable members will have appreciated, empowers me to grant a licence where I am satisfied that a private technical school provides satisfactory instruction, suitable accommodation and adequate equipment for teaching of the appropriate trade at a

reasonable fee, and that the school is prepared to furnish appropriate instruction in that grade. Section 59b provides:—

Where a trade is taught by correspondence, any premises from which written matter giving instruction in the trade is sent to pupils or to which written or other work done by pupils is sent for correction or examination, shall for the purpose of this Part be deemed to be premises in which that trade is taught, and to be a private technical school.

As the Tractor Training Service (Australia Pty. Ltd.) has no office in this State nor any premises as prescribed in Section 59b it is not required to be licensed as a private technical school. In such circumstances, it does not appear to be in my power under the Act to require it to conform to the standards of instruction, accommodation, equipment, and fees which are observed in investigating the claims of a private technical school to be licensed in this State. Any persons contemplating undertaking this course should therefore be made aware that it is not subject in any way to inspection or approval by the Education Department.

Mr. RALSTON—Will the Minister of Education take up with the Attorney-General the question of amending the Education Act to control, in any way possible, the standards of correspondence courses in this State in those instances where no office is established within the State?

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

SALES TAX ON BUSES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Premier received any information from the appropriate Federal Minister in relation to sales tax on buses licensed by the Tramways Trust to provide a service in the metropolitan area and other places, and was he successful in obtaining information about the likely reduction of the tax?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No, not yet.

EIGHT MILE CREEK RENTALS.

Mr. RALSTON—My question is in response to a request received from war service settlers in the Eight Mile Creek area for information relative to the annual rental payable on their properties. It seems that the rental has recently been increased and the settlers wish to know if this is a final adjustment and whether the amounts fixed will apply throughout the period of the leases. Is the Minister of Repatriation able to supply that information?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—Yes; I understand the honourable member rang the Lands Department a few days ago regarding Eight Mile Creek settlers and I have obtained the following reply:—

The final rentals and charges for improvements on holdings in the Eight Mile Creek area have been fixed and the settlers were advised on April 29, 1960. The rentals are payable in perpetuity under the leases and the charges for improvements are payable in 29 payments of principal together with interest at the rate of 3½ per cent on the balance remaining unpaid from time to time. Rents on war service holdings are payable to the Commonwealth and not the State and there is no provision in the Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State for settlement of ex-servicemen for any appeals against rentals. If it could be shown by the lessee that under proper management the returns from the property would not enable the rent to be paid there seems little doubt that the settler would be given an opportunity of submitting his case for consideration. The Agreement provides that lessees of dry lands holdings may freehold the land after it has been held for 10 years at the option prices as determined by the State and the Commonwealth.

This, of course, applies also to settlers at Eight Mile Creek. Special cases have been approved under the 10-year period.

ALIENS' LAND TRANSACTIONS.

Mr. STOTT—Has the Minister any further information in relation to the matter I raised last week of aliens having to get the permission of the Minister of Lands before signing forms for the transfer of land?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—There is a Bill now before the House.

BLANCHETOWN BRIDGE.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Works say whether the preliminary work in connection with the Blanchetown bridge is nearing a stage where specifications can be completed and tenders called for the erection of the bridge?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—My colleague, the Minister of Roads, states that the gang at Blanchetown at present is a road construction gang constructing the approaches to the Blanchetown bridge. This gang will not be moved until as much as can be done at present has been completed. It is expected that tenders for the construction of the bridge will be called in June of this year.

SWINE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

Later: The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's amendments.

LAW OF PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from May 11. Page 472.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I support the Bill, which has two purposes. The first is to remove a provision in the Act that requires that aliens should get the consent of the Minister of Lands for dealings in land. At one stage the legislation had the effect of causing naturalizations, because people found that there was a considerable material advantage to them in gaining naturalization. It has been a law that has been retained by this State alone for some time. Other matters make it advantageous for people to gain naturalization and in these days they work very much to that end, but in this matter an unwarranted hardship is caused to some people. I know that many in my district have had difficulties in land transactions because applications have to be made and, although the Minister has been extremely helpful to me (and I am sure to other members) in expediting them, it has often meant that sales have been difficult. Also, where a policy has been laid down it has meant that some aliens have not been able to get land, when generally speaking there was not very much against their obtaining the land and titles. In all circumstances I think the Government has been wise in acceding to the requests that have come from many sections of the community, particularly the Good Neighbour Council and migrant groups, for the removal of the provision. I support the move.

The other purpose of the Bill is to alter the jurisdiction of the Local Court over applications under the Act as between husband and wife. Section 105 provides for wives bringing applications for determination by the court in respect to ownership of matrimonial property as between husband and wife. Up to the present the jurisdiction of the Local Court has been limited to a property value of £750. The Bill raises that figure to £1,250, but my quibble is that the amendment does not go far enough as the difference between

£750 and £1,250 in the value of property these days is not great. It is clear that where real property is involved (and generally this is a dispute on real property that comes before the court) the sale will not be within the jurisdiction of the Local Court. Because wives have to go to the Supreme Court real hardship is occasioned. With the new judges appointed to that court the civil list is getting shorter. The position is that an originating summons is taken out by the wife to go before a judge in chambers to get an order. The husband presents an affidavit in dispute and then the judge will not determine the matter in chambers, but says he wants to hear oral evidence, so the matter is referred to the court. It is then included in the civil list. I have a case that has been in that list for 15 months and during that time the wife has been in considerable difficulties. If it had been in the Local Court the matter would have been dealt with within four months. The matter could have been dealt with more expeditiously there because when a matter goes to the Local Court it is obvious what will happen. In many instances there is no doubt what will happen once a case reaches that court. Because of the procedure in the Supreme Court it is difficult to get matters dealt with expeditiously, and it is desirable that they should be dealt with that way. I have some misgivings about the jurisdiction being raised to £1,250. In some instances the Local Court has jurisdiction in property matters up to £4,000. There is no doubt that the Local Court is competent to determine these questions.

If the Bill had been introduced in other circumstances I would have moved in Committee for the amount to be increased to a more substantial figure, but the Minister has pointed out that we have not much time to deal with the Bill in this part of the session. It is desirable that the other amendment should go through rapidly, so I do not intend to hold up the Bill, but I ask the Government to consider the matter I have raised, with the hope that the jurisdiction of the Local Court will be further increased.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I have pleasure in supporting the second reading. I hope that I am not being immodest if I claim to have had some part in persuading the Government to introduce the Bill, and certainly that part dealing with land transactions by aliens. I cannot claim to have been the first to raise the matter because *Hansard* shows that the former member for Burnside (Mr.

Geoffrey T. Clarke) first raised it in a question to the Minister of Lands in October, 1958. I am glad to say that as a result of his question, and perhaps as a result of those I asked last session, the Government has introduced this Bill to get rid of what was originally a war-time measure. I hope that the good example the Government is setting in this matter will be followed in connection with other controls that were first introduced as war-time measures about 15 years ago. I commend the Minister of Lands for his lead and I hope that other Ministers will follow suit in removing war-time controls. There can be no doubt that the provision with regard to land transactions by aliens is a good one and that we should get back to the position that obtained in this State and in most British countries until the commencement of the war. This provision is long overdue and I shall be glad if the other place will sit long enough to deal with it before going into recess, but perhaps that is hoping for too much.

I support the second provision in the Bill, but cannot entirely agree with Mr. Dunstan. I do not believe that it would be appropriate to increase the jurisdiction of the Local Court beyond £1,250 in this matter. We know that its general jurisdiction is up to £1,250, and it is only right and proper that the jurisdiction on property matters should be in accordance with that jurisdiction, and to that extent Mr. Dunstan and I are at one. I cannot deny what he said about delays in the Supreme Court but I do not think that the appropriate way to get over the delays is as he suggests, by increasing the jurisdiction of the Local Court, I presume, by an amendment of the Local Courts Act. I think that the limit of £1,250 under present circumstances is the appropriate one, and that other steps could be taken to expedite the work in the Supreme Court. With these few remarks I heartily support the second reading.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—I commend the Government for introducing the Bill, which is long overdue. It should become law as soon as possible. I approve the provision dealing with land transactions by aliens because it is a matter I have raised many times previously. I support the other provision because I consider it to be a good move. I hope there will be no opposition to the Bill.

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

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959. Read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is two-fold. The first, which is covered by clause 4, is to remove the provisions of the principal Act that a third party policy may limit liability to £4,000 in respect of any one passenger. Compulsory third party insurance was, as members know, introduced some 25 years ago when a limit of £2,000 was placed on the cover for relatives and passengers, the reason being that claims by relatives and friends might be made by collusion—in other words, “rigged.” In the course of time the limit for relatives was removed and the limit for passengers was increased to £4,000.

The Government has given some thought to this matter recently, more particularly since the anomalies brought about by the provisions in the new Act relating to uninsured vehicles and claims by spouses have been brought to its attention. It has come to the conclusion that it is not reasonable to limit the rights of a large number of persons because of the possibility of some few cases of fraud. The Government feels that the proper way to deal with collusive claims is to have them properly heard and adjudicated in the courts. There are no limits in New South Wales and Queensland. In Tasmania there is a general limit of £5,000 per person and £50,000 per accident, but no limit for any specified class of persons as such. In Western Australia and Victoria the limit for passengers—still £2,000—is still in force.

The Government has decided that New South Wales and Queensland should be followed, and accordingly clause 4 of this Bill repeals subsection (2) of section 104 which relates to the limits for passengers. The same clause repeals subsection (2) of both sections 112 and 113 by way of consequential amendments. The second object of the Bill, covered by clause 5, is to make it clear that the section introduced into the principal Act last year covering claims by spouses is not to have retrospective operation. I am advised that there could be some doubts on this matter, and clause 5 of the present Bill is designed to remove them.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I have studied the Bill as well as I can although the parent Act, passed only last year, is not yet available for comparison. The bound volumes are not yet to hand and the files of last year's Bills have apparently disappeared from the ken of man. However, as the Treasurer pointed out, there are only two clauses suggested for amendment. By his remarks, we are exhorted to follow the excellent example of Queensland and New South Wales in removing our present limitation on damages. Having a high regard for the Legislatures in both those States, and particularly for the wisdom of the Legislature in New South Wales, which has been controlled for so many years by the Party I have the honour to lead in this House, I am sure that the example of that Chamber is well worth following.

Mr. Millhouse—New South Wales has a Legislative Council.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am grateful for the honourable member for Mitcham's reference to Legislative Councils. I remind him that for many years, since 1921 or 1922, there has been no Legislative Council in Queensland. It was abolished by the then Labor Government and, although the opponents of Labor have been in power on two occasions since then and are in power today, there is no suggestion that the Legislative Council should be restored in that State. I think the interjection by the honourable member for Mitcham only adds to the evidence in support of accepting the amendment proposed in clause 4. As regards the retrospectivity suggested, it is fairly difficult to provide for retrospectivity in regard to an Act passed only last year.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—The point was that, when we passed the Act last year, it was probably retrospective for very many years, and was not intended to be.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That may be so. As I say, I am in some difficulty because I have had no opportunity of comparing this Bill with the parent Act. One point exercising my mind is whether the extension of the Act provided for in the Bill could lead to an increase in third party insurance premiums. If the Treasurer could give an assurance on that, I should be happy for the Bill to pass. On the other hand, we are already covered so far as third party insurance is concerned in this State because the premiums permitted under that section are subject to investigation by the Premiums Committee, but I should not like to think that the Premiums Committee,

which has done a good job since it was established, should be importuned to further increases because of this comparatively small but nevertheless just amendment of the Act. I support the Bill.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I am not so sure that the honourable Leader will be as happy about it as he is now when he sees the sorry picture that similar legislation has created for his Party in New South Wales. I think it wise that the House should know what we are doing in these circumstances and where this is leading us. The Leader's concluding remarks were rather informative of his approach to this problem. He wants his cake but does not want to pay for it. He is happy to have the increased benefits resulting from this amendment, which cuts out the limit for certain categories of people under third party insurance, but he does not want to pay for it.

For his information, I have the comparative costs of third party insurance in New South Wales, which I thought I might state for the benefit of my friends on the Opposition benches. In New South Wales, taking the *Australasian Insurance and Banking Record* figures for April this year, the losses in New South Wales on third party motor insurance amounted to £1,270,000 gross, from which must be deducted interest on funds and certain other small items, to be off-set against the gross losses, of £622,000 odd, leaving a net loss of £651,034 for the year ending June 30, 1959. If that is not sufficient assurance to my friends on the Opposition benches that this is not a very profitable field to be in, I now quote the figures which the same *Record* gives of the accumulated losses for the last 16 years in New South Wales in this one field of third party insurance—namely, £4,540,000. That is their accumulated losses. In New South Wales, Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle are included in their metropolitan area, which is the high rate premium area where people pay £10 13s. a year.

Mr. Millhouse—Is that third party?

Mr. SHANNON—The third party insurance premium is £10 13s. a year in New South Wales in the areas I have just mentioned, which we would classify as our metropolitan area. In the country areas in New South Wales they pay only £6 13s. a year. Our Premiums Committee will be faced with the problem of an increased rate for South Australia for third party insurance. In the high rated areas in New South Wales, the premium is £10 13s. whereas in a comparable area in

South Australia, within 20 miles of the G.P.O., it is £6 5s. Again, whereas the premium in the country area of New South Wales is £6 13s., in the South Australian country area the rate is £4. As long as we know where we are going I have no objection, but I do not want anybody to be led into believing that we can have these increased benefits without some extra payment.

Mr. O'Halloran—Have you looked at the parent Act passed last year?

Mr. SHANNON—No, I have not, and the honourable the Leader has not.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is my trouble.

Mr. SHANNON—It is no trouble at all. I do not need to look at the parent Act; I note only the policy put forward by the Treasurer. That policy was sufficient guide to give me a lead as to where we are heading. I have no objection to falling into line with other States, although in this instance we are not falling into line with all other States. New South Wales has created this upper limit for these restricted categories of people injured in third party accidents, but Victoria has not. In fact, Victoria still retains a £2,000 upper limit, which we had originally for these categories of persons.

Mr. O'Halloran—What are their premiums like?

Mr. SHANNON—I have not the figures here, but I think they are slightly higher than ours. They are hardly comparable with ours because they have a lower upper limit than we have: ours was £4,000 whereas Victoria's was £2,000.

Mr. O'Halloran—On your argument then, theirs should be less than ours?

Mr. SHANNON—Yes, they should be, because this is not a very profitable field, even for South Australia. We are on a very reasonable insurance rate for this risk (probably the most reasonable in the Commonwealth so far as premiums are concerned), but to expect, as the Leader did expect, that there would be no material change in the premium rate for these additional charges placed upon the fund that the premiums create is to fly in the face of a certainty. Nothing else can possibly come from it but an increased premium rate, which will affect every motor car owner in the State. Everyone has to have third party insurance before he can put his vehicle on the road. So every motorist in South Australia will have to bear his share of any increased premium that may result from anything we do here. That must always be borne in mind.

I do not know exactly how many there are on our roads, but there must be more than 500,000 vehicles, the owners of which will all have to pay extra premiums if we grant these privileges to restricted categories of people. Not so long ago we were dealing with people injured in cars that were not insured. I am not criticizing that. It is just that we should protect the unfortunate person knocked down by some fly-by-night who has stolen a car and is not insured for third party risk. We should take steps to protect the interests of the injured party. These things cannot be done for nothing. I am not arguing against this legislation: I am merely pointing out the almost essential need for insurance companies to recompense themselves by charging increased premiums.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—Does the honourable member support the Bill?

Mr. SHANNON—If the Treasurer wants a division, I have not much chance of beating him, as he well knew before he asked me that silly question. After all, as regards opposing a Bill brought in by the Government and supported by the Labor Party, my honourable friend the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) discovered the other day how innocuous is the position in such circumstances. So I do not propose to call for a division, with only myself on one side. That would not be very wise. Nor did I rise to make a speech along those lines. I rose only to indicate that everybody who owns a motor car can expect to pay a little more for third party insurance when this amendment becomes law.

Mr. KING (Chaffey)—I support this Bill. I thank the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) for a most timely reminder in the matter of third party insurance premiums. The comparisons he uses are not entirely valid because the premium rates are invariably fixed by experience and, until experience has been experienced, the committee in charge has no evidence on which to base its premiums. In New South Wales, the damage is assessed by a jury. It has been frequently suggested in New South Wales newspapers that juries are too greatly influenced by emotional considerations in fixing damages, but this would not apply to a court of judges sitting in cool impartiality afterwards. In South Australia the damages will be assessed by judges who are, I imagine, more competent to assess damages. Consequently, until we have had experience on how the judges will operate under this legislation, any prognostications

about the future of premiums will have to remain in the air. In the meantime, however, there is this vital difference. I support the second reading.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The point raised by the Leader and the member for Onkaparinga is that if there is any increase in the benefits paid under an insurance scheme the cost of insurance will ultimately increase, but I believe many motorists would be willing to accept an addition to the cost to know they were covered in relation to passengers travelling in their cars. At one time people were almost afraid to take strangers or people other than members of their families in their cars because, if they had the misfortune to have a slight mishap, they could be liable for substantial damages.

Mr. Jenkins—And advantage has been taken of that.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—When Sir Edgar Bean reported on this matter originally he did not report in relation to the cost. However, as chairman of the Premiums Committee (which has operated fairly and given much satisfaction), he said:—

The cost of doing this would be relatively small and would ultimately be covered by a small increase in premiums.

I doubt whether more than a few isolated cases would arise in the course of a year but that does not alter the fact that the people concerned in those isolated cases should have the same justice as everyone. I thank members for their consideration. I doubt whether it would be any advantage to suspend Standing Orders to put the Bill through its remaining stages today as I doubt whether it would be received and dealt with in another place today. However, it will be proceeded with in another place after the recess.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.52 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 9, at 2 p.m.