HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, September 7, 1960.

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

QUESTIONS.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—On August 17, in reply to my question relating to portable cement floors in certain school buildings, the Minister of Works said something about the thickness of the floors. From the Minister's reply to a subsequent question on August 18 I gained the impression that these floors were 6in. thick. In the temporary absence from the Chamber of the Minister of Works, will the Premier ascertain whether the architect's report indicated that a 3in. thickness could be used instead of 6in.?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will see if I can get this information for the honourable member.

SOUTH-EASTERN RAIL SERVICE.

Mr. HARDING—During August trials of roomette and twinette cars were conducted on the south-eastern railway line. Will the Premier (as Acting Minister of Railways) obtain a report on those trials and make it available to members?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have had favourable reports about these cars, but I have not yet seen the report of the Railways Commissioner as to whether patronage was sufficient to justify their continued use. I will get a report for the honourable member.

POLICE PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In last Friday's *News*, under the heading of "Crown View 'A Slight' —S.M." it was reported that Mr. D. F. Wilson, S.M., in giving judgment in an action against Donald Gilbert Willison, carrier, of Gordon Street, Albert Park, said:—

All these cases, and others of comparable complexity, are habitually conducted by Crown Law officers.

He went on to say that although it was well known that the defence would invoke section 92 of the Federal Constitution and that the Police Department had applied to the Crown Law Office for assistance, no officer of the Crown Law Office was made available. In view of the Special Magistrate's statement, will the Minister of Education ask the Attorney-General whether the Crown Law Office will continue to leave to the Police Department the conduct of cases for which police officers are not equipped with the legal knowledge? Will he also state whether the country is to be put to unnecessary expense for no avail because of police officers being asked to prosecute in cases involving section 92?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I read the remarks of the learned Special Magistrate and was somewhat intrigued by his use of extremely picturesque language. I will pass the honourable member's statement and questions to the Attorney-General and bring down a reply when the House resumes.

FIRE STATION FOR ELIZABETH.

Mr. CLARK—Recently I forwarded to the Premier a petition signed by over 700 residents of Elizabeth in the following terms:—

We, the undersigned residents of Elizabeth, respectfully draw the honourable the Treasurer's attention to the fact that the safety of life and of property at Elizabeth is being and will be threatened so long as the parties concerned cannot agree to a formula for financing a permanent fire station at Elizabeth. Accordingly, we humbly petition the honourable the Treasurer to increase the State Government's grant to the South Australian Fire Brigades Board to the extent necessary to offset the reduced contributions which the insurance companies are prepared to pay towards financing a permanent fire station in a district containing so many houses owned by an instrumentality of the State.

Has the Premier yet had time to consider this matter and, if so, has any decision been made?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Another honourable member (Mr. Tapping) some time ago asked two questions about the provision of fire protection for new areas, and I asked the Chairman of the Fire Brigades Board to report on what steps the board was taking to increase its services to meet the needs of additional housing areas. The question of the honourable member for Gawler presupposes that there has been some reluctance on the part of the Government to meet its share of the cost of financing the Fire Brigades Board in the metropolitan area. Although there is by Act passed, I think, in 1937 or 1938 a permanent statutory limitation upon the amount that the Government should provide (I think it is £10,000), the Government has always contributed on the same percentage basis as if the limitation did not apply. Each year the Auditor-General reports on the amount proposed to be spent by the Fire Brigades Board, and the Government's share is on the basis previously determined. That is amply provided for in the Estimates. The expansion

of the Fire Brigades Board has not been restricted because the Government has not taken up its allocation of the additional cost: the Government has always provided its full share under the proportions provided for at the time of the board's establishment. It is really a question of whether the local councils and the fire insurance companies consider this additional protection necessary. The Government has no representation on the board, except that it nominates the chairman, if I remember correctly. All the other members, however, are nominated by insurance companies and local councils.

YUNTA TO MARTIN'S WELL ROAD.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My question is ancillary to a reply that the Minister of Works gave me last week regarding a deputation from the North-Eastern Stockowners Association for certain improvements to be made in roads in pastoral areas. Although the Minister of Works gave a comprehensive review of the programme for the year he did not specifically mention the road from Yunta to Martin's Well, which was the main concern of the deputation. Can the Minister say what is proposed to be done to improve this road soon?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable Leader's deputation was taken by the Engineer-in-Chief in my unavoidable absence, and the report, on my reading of it, did not disclose that the deputation desired information on that particular road, but, as the honourable Leader has now named that road, I have a report from the Engineer for Water Supply which indicates that the long dry spell and very heavy traffic on the road between Yunta and Martin's Well, via Curnamona, has caused the road to deteriorate, particularly in an eight-mile section in Koonamore Station. Work has commenced on coating this eight-mile section with rubble and approximately four miles of it has been completed. Work is continuing on the remainder of the section. Before this project was started, a temporary deviation road 35 miles in length was constructed from Curnamona Station to Mount Victor Woolshed to bypass the section being rubbled.

The remainder of the road from Yunta to Martin's Well is in reasonable condition, although there are numerous small patches where rubbling will be carried out at the end of the main rubbling job if rain between now and then does not make it unnecessary. It will take approximately one month to complete the remaining four miles of the bad section, and another month to do the patching on the remainder of the road. It is anticipated that all of the work should be completed by the end of November.

LOCK AND MINNIPA SCHOOLS.

Mr. BOCKELBERG—Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the Lock and Minnipa schools?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have received a report from the Director of Education in regard to a status of these schools. He states that there would be only 14 secondary children at Minnipa in 1961 and that this number is plainly too few to justify the establishment of Minnipa as a higher primary or as an area school.

In regard to Lock, he reports that the number of secondary scholars in 1961 would be 18 only. This number might be increased to 22 if three children from Murdinga and one from Tooligie Siding were to attend. Unless these two schools were closed and transport provided, there would be no certainty that the four children would attend. The numbers at Lock are not really sufficient to warrant the establishment of an area school in 1961. It seems likely that in 1962 the total number of secondary scholars would be considerably greater, maybe as many as 31 with a possibility of 10 or 11 others from nearby schools. In addition, these larger numbers will probably continue at least until 1965. I, therefore, approve of the Director's recommendations that the status of Minnipa school be not raised at present and that a decision on the establishment of an area school at Lock be deferred until June, 1961, on the understanding that the matter will then be submitted to me again in the light of the anticipated numbers for 1962.

GLANVILLE-ETHELTON WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. TAPPING—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about discoloured water in the Glanville-Ethelton area?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The Engineer-in-Chief reports that his department has not received any complaints from consumers in the Glanville-Ethelton area during recent weeks. It is quite possible that, occasionally, the water in the mains may be discoloured due to the fact that at this time of the year water men are flushing the mains and testing fireplugs to ensure that they are serviceable for the approaching summer. Furthermore, to improve supplies in the area, some of the large feeder

mains are being cement-lined. This process could also result in temporary discolouration of the water. Recently, a number of residents in the district expressed their appreciation of the improvement to the water services to their properties.

LAND AT PORT PIRIE.

Mr. McKEE—Can the Minister of Education say whether the Port Pirie corporation has replied to his department regarding the offer it has made for land on the corner of Mary Elie Street and Wandearah Road, Port Pirie?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Some time ago, as a result of representations made to me by the honourable member and correspondence from the local council, I asked Cabinet for authority to negotiate for the purchase of the land, and Cabinet authorized me to make an offer to the council, which I did. I have no knowledge of any reply. If one has not been received in the department, I will give instructions for a follow-up letter to be sent immediately and advise the honourable member as soon as I have any result.

TELEVISION IN SCHOOLS.

Mr. RALSTON—Recently I asked the Minister of Education a question relating to the policy of his department regarding the use of television for educational purposes in schools. The excellent answer given by the Minister was much appreciated but, in the course of his reply, he said the department was further investigating the use of television to demonstrate the principles of education and teaching to the student teachers in the practising schools to assist them in their studies. Can the Minister say whether a further demonstration has taken place and, if so, with what result?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes. At my request, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, through Channel 2, is providing three experimental telecasts as demonstrations to the students at our teachers' colleges. The second was held this morning, and I viewed it. It was the second experimental televised demonstration lesson given at the Payneham practising school, by Mr. Percy McDonald, Master of Method, to Grade VII on the subject of geometry. The telecast was produced by Mr. John Cockcroft and Mr. G. Anderson of A.B.S. 2 staff, conjointly with Mr. A. Baddams, Supervisor of Visual Aids, and Mr. Colin Thiele, Lecturer of Wattle Park Teachers College. About 800 Teachers College students and more than 20 schools also viewed the lesson. Viewers were shown the cameras, staging and all the other T.V. equipment necessary for the telecast, and the general conditions under which both teacher and class work, so as to assess better the value of the lesson as a demonstration to them. The whole emphasis was on the lesson as a demonstration to student teachers. The Superintendent of Recruiting and Training (Mr. A. W. Jones) reported to me that the students at the Teachers Colleges were favourably impressed with the lesson, as being real, natural and generally valuable.

I am much indebted to the A.B.C. for this experimental use of television in our schools on a limited scale. It will enable the potentialities of television for school use to be assessed and will provide selected teachers with first-hand experience in its use as a teaching aid. Further experiments will be necessary before final opinions can be expressed as to how effective television will be as a medium for direct teaching or as a teaching aid for amplification and illustration of lessons. Another avenue of inquiry will be whether television is better than a first-class sound movie film, especially if this is in colour. Most of our schools are already equipped with projectors for movie films and there is a large and ever increasing film library from which films may be obtained readily and without charge. However, at present we cannot afford to provide or subsidize television sets in the schools.

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE.

Mr. STOTT—Regarding the privilege of freedom of speech in Parliament, Erskine May in his *Parliamentary Practice* (16th edition), at page 48, states:—

> Freedom of speech is a privilege essential to every free council or legislature. Its principle was well stated by the Commons, at a conference on December 11, 1667.

Further down on that page he states:—

> There could be no assured Government by the people, or any part of the people, unless their representatives had unquestioned possession of this privilege . . . the Commons did oftentimes, under Edward III, discuss and debate amongst themselves many things concerning the King's prerogative, and agreed upon petitions for laws to be made directly against his prerogative, as may appear by divers of the said petitions; yet they were never interrupted in their consultations, nor received check for the same.

On page 49 he states:—

> He would have been a bold king indeed who had attempted to stop discussion in the House of Lords.

On page 836, regarding public petitions, the following appears:—

The right of petitioning the Crown and Parliament for redress of grievances is acknowledged as a fundamental principle of the Constitution.

On page 837 he states:—

The rights of petitioners and the power of the House to deal with petitions were laid down by two resolutions of the Commons in 1669: "That it is the inherent right of every commoner in England to prepare and present petitions to the House of Commons in case of grievance, and the House of Commons to receive the same." "That it is an undoubted right and privilege of the Commons to judge and determine, touching the nature and matter of such petitions, how far they are fit and unfit to be received."

I am concerned at the growing practice in this House of preventing members from moving the suspension of Standing Orders to exercise their privilege of free speech. It occurred in 1938 when, in moving an amendment to a certain Bill, I sought the suspension of Standing Orders but I was denied that right. Again on two or three occasions recently a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable a member to be heard has been negatived by this House. I have quoted what is recognized in this House as the procedure to be adopted. Will the Premier in future favourably consider the rights of private members to be heard in this House without being stopped from presenting their case to Parliament?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will look up the authority from which he has just quoted, he will see that the control of this House is always in its own hands. Parliament can decide at any time, within its Standing Orders, what matters it will or will not consider: that is a prerogative of Parliament that is clearly laid down. That is not the prerogative of the Government, but of Parliament itself. Regarding the question of how widely we should debate questions, that of course comes down to how long members want the House to sit. If, on discussion of a Bill that is specific in its nature, members wish to bring up all sorts of other extraneous questions the sittings of the House will obviously be prolonged through discussing things that frequently are irrelevant to the matter before the House. I listened with much interest to a debate in the Commonwealth Parliament last night in which Mr. Thompson, an Opposition member who was once a member in this House, spoke on this very subject. I was interested in what he said because he deplored the fact that in the Commonwealth Parliament everyone was completely regimented and did not have the same freedom as he had been used to in this House.

On the general question of privileges to members, no Parliament in the world gives members more privileges and opportunities to ventilate their opinions than does this one. I cannot remember in 22 years the Government's ever applying the gag to any debate. As honourable members know, frequently private members' day is not wholly taken up by private members' business; we often go on with Government business because we have dealt with all the matters private members wish to place before us. Within Standing Orders honourable members have an opportunity to express themselves. Any honourable member could this afternoon give notice of motion for the next Wednesday sitting to discuss any matter he likes, either by motion or by legislation. If the honourable member for Ridley infers that there is a limitation on what members may do here, I emphatically deny that that limitation exists. The Leader of the Opposition has two matters before the House for debate this afternoon, and any member who desires can give notice of motion on any topic for discussion at the next Wednesday afternoon sitting.

Mr. STOTT—With the greatest respect to the Premier, I am concerned about two important points. The first is that on several occasions, as the Premier would know, when a Government Bill or some other Bill has been presented to this House and a member has desired to move an amendment to deal with a matter not within the four corners of the Bill, he has to move a special Contingent Notice of Motion that, contingently on the Bill being read a second time, the Committee have power to consider a clause covering the subject in his amendment. I am concerned that I was once prevented from even moving a Contingent Notice of Motion, as the House decided not to allow me the right to explain even the purpose of the amendment. That prevented the freedom of speech of members to say what they wanted to.

Mr. Shannon—You could have introduced a separate Bill!

Mr. STOTT—This question is addressed to the Speaker.

The SPEAKER—I hope the honourable member will not debate the question.

Mr. STOTT—I am making it perfectly clear. My purpose is to preserve the right

of a member to be heard. I plead with the Premier, for whom I have the greatest respect, to preserve the right of members to be heard whether he agrees with them or not. Secondly, when it was moved that a petition be granted, Parliament was not allowed to debate the matter. Although I agree with the Premier that this is Parliamentary, I point out with the greatest respect that the Premier can influence the numbers in this House to give a member the right to put his case whether he agrees with it or not.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member, of course, is wrong in this respect—at any time a member may move that Standing Orders be suspended to enable him to do what he desires. If a member wishes to give a Contingent Notice of Motion he can move that Standing Orders be suspended to enable him to do that. Whether the House will permit him to do it is another matter, but there is nothing to prevent a member from giving notice that he desires to do a certain thing, and it is then for the House to decide whether it wants to hear him or not. This raises an important question regarding the business of this House. Frequently, important legislation is deferred because the Government knows that if it is introduced all sorts of Contingent Notices of Motion will be brought along that will completely cloud the real issue and ultimately lead to the defeat of the Bill itself. For instance, there is certain social legislation that the Government believes would be highly beneficial to this State but, if the Government brought it in tomorrow, it would be so clouded by Contingent Notices of Motion that the original Bill would never emerge from the House. It becomes a question of priority. Obviously all members cannot speak at once and, if a member believes a matter to be important, he should give Notice of Motion so that time will be allotted for him to have his motion considered. Then the House is, in fact, obliged to hear what he has to say, as he has the right to move it and to be heard uninterrupted.

Mr. SHANNON—I understand that the Standing Orders in this Chamber and those in another place are not on all fours in regard to Contingent Notices of Motion. Will you, Sir, as the Speaker of the House and the most appropriate member of the Standing Orders Committee to answer such a question, take up with the Standing Orders Committee the desirability of our conforming with another place in that respect so that the occupants of the Treasury bench may not be embarrassed by the introduction of legislation which could be the method by which private members might seek to ride on the backs of Government Bills with Contingent Notices of Motion embodying their own ideas about the legislation in question? We should conform with another place in the procedure of bringing in private Bills to give effect to our own ideas on legislation, which I believe does not deny the back bencher ample opportunity, if he can get a majority, at least of airing his views on the proposed amendments. That appears to me to be desirable and something that would facilitate the passage of desirable legislation in Parliament.

The SPEAKER—I will examine the question raised by the honourable member.

ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Has the Minister of Education anything to add to his reply of yesterday to my question about the teaching of English in schools?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yesterday I said that although the criticism of the examiners was possibly valid it was not novel. It had occurred before and I said that I was sufficiently optimistic to think that I would hear it for many years to come. I had in mind a similar criticism I made about six years ago when, at the University, I opened a seminar for secondary teachers of English from departmental schools and from the independent schools and colleges. I have with me an extract from the *Advertiser* of December 14, 1954, which, under the heading "Language Decline Deplored", stated:—

Knowledge and use of the English language, and diction generally, had seriously declined, the Minister of Education (Mr. Pattinson) said yesterday. He was opening a refresher course in English at the University of Adelaide. The course is being held this week in an effort to find the causes of the decline and suggest a remedy. Mr. Pattinson said that the decline was particularly noticeable in the Intermediate examinations for which English was a compulsory subject. Ten years ago, 83 per cent of the students passed in the English examination compared with 73 per cent last year.

Of those who passed in four or five subjects, nearly 10 per cent had failed in English. Mr. Pattinson suggested that perhaps teachers should return to the old method of giving students a thorough grounding in grammar, spelling and parsing. The decline was apparent, not only in schools he inspected, but also at university level and among adults.

It is particularly interesting to me, in view of the repeated criticisms of the present Professor of English at the University, that on that

occasion six years ago the then Professor of English at the Adelaide University, Professor A. N. Jeffares (an undoubted authority on the English language) stated that he agreed with me and said, "The same decline is noticeable in other English-speaking parts of the world." There was fairly general agreement from a number of headmasters and headmistresses of our own schools and colleges. However, some leading educationists strongly disagreed with my opinions, and, as an instance, one distinguished headmaster of one of our leading colleges said:—

If these high level announcements are the prelude to an official attempt to tear up the tremendous advances of recent years, and to put the clock back to giving more importance to formal grammar than to the development of emotional and intellectual awareness, then I feel the main hope of putting fresh life into the content of secondary education lies in the schools which are independent.

With the greatest respect to that criticism, which I read with interest at the time (and I respect the author) I am still completely unrepentant in the views which I held then and which I hold more strongly now. I believe that time and circumstances have confirmed me in those opinions.

MILLICENT PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. CORCORAN—My question relates to the proposed new Millicent primary school, in respect of which there has been much correspondence. Originally the old showgrounds were to be the site for the proposed school, but as a result of later suggestions Cabinet decided that that land should be set aside for hospital purposes. The school committee is concerned lest the construction of the new school be delayed pending the selection of a new site. Can the Minister of Education say whether any decision has been made on a site? I understand that negotiations are taking place with the District Council of Millicent.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Education Department had acquired a site at Millicent for a primary school but representations were made to the Minister of Health by the committee of the Millicent hospital that the school site was highly desirable for a hospital and it would save enormous expense if it were transferred to the proposed Millicent hospital. The Minister of Health raised the matter with me and I discussed it with the Director of Education and received reports and recommendations from him. I also discussed it with the Minister of Works and received a favourable report and recommendation from the Principal Architect of the Public Buildings Department. The matter was then discussed in Cabinet and it was decided that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if the site were transferred from the Education Department to the hospital. Negotiations were then entered into for the acquisition of another site. Several alternative sites had been inspected and last week Cabinet approved of my negotiating with the owner of some land at Millicent for the acquisition of seven acres, plus an additional five acres for a joint recreation ground, or, failing that, for the acquisition of 10 acres as a site for the primary school. I hope these negotiations will be speedily concluded. I am advised that the change in the site will not cause any appreciable delay in the completion of the school.

RAILWAY YARD FEES.

Mr. HARDING—I am most concerned at the recent increase in yard fees charged by agents to stockowners selling cattle, sheep, pigs or calves in the agents' own yards or in rented yards. These fees have been increased by up to 300 per cent in some instances since July. In the temporary absence of the Premier, will the Minister of Works ascertain the rental being charged to stock and station agents for the use of railway yards at Naracoorte, and secondly, when the last increase was made in the fee for the use of the railway yards?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will ask for a report from the Commissioner.

GAWLER LAND.

Mr. CLARK—At last Saturday's Gawler Centenary Show, which the Premier was good enough to open, two councillors of the Gawler corporation spoke to me regarding persistent rumors current in the town that there was a likelihood that the South Australian Housing Trust would take over a large area of land at present occupied by the Gawler aerodrome.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—Who owns that land?

Mr. CLARK—I should think it is the Commonwealth Government. The councillors are naturally interested, because of planning problems, to know if there is any substance in the rumor. Has the Premier any knowledge of this matter or, if not, will he obtain information about it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no knowledge of the question but I do

know that after General Motors-Holden's announced a big expansion at Elizabeth the Housing Trust found it necessary to purchase another fairly substantial area adjacent to Elizabeth for housing. I do not think this is the block to which the honourable member is referring.

Mr. Clark—No, it is north of Gawler.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will investigate and advise the honourable member.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE GUARDS.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Ever since the military forwent the duty of guarding Government House the police have performed those duties at the gate and guardroom, and I understand they have also carried out certain duties within Government House itself. Although I may be wrong, I learned that the department intends to swear in retired police constables as special constables to perform these duties now performed by ordinary graded police constables. This work has been performed for so long generally by people suffering from some disability or sickness; they have been given this work until they have been able to resume active duties. I believe that the possible new procedure is perturbing the Police Association, and it is contrary to the accepted principles of Labor for special constables to be sworn in to carry out the duties normally performed by constables at certain rates of pay. If I am correct in assuming that it is intended to swear in special constables for these duties, will the Premier have this matter reviewed with the object of retaining police constables, at least at the front gate? If it is found necessary to change the present staffing at Government House, will it be possible to have this work performed by persons not sworn in as special constables?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This matter was examined some time ago, when it was discovered that the duties performed were extremely costly for the amount of benefit that accrued from them. I shall have the matter re-examined and advise the honourable member in due course.

STATE BANK REPORT.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report and balance sheet for the State Bank for the year ended June 30, 1960.

Ordered to be printed.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I draw the attention of the House to some points previously canvassed in connection with proposals to amend this legislation. Perhaps some of those points did not receive the full consideration that their importance merited at the time they were raised. I well remember once that the question of extending the Scaffolding Inspection Act to the whole State was lost in a welter of argument dealing with other amendments to the parent Act. It is the duty of Parliament on all occasions where it is constitutionally and legislatively possible to provide the utmost protection for all citizens, particularly workmen engaged in various occupations with differing types of hazards. I suggest that building work is an occupation meriting special consideration. Indeed, it has received special consideration in those parts of the State to which the Act applies.

I shall briefly refer to the areas of the State to which the Act now applies, which will show conclusively that there are large and important areas not covered by the Act. The latest reprint of the Act embraces all the amendments made prior to 1957. No amendments have been made since then, so it can be regarded as the final version on this matter. Section 3 states:—

> This Act shall apply to—
> (*a*) the municipalities of Adelaide, Brighton, Glenelg, Henley and Grange, Hindmarsh, Kensington and Norwood, Port Adelaide, Prospect, St. Peters, Thebarton, Unley, and Woodville;
> (*b*) the district council districts of Burnside, Campbelltown, Marion, Mitcham, Payneham, Walkerville, West Torrens, Yatala North, and Yatala South;
> (*c*) the Garden Suburb;
> (*d*) the municipalities of Gawler, Kadina, Moonta, Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Peterborough, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Victor Harbour, and Wallaroo, and to the district council district of Kadina; and
> (*e*) any other portion of the State, whether comprised in a municipality or district council district or not, to which the Governor may by proclamation declare that this Act shall apply.

That latter portion is the one I am concerned with this afternoon. I suggest that the idea of extending this Act by proclamation to certain areas and varying those areas by

proclamation from time to time is not the most efficient way of providing for men engaged in the building industry the protection to which they are entitled.

Having looked at the proclamations that have been issued from time to time, I find that on October 17, 1940, a proclamation was issued extending the Act to a radius of six miles from Whyalla post office situated in the township of Whyalla. On March 3, 1960—that is, not quite 10 years later—it was found necessary to extend the area at Whyalla to within a radius of 10 miles from the Whyalla post office. I find also that, although the municipality of Port Pirie is mentioned in the Act, it has been found necessary to extend the area at Port Pirie by proclamation, which was also done on March 3, 1960. It now provides:—

It shall apply to an area within a radius of five miles from the Port Pirie post office. The same thing has occurred in the case of the district council district of Encounter Bay, adjacent to Victor Harbour. There has been a change there, and also one in the area formerly known as the district councils of Yatala North and Yatala South. That is probably because the boundaries of those district councils have been changed and it has been necessary to vary the proclamation in order to do two things: (1) provide for the change in the boundaries, and (2) provide for the inclusion of Elizabeth in the new proclaimed area.

I find also that, although Mount Gambier is mentioned in the Act, it has been necessary —and this was done on March 3, 1960—to extend the provisions to an area within a radius of five miles from the Mount Gambier post office.

I suggest that shows there is much difficulty in administration, particularly in an area where the population and the building activity are growing. It would be much simpler if my suggestion to apply the Act to the whole State were adopted. However, the main point on which I complain is that the Act does not apply to large areas of the State. As far as I can ascertain, Murray Bridge is the only town on the River Murray where the Act applies. As the honourable members know, there are large and growing towns like Waikerie, Loxton, Renmark, Barmera and Berri where the building activities that should be covered by this protective legislation are not subject to such cover. The Act does not apply to the Barossa Valley. Not very long hence Iron Knob will have to be proclaimed under the Act because of the extension of activities by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company in that area.

Mr. Hutchens—It will be patch by patch.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, and while we are waiting for somebody to attach another patch to this patchwork quilt, some unfortunate building trade workman—perhaps more than one—will lose his life. I suggest that if we do not take this step as soon as possible we will be recreant in our duty to these people. The Opposition has been active in this matter over a long period. From the records I find that we made efforts in this respect in 1947, 1948, 1950, 1953 and 1957. Of course, we have had experience of the Premier's attitude to some of the proposals emanating from this side of the House from time to time. He takes much convincing, and thus the Opposition has to perservere to get something done, and that is why these efforts have been made from time to time. I appreciate that some of our suggestions, after mature consideration, have been and will be (provided, of course we live long enough) adopted by the Premier.

Mr. Clark—But never at the time we suggest.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Oh no, he likes to think of these things as things that are very desirable from his viewpoint. I submit that our amendment in 1947 was eminently justified because of the then conditions, and as time has passed it has become more and more justified because of the increasing height of buildings, not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the country districts. It therefore becomes incumbent on Parliament to make the amendment I have suggested.

Mr. Shannon—Have you any figures regarding accidents in the country?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—As the Act does not apply to many country areas, no statistics of what happens in those areas would, as far as I know, be available. That is one of the handicaps. Fatalities occur, of course, but there is nothing in the set-up of the Department of Industry, as far as I know, that would differentiate between whether a man was killed by a motor car on the road or whether he died as a result of a building trade accident. That is what we desire to provide against.

Mr. Fred Walsh—It is like closing the door after the horse has gone.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Precisely, and that is what we desire to guard against. For the

life of me I cannot think why we should not pass this legislation. With certain reservations, I believe it is good legislation; I could improve on it, of course, but the major improvement required at the moment is that it should be extended to cover the whole State. In so far as it has been implemented either in the Act or by proclamation, protection is afforded. A person who intends to erect scaffolding has to give notice of his intention. The scaffolding has to be inspected by an authorized person and passed before it can be used. If an accident of any kind occurs it has to be reported immediately to the Inspector of Scaffolding so that an inspection may be made to see whether it was a real accident, whether it was due to some carelessness, or whether the owner of the scaffolding was remiss. We find, therefore, that generally speaking the Act adequately covers building trade workers in those areas where it applies.

I sought information from some other States on what provisions apply there. I had some difficulty because—I have to confess it openly—most States have the same principle as we have in South Australia, namely, it applies to certain areas and can be extended to other areas or to the whole State by proclamation; but without much research one cannot ascertain to what extent the legislation has been extended by proclamation in, say, New South Wales. It may have been extended over the years to apply to the whole State. What I did learn was that in two States where conditions are very similar to those here the legislation applies to the whole State. In Western Australia the Inspection of Scaffolding Act applies generally to areas within 25 miles of the General Post Office, but it also applies to the whole State for scaffolding exceeding 15 feet in height. With that qualification, therefore, it applies to the whole State of Western Australia. In Queensland the Scaffolding Inspection Act applies to the whole State without any qualifications. As far as I know, no serious difficulties have been experienced in either of those States, and I am confident that no difficulty would be experienced in South Australia. However, I leave the matter there. I submit that the case for the extension of the legislation to the whole State is unanswerable, and I trust the Bill will be passed.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD secured the adjournment of the debate.

ASSEMBLY ELECTORATES.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. O'Halloran:

That in the opinion of this House the Government should take steps to readjust the House of Assembly electoral zones and the boundaries of electorates to provide a more just system for electing the House.

(Continued from August 31. Page 863.)

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I listened with much interest to the Leader's speech because it seemed to me that the motion was couched in moderate terms, but when it came down to the final result it was really a question of what the Leader meant by "a more just system". That appears to be the basis on which the Leader's speech should be considered. He knew that no-one on this side of the House would be opposed to a more just system, and that immediately meant that the motion was one we had to seriously consider, for if the Leader had a more just system to advance it was necessary that the Government should give him some support.

He complained a few moments ago that we do not always support him, but on listening to the Leader it seemed to me that he was being perfectly reasonable and only asking for a more just system than the one which we have at present. If there is a more just and beneficial system, obviously it is something this House will have to seriously consider. By way of interjection, I tried to discover what this more just system was, because the Leader has often proposed an electoral system that does not appear to have worked very satisfactorily wherever it has been tried previously. The Leader at that time told us that his was a most just system and that mathematically it was not possible to get a more just system than the one he advocated. The fact that it has not worked anywhere else where it has been tried does not seem to deter him, and he has advanced it on almost as many occasions as he has advanced another matter that we recently considered in this House. The Leader at page 862 of *Hansard*, said:—

The constitutional and electoral policy of the Australian Labor Party is the reduction of the number of members of the State Parliament by three . . . it is to be achieved by the abolition of the Legislative Council. The Upper Houses were abolished in Queensland and New Zealand years ago. Anti-Labor Governments could have restored them, but have not done so.

If I interpret those words correctly (and I have studied them closely) the Leader and his

Party have now abandoned proportional representation and propose a completely new Constitution for South Australia: a one-House Parliament with 56 members elected not on the principle of proportional representation, but on the present system of preferential voting, with electoral districts of about the same size. The Leader has previously mentioned the one vote one value principle and his present proposals (if I am wrong he will correct me) are that we will have 56 members of this House; we will have no Legislative Council; and each electoral district will be about the same size.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is not in the motion at all.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I know, but that is what I wanted to clear up. The motion is ambiguous and that is why I made the interjections that brought forth the Labor Party's policy. I am sure the Leader would not advocate a policy unless it had his Party's support. What members opposite are asking us to consider is the abolition of the Legislative Council, the establishment of a House of 56 members, which represents a reduction of three in the present number of members of Parliament, with each electoral district having approximately the same number of electors. The Leader spoke about the disparity in sizes of the present electorates. If I have summed up his proposals correctly, let me go further and examine their effects and what substantial changes would be made in our Constitution. The total number of electors in South Australia is about 507,000. If we divide that by 56 (the number of members proposed for the new House) the electoral districts will contain approximately 9,056 voters each.

Mr. O'Halloran—You are entirely overlooking my provision for a tolerance.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not overlooked it: I used the word "approximately" which will cover the Leader's tolerance. We would have 56 districts in one House with an average number of electors of 9,050. It is sometimes interesting to enunciate principles we do not practise, and the Opposition has for many years enunciated the principle of one vote one value that it does not always practise. Of all the matters that the Leader might have introduced for prime consideration on private members' day, he chose firstly the question of centralization. He referred to the enormous growth of the metropolitan area which, he claims, is happening at the expense of the country. I believe the Leader sincerely regards this as a grave problem. What would be the effect on that problem if the Leader's present proposals were accepted? Let us consider one or two districts. Eyre Peninsula at present has two members in this House and it shares the representation of four Legislative Council members: in other words, six members are available to work for Eyre Peninsula. They ably represent that district, but what would be its representation under the Leader's new proposals? Instead of having six members, it would have one and a half members.

Mr. Shannon—The half member being from Whyalla.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I exclude Whyalla because that would have a member under the new scheme, instead of the five at present representing it. Later I believe it would have two members under the new scheme. The Leader's own district, Frome, is at present represented by five members of Parliament. Frome has 5,663 electors; Rocky River, which is so ably represented by Mr. Heaslip, has 6,041; and Burra, ably represented by Mr. Quirke—

Mr. Lawn—How many in Light?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Burra electorate has five members able to look after it; one in this House and four in the Legislative Council. Members will agree that Legislative Council members materially assist in performing the work of a district. The point I make is that instead of those three electorates having three members in this House and four in the Legislative Council, under the new proposal they would have only two members in the new House. Let us make a wider comparison. At present the country districts are represented in Parliament by 38 members—26 in the House of Assembly and 12 in the Legislative Council. If we accept the Leader's proposition that representation decreases to 21, because there would be 35 metropolitan members and 21 country members in the new House. We would not even retain the country's present representation in this Chamber! There would be five fewer country members in the new House than there are in the present House of Assembly. Can members opposite justify taking away country representation at a time when they complain there is centralization? Surely members know that nothing is more conducive to getting activity in a district than for that district to have active members to advance its claims.

Mr. Shannon—And for the district to have a vote in this Chamber.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes, and for its member to be able to ask questions in this House. How frequently do members draw attention to the need for new schools, roads or bridges in their districts? Those questions inevitably start investigations which often lead to the establishment of important facilities in districts. Lately I have been considering what we can afford to spend on water supplies. Frequently a project is put forward by a country member for an extension of a water supply in his area but on investigation we find that there is no direct return from the water supply that would at all justify Government expenditure upon it.

Mr. O'Halloran—You are not referring to Booleroo Centre, are you?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will deal with the interjection in a few moments as I think it is relevant. In the meantime I will develop what I was saying. I have investigated some actual cases where water has been provided at the instance of representations furthered by the member for the district which schemes, on their face, do not conspire to give us a balanced Budget. In one area (not an irrigation area) I found that within three years of the provision of a water supply the actual production of the district had increased by 13 times. The Leader asked whether I was considering Booleroo Centre. That is the exact point I make: that members sitting in their places here can advance particular things that are necessary in the interests of their districts. If they were not here, obviously the advances could not be made. I would oppose having this particular resolution defeated. I think it is an important matter, and it appears to me to be wrong merely to take a negative action upon it. Having said that, however, let me say that the conclusions I come to are fundamentally different from those the Leader comes to because, instead of taking away country representation, I believe that it is necessary and should be maintained. I conclude by saying that at the appropriate time I intend to move an amendment that will enable this Parliament to set out clearly what it believes about centralization.

We hear so much about centralization of industry and population, and my amendment will enable the House to say in no uncertain terms whether it believes that country members are necessary for development. I believe they are. Country representation today has problems of area and space to make it difficult. I know that the Leader of the Opposition is one of those most affected by this problem. I doubt whether any electoral district has more travelling and more problems of representation than his; but if we had one vote one value it would probably be the smallest electorate in the State. From the point of view of representation, it requires probably more travelling than the far distant Eyre Peninsula district. I move:—

To strike out all the words after "House" first occurring and to insert in lieu thereof "any reduction in country Parliamentary representation must correspondingly increase the tendency towards centralization of population and industry."

The SPEAKER—I want to make it clear that the debate will continue both on the motion of the Leader of the Opposition and on the amendment moved by the Premier, but the question ultimately will be "That the words proposed to be struck out remain part of the clause." That will be the question from the Chair when a question is put.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I rise again to support a motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition dealing with representation in this House. As on previous occasions, I view this matter in a most serious light. I do not think there is anything more serious than the right of people to elect the Government of their own choice. As usual, of course, the Premier has treated the matter with disdain and ridicule, and I shall have more to say about his amendment towards the conclusion of my remarks. I expected that the Premier would move an amendment, following the attitude be adopted on the Leader's motion relating to decentralization submitted earlier this session. For the past 11 years I have had the privilege of representing the electorate of Adelaide in this House. If I were asked what I considered the most important matter affecting the people generally, including myself and all the people I represent, I would say—

Mr. McKee—You would say the gerrymander.

Mr. LAWN—I would say that the most important thing that affects the people is their right to elect their representatives to a democratically elected Parliament. I think that is the most important thing in the life of the Australian people—the right to elect their own Parliamentary representatives. I now turn to the interjection of the member for Port Pirie. It naturally follows that anyone

who takes away that right from the people is rendering the people of Australia the greatest disservice they could be rendered—and that is being done deliberately in this instance.

At this juncture I wish to refresh the minds of members on some ways in which the Premier has treated motions of this kind that have been introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, at least over the last 11 years. I cannot speak about what happened before then, but I know that ever since I came into this House in 1950, whenever the Leader has introduced a motion or a Bill dealing with our electoral set-up, the Premier has just set out to ridicule it. He has never attempted to answer the charges made on this side of the House. On one occasion the Premier gave this House a long discourse on the way proportional representation worked in France as an answer to our attempt to restore to the people of South Australia the right to elect their own Government. He dealt not with the general principle of the Bill but only with proportional representation, telling us how it worked in France. He did not tell us how it works in the election of the Senate in Australia. When he has discussed this matter in the last 11 years he has never referred to the Federal Constitution, and that is the latest Constitution that has been set up in this country.

On another occasion the Premier said time did not permit the motion calling for the appointment of a commission to operate. He said that time did not permit any investigation. If time did not permit an investigation and a report to be submitted to this House before the pending elections, it could have been presented to the House after that election for the following election, so time did not matter. If the Premier was "fair dinkum" in using that as a reason, he implied that if time did permit an investigation the House should have carried the motion. When a person puts as a reason why something should not be carried that time does not permit he is undoubtedly implying that, if time permitted, the motion was valid and should have been carried.

Mr. Jennings—He can change his mind every day.

Mr. LAWN—Of course. Last week we had an opportunity to read a document from the Chamber of Manufactures that sets out how uncompromising he is. Like this House, the trade union movement, and many other people, I also know how uncompromising he is. He can change his mind—he can get up in this House and tell lies without batting an eyelid or blushing and can deliberately distort motions or Bills from this side of the House, as he has done this afternoon.

Mr. Clark—Time did permit this year and last year.

Mr. LAWN—I wish to finish my submission. So far as time is concerned, it does not matter whether the Government sets up the commission in the session following the election or in a subsequent session. The Government could even set up the commission in the year preceding a general election. The commission would in due course report to Parliament, which would deal with the report when it received it. No-one can say that a Royal Commission or any commission should not be appointed because time does not permit.

Another time the Premier said he opposed the motion because the three or four points it set out that should be investigated were not in their proper sequence. The Premier can and does get up and oppose motions or Bills brought forward from this side of the House in the interests of the people to make South Australia once again a democracy, something on which the British people have prided themselves over the centuries. The British Parliament is known as the mother of Parliaments. Parliamentary government as we know it originated in Great Britain, and we try to tell other countries that our form of Government is the best. In some countries there are dictatorships: we have it here! However, we do it in a more subtle form.

Mr. McKee—They would not stand for it in another country.

Mr. LAWN—Of course they would not but, because our people are restrained and believe in Parliamentary government rather than dictatorship, and in peaceful means of obtaining their ends instead of violence, they have allowed this dictatorship to continue. However, the time will come when people on the other side of the House will have to answer for their actions. I will deal with that in more detail later.

Then on another occasion the Premier opposed a Bill because it would have taken away country representation from this House. He advanced that argument before. This motion is designed deliberately to meet any points raised by the Premier previously. It does not say how many members this House should comprise; it makes no reference to the Legislative Council or to proportional representation; and the time factor is not mentioned. It does not do anything in itself, as previously by Bill we attempted to do something or by motion to set up a commission. All this motion

asks is that the Government shall do something in respect of the House of Assembly only. It says:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should take steps to re-adjust the House of Assembly electoral zones and the boundaries of electorates to provide a more just system for electing the House.

We do not say what that just system shall be, as we have suggested previously. We represent the people. Really, we on this side of the House represent more electors than the Government does. If there were a card vote in this House according to the electors we represent, there would be greater voting strength on this side of the House than on the other. I have taken many people through the House. I have conducted university and Asian students and interstate visitors through this House; and not only interstate visitors but people from overseas, who are amazed to learn that in a democratically elected Parliament in a country like Australia the Party with the greatest number of votes sits in Opposition with about one-third of the members of the House. This motion simply says that the Government should take steps to adjust the electoral zones and boundaries to provide a more just system for electing the House.

Mr. Jennings—It could not be much worse.

Mr. LAWN—No. I think the only set-up I know of worse than our electoral system is in Russia, where the people going to vote are handed several pieces of coloured paper. They put the pieces of coloured paper into the ballot box for the party or candidate for whom they wish to vote.

Mr. Jennings—How would that go here?

Mr. LAWN—If it works there it would work here. The people would go along to the polling booths in their respective districts. They would receive a piece of red paper and, if they wanted to vote for the Communist Party, they would put the piece of red paper into the ballot box. They would also have a piece of white paper, which would be allocated in respect of the Labor Party, as white stands for purity. If they wanted to vote for the Labor Party, they would put the white paper into the ballot box. Then there would be a piece of yellow paper for the Government and, if they wanted to vote for the Government, they would put the piece of yellow paper into the ballot box. That is about the only system worse than ours.

Mr. King—Why do you suggest yellow for the Government?

Mr. LAWN—Because it is yellow: it is not ready to take its chances on an equal basis in an election. I have come up through the trade union movement. We have had hostile meetings to handle. I would go out and address two or three thousand members on strike, both men and women. In the final analysis, you can leave your fate in the hands of the people. I am satisfied of that. I know the people would change the Government. I say that the people should have the right to decide their own fate, whether they agree with my reasoning or not.

Mr. Jennings—That is democracy.

Mr. LAWN—Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as "Government by the people of the people for the people". He meant that all the people over, say, 21 years of age should have the right to elect their representatives to govern in the people's interests. Here in South Australia we have Government of the people by a section of the people for a section of the people. If necessary, I can illustrate that. Only this afternoon the Leader of the Opposition introduced a Bill to extend the Scaffolding Inspection Act to the country, but this Government says that the country people shall not have the protection of that Act. It also says that the country people shall not have the right to come to our Industrial Court to seek an award. The Premier said here only last session that the country people come last in everything, yet they have twice the representation that the metropolitan electors have. So the country people are doing no good for themselves with 26 members representing them—two to one.

The Premier put up this big squeal this afternoon that he was going to appeal to country electors that this motion wanted to deprive the country people of five seats in this House. The Premier himself submitted that the country came last. I have been advocating since 1953, three years after I entered Parliament, that this State could afford to give its pensioners—not the metropolitan pensioners or the country pensioners, but all pensioners of South Australia—concession fares. First of all, we asked for free transport on the railways and on the Metropolitan Tramways Trust trams and buses. That was our policy. I advocated that on behalf of my Party. When the Government introduced the measure, it complied in part, for the metropolitan pensioners only. Why this discrimination against the country? Not even one country member on the other side of the House objected to the fact that country pensioners had been deprived

by their Government of concession fares on the railways to the city and back to their respective districts. No Government member has complained.

The inference of the Premier in saying that this motion would take away five country members is that the Labor Party wants to take away something. We do not. Last session, during the Budget debate someone interjected and asked what would be the country representation if our motion were carried. Someone said, "What is the representation of Light?" I heard no answer from the other side of the House. The Premier did not attempt to answer it. Let me remind honourable members opposite that last session I said that a Socialist Labor Government would give country people electric light and power at the same price as that paid in the metropolitan area. The then member for Light (Mr. Hambour) agreed with me that it could be done in three years. So it can. The Electricity Trust of South Australia made a profit of £469,000 last year and I believe the figure for this year's workings was £468,000; but not one country member on the other side of the House suggested to the Government, before I brought the matter up, that electric light and power could be given to the country people on the same tariff as the city.

Mr. Heaslip—Will this motion give country people that?

Mr. LAWN—The honourable member for Rocky River was not here when the Premier said he was going to give his people more water and that this motion would prevent them from getting it. The Premier said that, if this motion were carried, it would take away water from the people in the district of Booleroo. If this motion took away water from the residents of the area of Rocky River, I am more in order in saying that, if we altered the representation of the State, we would give the country people electric light and power at metropolitan prices and they would be more interested in that than in having more members like the honourable member for Rocky River, the honourable member for Light and certain other members who at present represent them. I guarantee they would prefer to have five fewer of those members and five more members on this side of the House if they could get more water and concession fares were made available for country pensioners. I know that the people of Rocky River would be more interested in getting those things than in having five more members than they have today.

I referred to Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy. That implies that all the people collectively would elect their representatives to govern. That can be done only if all the people are recognized as being equal. The Leader has referred to equality. He quoted Dr. James Murray and his definition in the *Oxford Dictionary*. He also quoted from reports of a Constitutional Committee appointed by the Commonwealth Government, which made the same reference.

One reason advanced by the Premier in the past for opposing what we wanted was that he did not know what the principle of one vote one value was. The Leader said that in 1938 the metropolitan electors totalled 212,000, or 58 per cent, and in 1959, 21 years later, there were 313,000 electors in the metropolitan area, representing 63 per cnt of the electors of the State. That is not democracy; that is not equality. There is no fairness at all when 42 per cent of the people in 1938 could elect 26 members, or two-thirds of the total number of members of this House, and in 1959 37 per cent of the electors can elect those 26 members.

The Premier this afternoon gave his reasons why on this occasion the motion should not be carried. He said the Leader expressed himself in moderate terms. We on this side of the House are moderate, and that is why the people of this State have put up with this gerrymander for so long: they are moderate people, not extremists. We are moderate in all the requests we make in this House on their behalf. The trade union movement in South Australia is most moderate, and the Premier himself has, in effect, admitted that often. He went on to say that he realized that if the Leader advocated a more just system the Government would have to support it. In a democracy, yes, but not where there is a dictatorship. In a democracy the Government would have to support it, otherwise it would be defeated. However, despite defeat this Government does not accept it, and carries on.

Since 1938 there have been eight elections. The Liberal Party has only won on a poll of the people at one election out of eight, but it has carried on in Government during the whole of that time. The Leader referred to the 1953 elections, and said that the Labor Party polled 48,000 more votes than the Liberal Party. He could have gone further and said that had the No. 1 preferences of the Liberal Party, the Communist Party and the Independents been totalled together they would still have been 4,500 votes short of the

combined total of the Labor Party. Yet we had only 14 members out of a House of 39!

Mr. McKee—It is obvious what the people want.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, we see that in the Commonwealth Senate elections, and in Commonwealth elections generally. The Premier then went on to something the Leader does not mention in his motion. He said that the policy of the Labor Party was to have 56 members. We are not seeking to implement the policy of the Labor Party by this motion. He also mentioned that we sought the abolition of the Legislative Council. I do not want to discuss that matter, except to say that the Legislative Council in New Zealand was abolished by a Liberal Government, and since the abolition in Queensland three Liberal and Country Party Governments have been in office but have not attempted to restore it, nor will they. We are not asking for that in the motion, nor are we asking for 56 members: we are merely asking the Government to provide something more just and better than we have today.

The Premier said that if the motion were carried it would take away five country districts. I do not know why he picked certain districts, but he mentioned Eyre and Flinders and said that if the motion were carried and those electorates were taken away those districts would only have one and a half members instead of the six they have at present. That is not true. This motion in no way concerns itself with the four representatives of the Legislative Council, who would still remain if this motion were carried. It may be that as a result of an alteration by a Government-appointed commission those districts might get one and a half members in this House, but it is questionable whether or not they have less than that today. They certainly would not lose the four members in the Legislative Council, and the Premier's remarks could only mislead the people of this State into thinking that those seats would be lost.

Mr. Shannon—Then your Party does not believe in the abolition of the Upper House?

Mr. LAWN—I answered that question a few moments ago, and the honourable member should have heard me. The district of Gawler has one representative today, and if this motion were carried I suggest it would have two representatives, on the figures the Premier gave this afternoon. Although he said that this motion would take a half a member away from Eyre and Flinders, he did not mention that if the motion were carried it would increase by one the representation of the district of Gawler, which includes Gawler, Salisbury and Elizabeth. Earlier this session (at page 32 of *Hansard*) the member for Gawler (Mr. Clark) asked this question:—

The Gawler Assembly District numbers had grown to 15,129 at the end of March—an increase of 6,000 in the last two years—and at the same rate of increase the numbers would be over 21,000 by the next State election. Even now, of course, they are more than enough for two country electoral districts, and a further rapid increase is certain. In view of this, will the Premier say whether the Government intends to introduce legislation this session to give electors in this area the additional representation to which they are now entitled?

The Premier this afternoon was trying to make the people believe that the Opposition wanted to take five representatives away from the people, yet on April 5 the member for Gawler was asking the Premier whether he would give the people of his district more representation. In answer to the question, the Premier said:—

The representation that any district is entitled to is provided for in the Constitution, so the last part of the honourable member's question is already answered. Regarding the general part of the question, the district he represents is growing very rapidly indeed, and I point out, quite frankly, that if the Government introduced amending legislation this session it would be out-of-date by next session because of the enormous growth taking place. As there is no immediate election, except a by-election, that I know of, it would be better to allow the position to stabilize—

—I think we have heard that word before—

before considering this matter. I think the honourable member would, in modesty, assume that he could represent the district.

In March this year 15,129 electors were enrolled for Gawler, and by 1962 that area will probably have about 20,000 electors. On the figures given by the Premier this afternoon, if this motion is carried it may work out that there will be about 9,050 electors for each electorate. However, I do not accept those figures, for I do not think that a commission would divide exactly that way. The commission would be appointed by a Liberal Party Government under its terms of reference, and I could not anticipate exactly what the division would be; but even on the figures given by the Premier the district of Gawler will be entitled to two representatives at the next election, if the motion is carried.

He does not want to give them that representation, and he does not want to give country electors anywhere greater representation. Whether it be the electors of Eyre, Flinders or Gawler or any other district, none of their representation in the Legislative Council would be affected by this motion.

Mr. Jennings—He does not want to give extra representation where the people are likely to vote for Labor.

Mr. LAWN—That is the whole reason for the gerrymander.

Mr. Shannon—That argument is typical of the Opposition's attitude.

Mr. LAWN—When this gerrymander originated, Sir Richard Butler said that this would keep Labor out for 20 years. That was the whole gravamen of the idea in 1936. It was the reason the Government had the redistribution in 1955, and it is the reason it wants to preserve the present position. It is happy to go along and keep Labor out of office, against the will of the people. The Premier said that we could not justify restricting country electors to five fewer members than they have today. I do not want to take five members away from country people: my intention is to give the people the right to be regarded on election day as more equal, and for them to have the right to change the Government if they wish to do so. Even if it were a Labor Government, I believe the people should have the right to change it if they wish to do so. I say emphatically that the Premier cannot justify only 13 representatives in the metropolitan area. In fact, he has never attempted to do so. I have quoted reasons he has advanced over the last 11 years to try to show why we should not alter our present electoral set-up. He has never attempted to justify only 13 members for the electors in the metropolitan area. I mentioned earlier how country electors would benefit by the carrying of this motion, or by a change in the Government. The motion refers to "**a more just** system for electing the House."

Mr. Shannon—How can a system be more than just?

Mr. LAWN—The motion does not attempt to implement the policy of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr. Shannon—How can something be more than just?

Mr. LAWN—The member for Onkaparinga understands just what the motion says, and he is attempting to misrepresent it. He referred to a "more than just system." The motion does not say that; it says "a more just system", which is different.

Mr. Shannon—What is "more just"?

Mr. LAWN—I was going to deal with the matter without any assistance from the member for Onkaparinga, because one of the easiest jobs I have ever had in this House is to suggest an improvement in the electoral set-up in South Australia. We believe in a certain policy, which I need not enunciate, but there is no need to introduce it into South Australia to obtain a more just system. We would not have to introduce the Australian Labor Party's policy to provide a more just system. We can have a more just system without going that far. On previous occasions the Premier has cited New South Wales and Queensland as gerrymandered States and has used that argument to justify the rejection of motions introduced by the Opposition. I have not ascertained the position in Queensland because at the last two elections a Liberal-Country Party Government has been returned and it has not attempted to alter the zones or boundaries of the electoral set-up.

Mr. Hall—Yes it has.

Mr. LAWN—There has been no revision of the electoral boundaries in Queensland as one would have expected if there were any truth in the Premier's suggestion that Queensland was gerrymandered. The honourable member does not know what is taking place in his own Party in other States. The Liberal Party promised the Country Party in Queensland that during the first three years of the Government's term there would be a revision of boundaries. In the closing stages of that Parliament the Country Party was hostile toward the Liberal Party because it did not propose to carry out its promise and effect a redistribution. The Liberal Party told the Country Party to sit pat and forget about it until after the elections. The Country Party did, but there has been no revision in Queensland since the Nicklin Government came to office. The Liberal Party Government in Queensland has not attempted to alter the electoral system, so it cannot have been as bad as the Premier suggested. I have examined the situation in New South Wales, and although it does not have our policy it would be a much more just system if introduced here than our present system.

Mr. Shannon—When are they going to get rid of the Upper House in New South Wales?

Mr. LAWN—If I were to discuss that, you, Mr. Speaker, would rule me out of order.

The motion does not refer to the Legislative Council.

The SPEAKER—Order! There are too many interjections and the Chair is not able to hear the member for Adelaide.

Mr. LAWN—In the New South Wales Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act there is provision that the Commissioners are:—

. . . hereby directed to distribute New South Wales into electoral districts for the purposes of this Act whenever directed by the Governor by proclamation in the gazette and in the event of the Governor not so direting then such distribution shall take place after the expiration of five years from the date of the last redistribution.

The Governor, by proclamation, may direct the Commissioners to make a redistribution at any time. Even if, for political purposes, the New South Wales Government did not want that redistribution to take place, it would still take place automatically every five years.

Mr. Ryan—The Government cannot alter that.

Mr. LAWN—That is so. There must be a redistribution by the Electoral Commissioners, who are permanent officers. There is no attempt by the New South Wales Labor Government to perpetuate a gerrymandered electoral system, nor does it attempt to hold a redistribution when it suits it. The Government can direct that a redistribution take place, but, if it does not so direct, the redistribution automatically takes place every five years. I have examined the official *Year Book* of New South Wales to discover references to the electoral system. The following is a quote from that publication:—

The Act of 1949 increased the number of electorates from 90 to 94 and provides for the division of the State into two areas: the Sydney area with 48 seats and the country area, which includes Newcastle, with 46 seats. Quotas are determined for each area by dividing the total number of electors by the number of seats in the area. The number of electors in an electoral district must be within 20 per cent of the area quota.

I am not advocating the 20 per cent fluctuation, but of the 94 seats in New South Wales, 48 are in the metropolitan area and 46 in the country. The population of the Sydney metropolitan area far exceeds the population of the country area, yet the Act provides Sydney with only two members more than the country area. In South Australia 26 members represent the country and 13 the metropolitan area. I have quoted from the latest *Year Book* available and it reveals that in the 1953 elections the average number of electors a member was 20,776. From an examination of the 1959 election returns it is obvious that the number of electors varies between 16,000 and 20,000 in the country area and between 20,000 and 26,000 in the Sydney area.

Mr. Jennings—The number varies from 4,000 to 30,000 in South Australia.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. In South Australia the metropolitan electorates have about 28,000 voters whereas Frome has about 3,500 and Gumeracha 6,500. If the Government requested a commission to investigate and report upon a system similar to that applying in New South Wales it would be complying with the terms of this motion, which seeks a readjustment of the House of Assembly electoral zones and the boundaries of electorates to provide a more just system for electing the House. The Government would not have to adopt Labor Party policy to provide a more just system for the election of this House. It could, by copying the New South Wales system (but, of course, we do not want 94 members) provide a more just system.

Mr. Clark—We are not so optimistic as to think that the Government would adopt Labor's policy.

Mr. LAWN—I do not think for one moment it would, nor did we believe that when the Leader moved this motion. This motion has been introduced on behalf of the people in an effort to make South Australia a State of which we can be proud and to enable us to boast that we have a democracy. I am keenly interested in the Parliamentary institution, and I believe in it. I am not a Communist! Members of my Party hold similar beliefs and views to myself. We want the people to have the right of representation. We do not believe in obtaining that right by violence or by dictatorship.

Mr. McKee—It could come to that.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, but we do not want it to. We demand the right of the people to elect the Government they want and the right of the people to change that Government if they are not satisfied with that Government, be it Liberal or Labor. We want that provided constitutionally. I want the British Parliamentary system to continue, and I want to be proud of it. Every year I take 1,000 school children through this House. On occasions they are in the gallery while Parliament is sitting, and even on those occasions I speak to them in the library. At other times I bring classes into this Chamber when the House is not sitting and I give them a talk and answer questions for about an hour. I

pay a tribute, Mr. Speaker, to your predecessor (Sir Robert Nicholls) who was also proud of our Parliamentary system. He was proud to talk to school children and adults and to explain the Parliamentary system since its origination in England. I am not suggesting that you are not just as interested, Mr. Speaker, but I learnt much about the history of Parliament from Sir Robert Nicholls. On one occasion he addressed a class for me and I was able to gather much information from him about the history of Parliament.

Mr. Shannon—Do you ever mention the gerrymander to them?

Mr. LAWN—I tell the children that the Speaker sits in his Chair and that the Party which wins the greater number of seats in this House forms the Government and sits on the right of the Speaker, the Ministers occupying the front bench. I list the Ministers and explain that five Ministers are in the House of Assembly and three in the Legislative Council. Then the teacher or the pupils ask questions. It may surprise members to know that these scholars, from the sixth and seventh grades, ask, "If the Party with the greatest number of votes forms the Government why isn't the Labor Party sitting on the right of the Speaker, because the Labor Party won the last election?"

Mr. McKee—The children know that, too!

Mr. Shannon—You wouldn't prompt that?

Mr. LAWN—No. On occasions that question has been asked without prompting. On other occasions I have prompted it, and I make no apology for so doing. I can tell the member for Onkaparinga and other members opposite that I intend to go on doing that, because if I can bring 1,000 children through this House every year, in time there will be another 1,000 people reaching 21 years of age, and if I get through to 400 or 500 of them I hope that will have an effect in future elections. Some of the children I have shown through this House are getting a vote today, and each year that number is increasing. I am not the only member who is bringing school children along to this House. In addition to school children we bring parties of adults through. We are bringing through the House church groups, members of the Young Mens' Christian Association, various sporting bodies and women's organizations. Over the years we will bring hundred of adults here.

I never miss an opportunity to tell the people what the voting was at the last election and I even go so far as to say, as I have said this afternoon, that of the eight elections held since 1938 the Liberal Party won only one, and that we have had 14 members in this Chamber since 1941. I hope that eventually the will of the people will prevail and that they will be able to have a Government formed in this State in keeping with their vote at an election. I hope that I may be a member of that Cabinet but, if not, I hope to be a member of the Government Party. The member for Onkaparinga can snigger but let me tell him that if I get my way some of the members opposite, including the honourable member, will be impeached for having deprived the people of their right—and I am not kidding either! The same threat was made by the honourable member's Party to Scullin when he was Prime Minister of Australia. I have made some research into impeachment in the House of Commons, and there is no doubt that this House could impeach members opposite for what they have done in depriving the people of their electoral rights.

Mr. Hall—Get your facts right. What about the Queensland election?

Mr. LAWN—Let us get our facts right for the benefit of the young member for Gouger—young in experience, I mean. I refer the honourable member to May's *Parliamentary Practice*. At page 40, under the heading "Impeachment by the Commons", he will see the following:—

> Impeachment by the Commons, for high crimes and misdemeanors beyond the reach of the law, for which no other authority in the state will prosecute, might still be regarded as an ultimate safeguard of public liberty, though it has not been employed since the beginning of the 19th century. By the law of Parliament, all persons, whether peers or commoners—

I am sorry the peers are not here!

> —may be impeached for any crimes whatever although impeachments have generally been reserved for extraordinary crimes and extraordinary offenders.

I am sure anyone will agree with me that what this Party opposite has been doing since 1936—robbing the people of their democratic right to elect a Government of their choice—is extraordinary and that it has been committed and perpetrated by extraordinary offenders. In addition to impeachment there is an Act of Attainder. May says about this:—

> In passing Acts of Attainder and of pains and penalties, the judicature of the entire Parliament is exercised, and there is another high Parliamentary judicature in which both Houses also have a share. In impeachments, the Commons, as a great representative inquest of the nation, first find the crime—

We have that; we do not have to look far to find it—

—and then, as prosecutors—

I would be in my element of glory in being prosecutor in this case.

—support their charge before the Lords; while the Lords, exercising at once the functions of a high court of justice and of a jury, try and also adjudicate upon the charge preferred.

The proceedings of Parliament, in passing Bills of Attainder and of pains and penalties, do not vary from those adopted in regard to other Bills; though the parties who are subjected to these proceedings are admitted to defend themselves by counsel and witnesses before both Houses. Whenever a fitting occasion arises for its exercise a Bill of Attainder is, undoubtedly, the highest form of Parliamentary judicature, though it has not been employed since the 18th century.

It goes on to explain where in any impeachment the House of Commons, or in this case the House of Assembly, would be the accusers in the application before the Legislative Council, and that a Bill of Attainder is an ordinary Bill passed by both Houses. By that time I have no doubt that the personnel of the Legislative Council will be considerably changed. In fact, as a result of what has transpired at Elizabeth I expect a change in the Midland district shortly. We do not want the matter clouded or otherwise misrepresented. The motion simply asks the Government to take necessary steps to bring about a more just system of election. I have pointed out that to bring about a more just system we do not necessarily have to adopt the policy of the Australian Labor Party. I have given an instance of what happens in New South Wales. If something like that happened here it would be a more just system and would achieve the purposes of the motion.

In conclusion, I emphasize again that I am not joking about this matter: I am serious about what might happen in future regarding impeachment. I shall certainly have my say and do what I can, if I am still a member of this House, to see that impeachment takes place of members of the Government who have for over 20 years deprived the people of the right to elect their own Government. When we quote what happens here in our own House, it does not at all fit in with history as we know it and as we explain it to people. As I and other members of my Party have said, we do not want to see any other form of government. We want to preserve the Parliamentary system of government and, when all is said and done, if our system were implemented it would be nothing more than what happens in the Commonwealth Parliaments, but never once have members opposite referred to that—that is, one vote one value. In New South Wales there is nothing to say that the commission must have a review every time the population changes; it is automatic.

Mr. McKee—It is a perfect system.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. One argument advanced against the policy of my Party is that it does not advocate multiple electorates. I am convinced that the belief I had in multiple electorates was wrong. Since I have been a member I have seen it operate and, where it operates, some members do nothing, leaving everything to their co-members. All right: we concede that point. We are not pressing a multiple-member district. If this motion is carried it will leave it to the Government to appoint a commission under any terms it desires except that it is intended by this House that a more just system should be introduced. With those remarks, I support the motion and sincerely trust that it will have a majority when the final vote is counted.

The Premier on this occasion has attempted to ridicule the motion not only in his speech, as on previous occasions, but by attempting to amend the motion to state:—

That in the opinion of this House any reduction in country Parliamentary representation must correspondingly increase the tendency towards centralization of population and industry.

If the Premier intends to misrepresent this motion deliberately and to suggest that we do not believe in decentralization, let me remind him that it was our motion this session that was responsible for his capitulation and for the reference of decentralization to a committee. He has always strenuously opposed any motion from this side to set up a committee to investigate decentralization, and it was our motion this year that was responsible for a committee being asked to investigate decentralization, so it will not go over with country people to suggest that we do not believe in decentralization. We do. It is in our interests to have decentralization of people and industry. Let us stick to this matter, which deals with the right of people to elect their Parliamentary representatives and their Government, which has been denied them for 20 years. I support the motion, and hope that it is carried.

Mr. SHANNON secured the adjournment of the debate.

COUNTRY HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

BUSH FIRES BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Forests)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

My outstanding impressions of the Bush Fires Act for a long time have been that it is difficult to understand and is subject to the complaint of widely varying critics that it does not cover their case. In a State that differs in climate so widely, as does South Australia, it is natural that various views may be put forward on the provisions of the Act. I cannot offer a solution to many of these problems. Indeed, I do not think there is a satisfactory answer to all the complaints. The matters that cause most complaint are connected with fires in the open during the prohibited period, such as picnickers' fires, and with fires on ban days, usually for scrub clearing purposes, and barbecue fires at night, probably in the metropolitan area. In this new Bill more power is given to local councils to ban fires or to allow burning off as required. What is known as the "ban day" legislation has been widely approved throughout South Australia. There are provisions that allow for exceptions for clearing operations and these have been used fairly extensively. Sometimes these ban days are criticized as being too severe in their operations because, it is said, they are brought in too frequently.

I should like to explain to the House, however, that these bans are imposed on information from the Weather Bureau and are determined according to a scale known as Luke's scale. They are determined by the number of degrees registered on this scale. Ninety degrees on Luke's scale will normally cause the Weather Bureau to declare a ban day, that is, under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture. The bans imposed are sometimes criticized as having been imposed too easily. That is subject to adjustment by myself: I can raise the standard if necessary. Probably in late summer, when scrub-clearing operations are required, I shall raise the standard for those areas where the burning usually takes place. For instance on Eyre Peninsula where much scrub-clearing burning is done, I can raise the standard, which therefore means that there will be fewer ban days than would otherwise be the case.

On the other hand, in districts where there is a very high danger throughout the summer, the standard will be kept as at present, and of course there are many districts throughout the State where no exception to the ban is allowed. For instance, if a district council chooses not to appoint "authorized persons" to inspect scrub-clearing operations, then there are no exceptions to the ban days. Nobody can burn on a ban day throughout the whole of the Adelaide hills, for instance, simply because no district council will appoint "authorized persons" for that area. Of course, the action of those councils is endorsed by nine people out of 10 in that respect.

I shall now read the report on this Bill but, in doing so, point out that it is a large Bill and, as it repeals the old Act, it has over 100 clauses. There will be no attempt to deal with every clause in the second reading speech, but it may be scrutinized and discussed in Committee. Almost every suggestion adopted in this Bill has been approved by the Bush Fires Advisory Committee, which normally considers all suggestions for alterations to the Act. The report reads as follows:—

As a result of amendments and additions made over many years, the Acts relating to bush fires have become complicated and difficult to follow. And, although the general principles of the Act seem to be well adapted to the requirements of South Australia, there are a number of minor inconsistencies and anomalies in its provisions and some of the sections have unusual difficulties of interpretation and administration. For these reasons, and because of requests from interested parties that the Act should be simplified, the Government decided to prepare a new consolidating and amending Bill. A Revision Committee of bush fire experts was appointed to review the legislation and Sir Edgar Bean was instructed to do the drafting. The committee consisted of the Director of Emergency Fire Services (Mr. F. L. Kerr), the Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. H. S. Rush), and the Chairman of the Bush Fires Advisory Committee, who is also the Conservator of Forests (Mr. B. H. Bednall). Mr. F. N. Botting, who as senior clerk in the office of the Minister of Agriculture has had many years' experience of bush fires legislation, was co-opted to help.

Before continuing with the report, I pay a tribute to that committee because it has worked very hard to make this Act reasonable

and easy to understand. Sir Edgar's drafting ability is well-known in the Chamber and everybody will recognize his touch in the drafting of the clauses. I also want to thank the other members of the committee who have helped in the preparation of this Bill, because it has been a labour that has kept them busy long after normal hours. The report continues:—

The committee considered whether the present scheme of control might be changed altogether in favour of some simpler system, but decided not to recommend fundamental changes. The general scheme of control is understood by primary producers, councils and fire fighting organizations, and has been in force for many years. However, the form, language and arrangement of the law are capable of considerable improvement and it is hoped that the Bill will make a contribution to this. The committee sorted out the provisions of the present Act and endeavoured to group them according to subject matter and prepare a Bill divided into parts and arranged in a logical order. The administrative provisions are placed first, then the general rules for regulating the burning of stubble and scrub during the summer months. These are followed by other rules as to open air fires and general precautions for preventing and controlling bush fires. Finally, the Bill deals with the powers of fire control officers and the usual provisions about offences, evidence and regulations. In moving the second reading, I will not aim at explaining every amendment made by the Bill. I have a table which shows exactly where each existing provision of the law is dealt with in the Bill and, if any honourable member should desire information on any particular clause, it is available, but at this stage I will limit myself to explaining in general terms what the Bill does in connection with the principal topics dealt with in the legislation.

The Bush Fires Advisory Committee.—The Bill proviues that the Bush Fires Advisory Committee of nine persons is retained but alters its constitution slightly by providing for three nominated members instead of one. It is set out that, in addition to six other persons, the committee must always comprise the Conservator of Forests or a person nominated by him, and the Commisssioner of Police or a person nominated by him, as well as the Railways Comissioner's nominee, who is provided for in the present law. The Bill also provides for a five-year term of office for the committee, for a quorum of five members, and majority decisions, and empowers the committee to lay down its own procedure. These matters are not dealt with in the present Act.

The Bush Fires Fund Committee.—This is the committee responsible for working out the contributions to be made by insurers and the Government to the Bush Fires Fund which is used for subsidizing fire-fighting organizations and councils. The Bill does not alter the constitution of this committee, but proposes that its name should be altered to the Bush Fires Equipment Subsidies Committee, and that the Bush Fires Fund should be called The Bush Fires Equipment Subsidies Fund. The reason for this is that there are from time to time other bush fires funds and other bush fires fund committees which distribute assistance to victims of bush fires, and it is desirable that the Subsidies Committee should have a distinctive name. No changes are proposed in the method of working out and collecting the contributions to the fund.

Registration of fire-fighting organizations.—At present the Act requires all voluntary fire-fignting organizations formed for the purpose of combating fires outside the fire brigades area to be registered. If strictly interpreted, this section applies to private fire-fighting organizations such as are formed by some employers for the protection of their own premises. It is proposed in this Bill to provide that it shall not be compulsory for these private organizations to be registered, but that they may, if they desire, register themselves, in which case they would be eligible for financial help. Whether they received help would, of course, depend on their value for bush fire fighting.

Compensation for injury or death of fire control officers and crews of fire-fighting appliances.—The Bill makes some considerable alterations to the existing Act on this subject. The present scheme for compensating fire control officers and crews of fire-fighting appliances and their dependants in the event of injury or death has some unsatisfactory features. One is that, if the council does not insure against its liability, no compensation is payable. Another is the big difference between the amount of compensation payable for injury to a fire control officer or crew member who is a self-employed person, and that payable when the injured officer or crew member is ordinarily employed by an employer. Here is an example: if a fire control officer is an employee earning £1,500 a year in his ordinary work and is injured when fighting bush fires, he or his dependants are entitled to compensation based on his earnings of £1,500 a year. In the event of death or

permanent incapacity this compensation would be some thousands of pounds. On the other hand, if the injured fire control officer were self-employed, the Act gives no definite rights beyond £1,000 for death or total incapacity and £10 a week for partial incapacity. Another anomaly is that £10 a week is payable however slight the degree of incapacity.

It is obvious that a better scheme is required. The Bill proposes a new scheme on the following lines—

(*a*) A council must pay compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act for injuries to fire control officers and members of crews of fire fighting appliances, caused by accident arising out of and in the course of their duties. This liability is independent of insurance, but the council is required by the Bill to take out an insurance policy;

(*b*) secondly, the amount of the compensation in the case of every fire control officer or crew member, whether a self-employed person or an employee, is to be the same. It will be computed on the assumption that the injured fire fighter earns a weekly wage equal to the living wage plus a margin of £1 or such other margin as the council may fix by resolution. It may be thought that under this type of scheme some fire control officers and crew members will get too little and others possibly too much, but the scheme at least has the merit that the council, the fire fighters and the insurance companies will know where they stand, and the present serious discrimination against self-employed persons is largely removed.

Burning off stubble and scrub.—The present Act recognizes two periods of fire control which are popularly called "the prohibited period" and "the conditional period". The prohibited period is the early summer and for most types of fires it is the period October 16 to January 31. The conditional period is February 1 to May 14 for burning stubble and February 1 to April 30 for burning scrub. There are a number minor differences in the periods applicable under the present Act to various other fires. The Bill proposes two uniform periods, the first commencing on November 1 and ending on February 15, and the second commencing on February 16 and ending on April 30. In accordance with popular usage, the Bill calls these periods the "prohibited burning period" and the "conditional burning period". These periods will apply to the control of all burning off and fires under the Bill, except where a particular council specifically alters them. The present power of councils to alter the burning periods is retained. A council may make permanent alterations of either period to suit local conditions, and may make seasonal variations of not more than 14 days for any particular season. These latter variations can only be declared for one season at a time. Perhaps I should stress that. A council may make permanent alterations to either period with Ministerial approval, which is normally given. It may make seasonal variations of up to 14 days either way in any season, but that variation lasts for that season only.

Control of the burning of standing stubble and scrub.—The Bill retains the general rules that during the prohibited period stubble can be burnt only for the purpose of clearing fire breaks and scrub cannot be burnt at all, while during the conditional burning period stubble or scrub can be burnt for any purpose provided that certain standard rules of burning off are observed. In order to avoid repetition, the standard rules for burning scrub and stubble are now set out once only in clauses 49 and 54 respectively. These rules deal with the precautions which must be taken in connection with burning off, such as clearing fire breaks, giving notice to neighbours, the police, the council and the Forestry Department, and having men available to assist in controlling the fire. The minimum width of fire breaks for stubble fires is unaltered, being 12ft. cleared or 6ft. ploughed and cleared. The clearance distance for scrub fires has been reduced from 15ft. to 12ft. It is considered that any disadvantage in this reduction is compensated by achieving uniformity with other sections of the Act. The time for giving notices is altered by laying down a requirement that every notice must be given not more than 48 hours before the fire is lighted. At present notices can be given weeks before the fire is lighted, which is unsatisfactory.

Burning off of town allotments.—The present provisions allowing stubble to be burnt off town allotments under permits from the local council are retained but it is provided that the notice of burning which has to be given to the local fire brigade must not be given earlier than 48 hours before the fire is lighted.

Burning at weekends.—The Bill provides that the existing provision prohibiting burning on Sundays will not apply (as it now does) to fires for lime or charcoal burning. Also the powers of councils to make by-laws prohibiting burning on Saturdays and public holidays will not apply to lime or charcoal burning.

Control of places where fires in the open air may be lighted.—At present councils by resolution can prohibit the lighting of open air fires except in specified places. It is proposed in the Bill to empower councils to prescribe by resolution the structures or circumstances in which open air fires may lawfully be lighted. The effect will be that councils will have more flexible powers of prescribing exemptions from the prohibition of open air fires.

Days of serious fire risk.—The language in which a warning of a day of serious fire risk is to be given is simplified. At present the Act says that the warning must state "the likelihood of the occurrence of weather conditions conducive to the spread of bush fires in the whole of the State or any part of the State". The new form of warning will be that a particular day "is a day of serious fire risk throughout the State or a specified part of the State", and that the lighting of fires in the open air for any purpose is prohibited. Apart from these alterations and other simplifications of language, the Bill does not contain any alteration of the law relating to burning on days of serious fire risk.

Engines, vehicles and aircraft.—The provisions requiring fire precautions to be taken in connection with engines, vehicles and aircraft are collected together and stated more simply. The war-time sections relating to producer gas equipment have been omitted, but provision is made for this matter to be dealt with by regulations if it should become necessary. The requirements as to the use of spark arresters and portable water sprays in connection with stationary engines and engines used in harvesting are retained. A definition of spark arrester is inserted to the effect that a spark arrester is a device or arrangement which is in good working order and effectively prevents the escape of any flame or burning material from the exhaust of an engine. In addition in all the clauses requiring a portable water spray to be provided, the Bill requires that there must also be a shovel or rake.

Clearing Airstrips.—It is proposed in the Bill to provide that when an aircraft used in spraying or dusting operations lands on an uncleared airstrip there must be on the airstrip two men to assist in controlling any fires, two portable water sprays and a motor vehicle available to transport the men and the sprays. Under the Act at present there is no requirement that men must be present or that any transport must be available.

Use of "strike anywhere" matches.—The present section which enables the use of the so-called "strike anywhere" matches to be prohibited by proclamation is considerably simplified in the Bill and is redrafted as a direct prohibition of the sale or use of matches, the heads of which contain phosphorus or a sulphide of phosphorus. It appears that as a result of legislation in this and other States these matches are now off the market and the manufacturers accept the position that they cannot lawfully be sold.

Clearing of inflammable furze.—Under the present Act councils have power to require occupiers and owners to destroy or remove furze which may be a source of danger from bush fires. The Revision Committee recommends that this power should extend to any shrubs or bushes likely to facilitate the starting or spreading of bush fires and the Bill contains a provision to this effect. There seems to be no particular reason at present for limiting the control to furze.

Powers of fire control officers.—The Bill sets out the powers of fire control officers more clearly. The present Act says that fire control officers for the purpose of controlling and extinguishing bush fires have all the appropriate powers of the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades under the Fire Brigades Act, 1936. Upon examination of the Fire Brigades Act, 1936, however, it is not altogether clear which of the powers mentioned in it are conferred on fire control officers. For this reason the committee recommends that the powers should be expressly stated in the Bush Fires Bill. This is done by clause 86. No increase in the powers is proposed.

Interfering with fire plugs and fire alarms.—The Bill contains two new clauses on this subject. One makes it an offence to cover up or conceal fire plugs or hydrants or to remove or obliterate marks or posts marking the position of a fire plug or hydrant. The other prescribes a penalty for destroying or interfering with a fire alarm or giving a false alarm. I will have detailed explanations of the clauses available later.

Mr. O'Halloran—Aren't they available now?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I haven't them with me. In fact the person preparing

the schedule, Mr. Botting, has been indisposed for a few days and when this report was typed it was probably expected that the schedules would be available. I think members will see, from an examination of the Bill, that the clauses require far less explanation than the sections of the present Act. I commend the Bill to members.

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

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

CELLULOSE AUSTRALIA LIMITED (GOVERNMENT SHARES) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following suggested amendments:—

No. 1. Page 1, line 19 (clause 3)—After "such" insert "notes and".

No. 2. Page 2, line 7 (clause 4)—After "the" insert "notes and".

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The amendment suggested by the Council to clause 3 (2) of the Bill makes it clear that notes can be paid for out of Loan moneys, in case it should be argued that only "shares" in the strict sense are covered by the intended authority to take up notes, as well as shares. The second amendment is consequential. It also makes clear what is implicit in the clause.

Suggested amendments agreed to.

GARDEN SUBURB ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 895.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Edwardstown)—I support the second reading, and will not take as long as the Minister did when explaining the Bill. I may have had more to say had it not been that this Bill has to go before a Select Committee for investigation. However, I believe there are areas in Colonel Light Gardens that require much improvement. If sporting bodies (particularly the South Australian Football League) were interested, I believe there is great potential in the development of the Mortlock Park oval. I do not agree that it has been developed to its best advantage: much more could be done. If the Commissioner has succeeded in selling all land suitable for building purposes there may be a need to consider some other vacant areas. One in particular that could be used to greater advantage is known as the bandstand area in Light Place. If money is available there is no reason why that should not be one on the nicest civic centres around Adelaide, as there is a roadway right around it. It was one time used as a band stand when many years ago there was a good band in the district that provided much entertainment. One-half of this area is in the Mitcham electoral district and the other half is in the district I represent. As this is a hybrid Bill and must go to a Select Committee, with these few remarks I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and referred to a Select Committee consisting of Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Millhouse, Frank Walsh, Bywaters and Stott, the Committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place, to report on October 20.

PORT PIRIE RACECOURSE LAND REVESTMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 896.)

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie)—I support this Bill with enthusiasm. It is also greatly appreciated by the teachers, council and students of the Port Pirie high school. As a result of this measure the school will be able to extend its recreation area and I am sure that all members agree that it is most important that, where possible, we should make every effort to provide adequate playing fields for our children, because active sport plays an essential part. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.22 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 20, at 2 p.m.