

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 6, 1960.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

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

QUESTIONS.**TROTTING BOYCOTT.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Last night's *News* reported that trotting meetings at Wayville might be boycotted by bookmakers when the season opened next Saturday evening. I understand that differences of opinion exist in this matter, but I do not believe either of the parties involved desire to boycott this popular sport. It is certainly not in the interests of the patrons that they be denied their pleasures. Another press report indicated that certain people were to appeal to the Premier, and I understand that those people have already appealed to the Betting Control Board. In the interests of the sport and patrons, will the Premier indicate whether there is any way to solve this matter before Saturday evening without a dispute or hardship to either party and, if necessary, will he intervene?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the Betting Control Board sent me a communication this morning and I assume that he had probably heard that the Leader of the Opposition was going to ask a question because he told me that he had been informed that a question would be asked in Parliament today concerning the difference between the South Australian Bookmakers' League and the South Australian Trotting Club. The difference results from the club's announced intention to withdraw two complimentary tickets for admission to each bookmaker betting at the club's meeting. The board's views are as follows:—

1. The legislation of betting and licensing of bookmakers was introduced because of illegal on-course and off-course betting before 1934.

2. The board therefore considers its duty to secure if possible betting by bookmakers at racing and trotting meetings.

3. But the clubs are free to issue or refuse to issue to licensed bookmakers permits to

bet, and to attach to permits any conditions thought fit under section 39 of the Act.

4. If a club is willing to issue permits but on terms not acceptable to bookmakers, and bookmakers boycott a meeting, a question of public interest arises.

5. In such an event the Board feels that it should license bookmakers who are willing to accept the terms of the club, and bet.

6. In such an event there would be too many licensed bookmakers and it would be necessary to consider whether some licences should not be cancelled.

I hope that the present differences can be overcome and I am sure the Chairman of the Betting Control Board will do his best to see that this happens. I (and the Government) have always taken the view that it is, as far as possible, desirable for these sporting activities to be controlled by their own committees and the Government would be loath in those circumstances to take any direct action in the matter. However I can only answer the honourable Leader's question to the extent of the information available to me. I hope to be able to advise him next week of the result of the negotiations.

NOOGOORA BURR.

Mr. HEASLIP—I have often asked the Minister of Agriculture questions regarding the menace of Noogoora Burr but up to the present I have not been able to get a satisfactory answer. Sheep coming into South Australia have spread the burr over the northern areas. Bad as that may be—I know it is costing property owners much money to eradicate the damage already done—I am more concerned with the future. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the Government is prepared to take some action to prevent a recurrence of the introduction of this burr from New South Wales because it is adding considerably to the primary producer's cost of producing wool?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I should like to have some facts from the member on which I might work. The last time he spoke he said that sheep were wandering about the north carrying Noogoora Burr and I said that I should be glad to have instances of where this was occurring and that they would be investigated on a high priority level. Subsequently I spoke to the honourable member and obtained from him the name of a person who was alleged to have sheep with Noogoora Burr. I immediately contacted the Agriculture Department to find out about that and found that it was the case dealt with by the department some weeks ago. That is the only

case that has occurred within recent weeks. I badly require some information as to where there are any other sheep infected with Noogoora Burr. Any reports on that will be investigated immediately. The same applies to any district council or any honourable member who has information on this. It is a matter of considerable importance, and the department will give it high priority.

BASIC WAGE CASE.

Mr. RYAN—Has the Premier the report he promised to get when answering my recent question about the appearance of the Crown Solicitor before the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission in Adelaide?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. I am informed that the Attorney-General has already answered this question fully in another place. I cannot give the honourable member the precise reference in *Hansard* for the moment but he will there find a full answer to his question. The Attorney-General, through the Secretary for Labour and Industry, has forwarded me the following report on the matter:—

A senior solicitor of the Crown Solicitor's Department is appearing on behalf of the Government in the differential basic wage case now being heard by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The application being heard was made by private employers in South Australia for the difference between the basic wage in Sydney and Adelaide to be eventually widened. The application does not involve any reduction in the present basic wage. As the honourable Minister for Labour and Industry stated in reply to a question in another place on August 16 last the Government is a respondent to the Award and was summoned to appear in the case.

SOVIET LITERATURE.

Mr. CUMBE—Is the Minister of Education aware of a report appearing in this morning's press that certain schools in Victoria have received quantities of Soviet literature, including pamphlets that have caused some concern amongst both the school staffs and the parents of the children? It was further reported that this material had probably emanated from the Russian Embassy in Canberra. Has the Minister received any reports or complaints of similar publications being received in South Australian State or private schools and, if he has, can he comment upon this matter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I read the report in the *Advertiser* but have not received

any report or complaint from any source in South Australia. If and when I do, I shall be pleased to investigate it.

BUNGAMA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. RICHES—The member for Port Pirie (Mr. McKee) and I have been asked to submit a petition to the Premier asking him to use his good offices with the Electricity Trust to see whether electricity could be supplied to the residents of Bungama, situated near the transformer station just out of Port Pirie. The petition is signed by 16 residents. Will the Premier take the matter up with the trust?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. If the honourable member will let me have a copy of the petition, I shall be pleased to investigate that.

DEVELOPMENT AND VENDING CORPORATION LIMITED.

Mr. LAUCKE—I draw the attention of the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General, to the August 27 issue of the journal *Nation* and also to an article appearing in the *Financial Review* of September 22 dealing *inter alia* with the activities of a public company known as Development and Vending Corporation Ltd., which was incorporated in this State on February 25 last. My concern is that the investing public should be protected by a provision in the Companies Act requiring public companies to state clearly and fully in prospectuses the purposes for which money is sought and is to be applied. The writers of the articles to which I referred claim that money, ostensibly being raised for investment in vending machines, has in substantial part been speculated in a molybdenum mining venture in Queensland. The article in the *Financial Review* states:—

This company advertises that "the general nature of the company's business is to develop the sales of high impulse selling merchandise through vending machines in selected sites throughout Australia" and that is the song sung through the front part of the prospectus too. But, in the "additional statutory information" an eager investor can discover that vending machine operation is actually only a minor function of the company.

Before the share issue, now before the public, the company had an issued capital of £410,569—and £403,193 of it went on March 4 to buy a molybdenum mine that leaves precious little over for vending machines. After the present issue the share capital of the company will total £660,569—so there will still be two-thirds of the company's capital in molybdenum mining instead of the vending activities that are supposed to make up the "general nature"

of the company. Despite this concentration of mining, the company can get away with saying precisely nothing about the mine and its prospects, beyond the fact that it has bought it.

The article concludes with the following paragraph:—

Wouldn't it be a good idea if the Companies Act were to require companies to tell the truth about the "general nature" of their business in prospectuses?

Through the Minister of Education I ask that the Attorney-General consider tightening up the Companies Act in accordance with the last paragraph I quoted, thus requiring a company in its prospectus to tell the truth about the general nature of its business, which would be an important protection to possibly unsuspecting investors?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have not read the article in the *Financial Review*, but I have read with great interest the article in the *Nation*, and I know that the Attorney-General and his officers have given this matter much consideration. It has been discussed in Cabinet and the Premier has issued two or three public warnings regarding the operations of this type of company. The matter has been discussed in relation to the general amendment of the Companies Act, but I shall be pleased to bring the honourable member's specific request before the Attorney-General.

SOUTH-EAST FIRE OFFICER.

Mr. HARDING—My question relates to preventing and combating bush fires in the Lower South-East. The following letter has been sent to the three members of Parliament representing the South-East:—

A meeting of delegates from the district councils of Beachport, Millicent, Tantanoola, Port MacDonnell, Mount Gambier, and Penola, held at Tantanoola on Monday, September 26, 1960, discussed the following motion, which was passed at a meeting of the South-East Fire Fighting Association:—

That a regional officer, similar to appointment in Victoria, be appointed by the South Australian Government for the district council areas of Port MacDonnell, Mount Gambier, Penola, Tantanoola, Millicent, and Beachport.

Delegates from the abovementioned councils were unanimous in their support for this motion. The meeting decided that, due to the acute fire hazards which exist each year in the Lower South-East, caused by prolific pasture growth and the presence of private and Government forests, the appointment of a regional fire officer would assist greatly to prevent the outbreak and spread of bush fires generally.

This motion arose from a meeting held at Naracoorte of the fire fighting associations of

the whole South-East. Councils in the Upper South-East, north of the Penola area, support this, but do not wish a regional fire officer to be appointed for that area, although they are not opposed to the appointment of an officer for the Lower South-East. Will the Minister of Forests seriously consider the appointment of an officer for the Lower South-East, and when a decision has been reached will he advise the House accordingly?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I received that letter yesterday and have forwarded it to the Chief Secretary, who controls the Emergency Fire Services, for comment.

WARREN TRUNK MAIN.

Mr. HALL—As we are approaching the summer, the people served by the Warren trunk main through to Paskeville are once more concerned at the worrying time they will have with breakdowns in the old main. Because of this, can the Minister of Works say what stage the new construction has reached, and if bad sections of the main are to be renewed ahead of the new main?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Some time ago I visited the area and inspected the trunk main in company with the honourable member and the honourable member for Wallaroo, discussed the matter with some of the people concerned, and made a forecast as to the probable completion date for the new trunk main to Paskeville. Since then two factors have influenced the position as regards the completion of this work. The first is that under the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Indenture Act the Government was called upon to supply very large quantities of water to Iron Knob and Whyalla, and this in turn has placed a greater load on the Morgan-Whyalla scheme. As the two schemes are linked and as the Morgan-Whyalla scheme at present supplies a large quantity of water to Yorke Peninsula, it was deemed prudent by the department to enlarge the size of the Warren trunk main so that it could, of its own resources, supply Yorke Peninsula and relieve the load on the Morgan-Whyalla main, and consequently make it easier to supply the greater quantity of water required at Whyalla and Iron Knob. That meant a recast of the design to increase the capacity of the Warren trunk main from about 400,000,000gall. to 600,000,000gall. a year which, of course, required larger pipes. The matter was referred to the Public Works Committee and in July this year the committee recommended that the amended scheme should be effected at a cost of about £6,250,000.

The second factor affecting the completion date is the shortage of steel. The Engineer-in-Chief informed me some time ago that steel plate was becoming more difficult to obtain. He was somewhat concerned because the right thicknesses and types of plates for the different sizes of pipes over the whole of his projects might be difficult to obtain. In view of these two factors the forecast that I made at the time of my visit cannot now be realized, but the department is giving a high priority to this main because it is of such vital importance to us in the whole of the northern network. About £1,000,000 of the Loan programme this year has been diverted to the work. Without making an inquiry I am not sure of the stage the construction work has reached. Steps have been taken to move the headquarters of the relaying gang to the vicinity of Balaklava, which indicates that considerable progress has been made, but I will consult the Engineer-in-Chief for a more detailed report as to the progress made.

INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATES.

Mr. LAUCKE—The following is an extract from a letter I have received from one of my constituents:—

I have been informed by an officer of the Public Service Commissioner's Department that the Intermediate Technical Certificate is not equivalent in status to the P.E.B. Intermediate Certificate, and as a consequence the Public Service Commissioner will not accept this certificate for permanent appointment to the South Australian Public Service. I respectfully request in view of this apparent anomaly that you please make an approach on my behalf to the Minister of Education with a view to obtaining a ruling as to the true status of the Intermediate Technical Certificate as compared to the P.E.B. Intermediate Certificate.

Can the Minister of Education explain the relative values of the two certificates mentioned?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The question of the relative standards or values of the Public Examinations Board Intermediate Certificate and the Technical High School Intermediate Certificate after an internal examination is a vexed one. It crops up intermittently and there are honest differences of opinion on the matter amongst various people in authority. The courses leading to the certificates are different in form and content and comparisons between them are difficult. For example, some employers prefer one certificate and some prefer the other. I have had a number of letters from individual persons, such as

parents of students and students themselves. I have also had correspondence and deputations from the Public Schools Committees Association about this matter and have had numerous discussions with them. I have referred them to the Director of Education and the Superintendent of Technical Schools. I have also had some correspondence from and discussions with several members of Parliament who have technical high schools within their electorates. Of course, the courses leading to the issue of the certificates come within the jurisdiction of the Director of Education and not of the Minister of Education, but I have the Ministerial responsibility and I have been concerned for some years whether we are pursuing wholly the right course in technical high schools in having only an internal examination for the Intermediate and not giving the boys and girls the opportunity to take Public Examination Board examinations.

There are differences of opinion even in the Education Department. I know it is an open secret that the Deputy Director of Education and I place a high value on the Public Examination Board examinations, but the Director of Education and the Superintendent of Technical Schools favour internal examinations, and we have not yet resolved our differences of opinion. They are honest differences of opinion and each respects the view of the others but, as I said earlier, as the Ministerial head of the department for the time being I have a responsibility to the public and I think that at some time in the near future the problem should be resolved. This matter crops up from time to time in relation to the Public Service Board, as indicated by the letter read by the honourable member. I referred that letter to the Director of Education. He in turn referred it to the Public Service Commissioner, who reported back to the Director of Education on September 28 as follows:—

I have had inquiries made regarding the interview in this office with the person named. The question raised by him comes up quite often when juniors are seeking employment. He would have been informed that for employment purposes the Intermediate Technical Certificate is not accepted as sufficient for entry to the clerical section of the Service in the third division. The regulations authorize me to accept any other certificate which in my opinion is of at least the same standard, but up to date I have not been satisfied that the school technical certificate is of the same standard as the Public Examination Board certificate. If I accepted the school certificates of the Education Department, I could not consistently refuse to accept similar certificates issued by private colleges.

The Education Department has long been aware of this department's attitude in this matter (which attitude was also held by my predecessor) and if any child attending a department technical school is under a wrong impression, then the responsibility cannot rest with this department.

As the matter has been raised so frequently and as it has now been raised publicly in Parliament, I intend at the earliest opportunity to call a conference with all the principal officers of the Education Department to see if this vexed problem can be resolved.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: BEACH DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. HALL—I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. HALL—In yesterday's *Advertiser*, in a report on the Budget debate in this House, I was reported as saying that serious consideration should be given to the development of beaches at Port Adelaide. What I said, as reported by *Hansard*, was that serious consideration must be given to developing the beaches north of Port Adelaide. I think the word "north" has quite a bearing as its omission gives a meaning that I am intruding on the district of the member for Port Adelaide.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: BASIC WAGE CASE.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that a few minutes before the sitting commenced today I was handed a letter in the following terms by the Leader of the Opposition:—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I desire to inform you that I propose to move today that the House at its rising adjourn until 1 p.m. tomorrow for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgency, namely, that the Government immediately withdraw its support to the employers' application now before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission at present sitting in Adelaide to vary the Metal Trades Award and thus affect the future basic wage in South Australia, because the Government's action in supporting the application is contrary to the Premier's announced views on the prosperity and better rate of progress of South Australia when compared with the other Australian States.

I inform the House that I have considered the proposed motion most carefully in the time at my disposal. It raises a matter that is inextricably bound up with submissions which are before the Full Bench of the Common-

wealth Arbitration Commission at present sitting in Adelaide and is therefore *sub judice*, and for that reason I rule the proposed motion to be out of order.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition)—Whilst it is not my intention at this stage to challenge your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on whether the matter is *sub judice* or otherwise, I feel I should say that I could understand the ruling if a different substance were involved. What I am particularly concerned about is that the State of South Australia—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader is out of order in speaking; I have given a ruling on this matter, and therefore he cannot speak to the proposed motion.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member for Norwood.

Mr. DUNSTAN—You, Sir, have ruled that this matter is out of order because it is *sub judice*. With very great respect, the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission is not a court, and it is only sitting on this matter by virtue of the fact that it is not a court. According to the decision of the Privy Council in the Boilermakers Case, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission cannot be a court, and only has jurisdiction to hear the application before it because it is not a court within the terms of the Commonwealth Constitution. The very Conciliation and Arbitration Act itself has specifically divided the functions of the Conciliation and Arbitration Court from those of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. What is more, Sir, it is not even a commission of inquiry bearing the prerogative of the Crown: it is an administrative tribunal, and matters before administrative tribunals have always been subject to debate before the House. Even if it were a prerogative tribunal, it would not be a tribunal subject to the prerogative of this State, and therefore it is not intruding upon the prerogative of the Crown to question the action of the Executive in sending its advocate before the commission on this particular occasion.

With very great respect, Mr. Speaker, I submit that a ruling that a hearing before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission is a matter that is *sub judice* is incorrect because it is not before a judge, a court, or a prerogative commission, and in consequence, since it is merely an administrative tribunal exercising delegated legislative powers, there is nothing

improper and nothing contrary to the practice of the House of Commons or this House in discussing this matter here.

The SPEAKER—I think that in November, 1956, the Chair gave a ruling in respect of an application before the Board of Industry which raised a similar matter, and I ruled on that occasion that that was *sub judice*. I have given that ruling in this case, and I do not propose to depart from that ruling.

Mr. Lawn—Two wrongs don't make a right.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I again ask that you further consider this matter. If you, Sir, are not prepared to reconsider your ruling, then I must move to disagree with it.

The SPEAKER—Does the Leader move that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes, Sir. I move—
That the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the Opposition has moved that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with. Is the motion seconded?

Mr. LAWN—Yes, Sir.

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (13).—Messrs. Bywaters, Clark, Corcoran, Dunstan, Hughes, Jennings, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, Ralston, Riches, Ryan, and Frank Walsh (teller).

Noes (18).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Coumbe, Dunnage, Hall, Harding, and Heaslip, Sir Cecil Hincks, Messrs. Jenkins, King, Millhouse, Pattinson, and Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford (teller), Messrs. Quirke and Shannon, Mrs. Steele and Mr. Stott.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Tapping, Hutchens, and Fred Walsh. Noes—Messrs. Nankivell, Lauke, and Nicholson.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. QUIRKE—I seek leave of the House to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. QUIRKE—My vote was cast supporting your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I do not agree with the action before the court at present, nor with the part the Government is playing.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may not debate a matter before the court.

Mr. QUIRKE—That is my explanation.

THE ESTIMATES.

(Continued from October 5. Page 1194.)

On the motion that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply:

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition)—I wish to refer to a matter that concerned me when the first few lines of the Estimates were being discussed, but which I inadvertently overlooked then. I refer to certain important officers employed by the Crown, and I desire to know whether they are receiving full remuneration for the duties they perform. Some are performing work over and above their official duties for which they are paid. Are they being compensated for their additional work? I have been informed that a certain officer of the Crown has been given an appointment in addition to his permanent Public Service office, and I believe that there is collaboration between the Government and certain employer organizations in South Australia and that this collaboration extends to a point that is different from that expounded by the Treasurer to the Committee yesterday.

The prosperity of this State has been referred to, yet I find from reports that certain State officers are assisting in preparing a case that will attempt to deny an equal standard of living as between metropolitan and country people. Certain matters are to be determined before the commission. That has been announced in the press and I am forced to accept that announcement as correct. If it is correct, an attempt is to be made to establish a differential rate in the basic wage of 12s. between the country and metropolitan area and, in addition, there is to be a 25 per cent differential between Adelaide and Sydney. South Australian workers have been denied the cost of living increases based on the C series index figures and they are to be deprived of a fair living standard. I am informed, although my information may be wrong, that Whyalla and Iron Knob are to be exceptions, but what is to be the position in places like Bordertown? What will be the position of people in Mount Gambier and other areas in the South-East if this Government denies equality of rights to the people working in industry? How are the people in South Australia, who will under these conditions be receiving at least 12s. a week below their counterparts just across the Victorian border, to be expected to purchase commodities produced in Victoria? Are they going to leave the South-East and migrate to Victoria? If they do that, at

whose expense will it be done? Are they going to transfer to the metropolitan area?

This State will be faced with the problem of having sheep farmers in the area who are unable to secure labour and there will be little for them to do.

Mr. Clark—This is another move to help the country districts!

Mr. FRANK WALSH—If it is a question of assisting the country districts, can we as citizens of this country, let alone as its Parliament, discriminate any further between city and country?

Mr. Clark—We have done plenty of it so far.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—And we are going to continue as far as the Government is concerned.

Mr. Lawn—The Government wants to drive the workers to the city, where they will get 12s. a week extra!

Mr. FRANK WALSH—We cannot afford to have any further discrimination between the city and the country. I listened attentively yesterday to the Treasurer and I believe he was sincere when he said that the prosperity of this State was outstanding. He referred to industries and the expenditure on educational facilities; he said that prosperity would continue. There will be no differential rates for schoolbooks although, if the Government's appearance in the basic wage case is successful, the teachers will suffer from a differential rate of salary. Books will cost no less in the country than in the city; indeed, they will probably cost more in the country. In 1958 the Government applied to the court regarding the basic wage, but that application was refused. The court said that there was a difference in approach by the employers and by the Government. Because the approach was not uniform, the application was refused. To overcome that disability the Government is now hand in glove with the Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Manufactures. Further, those employers' organizations are using Government labour to present their case. I am particularly concerned about this matter. I regret that I was denied the opportunity of moving my motion.

Recently, a gentleman whose name I think was Mr. Robinson said, "From 1950 to the present date shows that by comparison with other States South Australia has in fact done the worst." Surely somebody is out of step. Is it Mr. Robinson or is it the Treasurer? In view of the Treasurer's statement, I assume that he believed that we had prosperity and

that it would continue, that he did not desire to break down the living standards of any section. The press has reported that the Government is prepared to agree to a differential rate of 12s. a week in the basic wage between the metropolitan area and the country, excluding Whyalla and Iron Knob. The wage-earners in these country areas will get 12s. a week less in their pay envelopes in the foreseeable future.

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla)—From the information we receive, there seems to be little doubt that the officers of the Crown are preparing all the statistical information on this question of the differential rate as between the city and country districts. It is remarkable that we see this close alliance between the Government and the employers' representatives in order to reduce the wages not only of the city but also of the country workers. It is interesting to notice that in 1958 the Government was unsuccessful because of the difference of its approach from that of the employers, but now it is working in collusion with the employers to reduce the wage-earners' rates both in the city and in the country. Despite all the propaganda we have had about the alleged prosperity of this State, it is now being described, so far as the rate of development over the last 10 years is concerned, as the worst in Australia. That is the basis of the approach to the commission.

Mr. Dunstan—Supported by the Government.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Yes. If that is true, then all the propaganda of the last few years on this question has been false, because both statements cannot be right. It was interesting to hear this afternoon that there is to be no immediate reduction in the basic wage. No! It is to be a gradual chipping down so that it will not cause an industrial uproar. What a reward for the moderation of the South Australian industrial workers! We have always been told how moderate they have been in their approach to industrial questions, but now their rates will be chipped, piece by piece, so that they will not create an industrial uproar.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Chair has allowed the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Whyalla considerable latitude, but I cannot allow any direct references to the matter at present before the commission. The honourable member will appreciate that and will confine his remarks to matters other than those before the commission.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I shall deal with the effects of

the proposal. Workers who are coming to this country from overseas will, of necessity, flow into the city instead of going to country towns for work.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—What proposal are you referring to?

Mr. LOVEDAY—The proposal to cut wages in both the country and metropolitan areas.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—Are you suggesting that the Government is proposing that?

Mr. LOVEDAY—The Government is supporting that proposal. That has been stated in the press and it has not been denied. The effect of the proposal will be felt most in those few large country towns on which we rely for industrial expansion.

The SPEAKER—Is not this a matter with which the commission is dealing? That being the case, in view of my previous ruling the honourable member is out of order in referring to it. Arguments are being placed before the commission and I think that this may be one of them. I cannot allow any discussion on any matter that is before the commission or on any evidence that is being submitted to it in connection with the application.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I should like your ruling, Sir, on what aspects of the question I am allowed to discuss, seeing that they are all relevant matters, as was pointed out by the Leader a few moments ago.

The SPEAKER—I have already indicated that the honourable member cannot speak on any matter with which the commission is at present dealing. His remarks must be confined to another subject matter.

Mr. LOVEDAY—We are all concerned with the question of extending industries to country areas and we desire to make those industries attractive. We are interested in bringing migrants to this country. Normally they go to country areas, which rely on these migrants, but the Government's policy, in doing what it is doing today, appears to negative our objectives. I find it difficult to say much more on this particular question without contravening your ruling, Sir, because it is perfectly obvious that in trying to speak logically on the matter one will be balked at every turn. This is a matter of immediate importance, but it seems that its discussion is being completely gagged. The results of the application will have a big bearing on people working in the country. All large country towns will be affected. The workers in Whyalla, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Port Augusta are awaiting the result

of this move by the Government, and I feel that they will be thinking of moving to the city as a consequence. In view of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I cannot discuss the question further. I have said all I can without infringing your ruling, and it seems that this discussion is being completely hampered.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—Mr. Speaker, if the Treasurer were to speak at this stage would that debar other members from speaking to the motion?

The SPEAKER—Yes.

Mr. STOTT—I do not agree with any move by the Government to intervene in this case and I shall confine my remarks to that aspect. Your ruling, Sir, was that we could not deal with the subject matter of the application before the commission or with any evidence submitted to it. I was under the impression that on a motion of this nature members could speak on any subject and could, in guarded tones, refer to a matter of vital concern (as this is) not only to the Government and Parliament but to every country person.

The matters that the commission is at present considering include an examination of the differential principle and its application; what is a just and reasonable basic wage; the effect of a series of flat rate increases; the significance of geographic and economic differences between various centres of population and the effect of those differences on the various basic wages. An extremely important matter is the effect of relative living costs as between various centres of population and the question of the desirability of avoiding excessive centralization of industry. The final matter relates to the distribution of population throughout Australia and throughout the various States. I understand that the Government is represented in this case and that it supports the application. It is on that subject that I wish to speak.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member would be out of order in debating that matter.

Mr. STOTT—Surely, Mr. Speaker, a member is not out of order in expressing his view on what the Government is doing in this matter?

The SPEAKER—I have ruled that a member is out of order in debating a matter that is before the Arbitration Commission.

Mr. STOTT—Surely a member can express his views whether or not he is in agreement with the Government's appearing before the commission in this case and I will not be debarred from doing so?

The SPEAKER—I do not know what the honourable member wants to say, but he referred in detail to matters before the commission, and if he intends to debate them I rule that he is out of order.

Mr. STOTT—If the differential rate in country towns is further reduced, country shopkeepers will lose many of their customers who are working people. I do not find myself in agreement with any move that differentiates between the worker in the country and the worker in the city. We find that people are attracted to the country because of the living-away allowance.

Mr. McKee—Are you opposed to the Government's action?

Mr. STOTT—I have already said so.

Mr. Ryan—Why did you vote with the Government just now?

Mr. STOTT—That was on a motion challenging the Speaker's ruling—a different matter entirely. I could not find myself voting against the confidence of the House in the Speaker, to which the motion related. Whether the Speaker was right or not in his ruling, we have to uphold the principle of a Speaker in this House. The Leader of the Opposition has taken the right course under our Standing Orders in expressing his views on this subject, and I am doing the same now. I could not vote to get the House into a fight with the Speaker. This is the proper time to discuss the matter in the proper way without having the Speaker embroiled in an argument with the House.

We should encourage people to go into country districts and to achieve that we must provide some incentives. I am not at all satisfied that the present system of determining wages and conditions of employment is all that is desired. Many honourable members will have read in the press recently that I was the sponsor of a motion that was endorsed by the whole Australian wheat industry, which wants a review of the national wages policy. It does not necessarily mean that we are going to do away with the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission, but there are some grave anomalies in the way the commission works under our present economic set-up. Costs are getting out of hand in comparison with wages and are rising in a continuous spiral compared with the earnings of our export industries. The result is that we cannot sell our products overseas profitably at ruling prices. When a determination was made to increase the basic wage by 15s. a week a chain process set in whereby numerous applications were

made before the commission for a marginal increase, which was worked out on the basis of a 28 per cent advance to apply throughout industry, starting with the metal trades industry.

I am not satisfied with the present system of determining wages and margins, and a review of the system must be made. It is not right or logical that when a man on the basic wage gets an increase of 15s. a week because of a rise in the cost of living in accordance with prices under the C series index that highly paid public servants in Canberra should receive an increase of £1,500 a year. Therefore, I want a review of the formula that determines margins in industry. Such a review is long overdue. We must have another look at where we are going. I want a central bureau of economics set up clothed with the power and authority to collect all the necessary data to arrive at the economic position of the nation as a whole, and relating that to the commission when an application is made; and also to study the present formula of the C series index which determines the basic wage and if necessary to work out a new formula for determining margins in industry. Having got that far, we would then be in a position to operate our wages system in accordance with the economics of the nation and thus be able to stop the dreadful spiral rise in costs which affects the pocket of every individual.

Our financial system is completely haywire because the Commonwealth Government is in control of it. Legislation was enacted that has the approval of all State Governments establishing the Loan Council, so that the various State Governments and the Commonwealth Government with their sovereign powers would have complete control over the nation's financial position in the raising of loans. The Commonwealth Government established the Commonwealth Bank Board; and the Commonwealth Treasury, because of its powers, has full control of our financial system. The board has power to draw off from individual banks their surplus funds, which are paid into a frozen account at the Commonwealth Treasury and these funds earn only up to 10s. per cent interest. This results in drawing surplus money away from the private banking system that would ordinarily be available to the bank's clients at a rate of 5½ per cent interest on overdrafts. Some millions of pounds are drawn off every three months and this curbs the banks from lending this money. That was done to halt inflation. Economically, that is true. When money is withdrawn from

circulation it has a steadying influence on inflation, but what is the good of adopting such a policy when it is possible to get an unlimited amount of money at a flat interest rate of eight per cent? I have a letter from a share farmer asking me where he can get credit in order to buy a farm. He said that he had approached three banks, but they had told him they could not assist because of the Commonwealth Treasury direction. I will tell him that if he will pay a flat interest rate of eight per cent he can get all the money he wants, but not at the overdraft interest rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

All this shows that the Commonwealth Treasury has lost completely the control of Australia's financial set-up. In order to develop Australia our people should be encouraged to go to the country. Our income from exports must be built up. Recently I attended a conference at Canberra where, in an excellent speech, the Right Hon. J. McEwen said that with the economic position of Australia as it was today it was necessary, in order to keep the balance of payments sound, to increase our export earnings by about £250,000,000 a year over the next five years. How can that be done unless we encourage more production in the country, and by providing incentives for people to go to the country? Because of the fall in wool prices and the consequent reduction in our export earnings, the Minister for Trade must have a headache. Increased population in country towns means that those towns can provide more amenities, such as drive-in theatres, halls, meeting places for rural groups, etc., but they are possible only if a number of people are available to support them. I am opposed to any move that will discourage people from living in country districts. I am glad to have this opportunity to state my attitude on this matter. I oppose any move that will penalize country people. I will not remain a member of this House and do something to discourage people from going to the country.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—For a long time we have heard about South Australia's rate of development compared with that of other States. We have heard the Treasurer say *ad nauseum* that percentage-wise this State's development has been greater than that of the other States. I want to remind members of statements that have been made by the Treasurer. Recently, when introducing the Budget, he said:—

I forecast that as the year progresses economic activity and employment will reach

peak levels. It will then be necessary, more than ever before, to put first things first. The community can undoubtedly live well, but it quite obviously cannot expect to finance considerable industrial expansion, provide for heavy migration, have record building of homes, schools, and hospitals, keep its public utilities in line with industrial activity and domestic demands, and still attempt to spend to the limit on day to day living. At least a fair measure of personal saving is necessary to supplement the institutional savings and the public budgeting for surpluses. This is necessary to help provide for development and capital construction.

Then he pointed out that people could save money by increasing their investments in construction and development work, but how can that be done in circumstances envisaged elsewhere? On the Prices Act Amendment Bill the Treasurer said:—

No argument immediately becomes so apparently ridiculous as that one, because let it not be said by anybody that any State has more business activities coming to it than has South Australia. At present, we are bursting at our seams with new business activity coming into this State—and, I might add, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, not all in the metropolitan area, either! At present new enterprises with a capital value of not less than £100,000,000 have announced their intention of establishing works in South Australia. There is not one State that percentage-wise can show any figures to approach that.

He was referring to the argument that South Australia's business activities had suffered. The Minister of Labour and Industry made a similar statement when he released some statistics about factory development in South Australia. Yesterday in this place, in answer to a question by the Leader of the Opposition about the progress of the State, the Treasurer said:—

The answer to the Leader's question is "Yes, the development in South Australia percentage-wise has been much greater than that of any other State." If members would like some statistics to prove that, they could prove it simply in two or three ways. For example, they could take the increase in population, which has been more rapid percentage-wise in South Australia than in any other State. They could take the number of children in our State schools, which is far greater than that of any other State. The fact that so many people are coming from other States to this State to take up occupation here clearly establishes that the opportunities here are greater than in the States they leave.

Later he said:—

The comparative increased rate of progress is borne out by many comparisons that one could make.

He then gave some comparisons about migration and said that some statements made by

Mr. Robinson before the Arbitration Commission did not meet with his approval. I am interested in these statements by the Treasurer because I have some statistics upon which I wish to comment.

Mr. Jenkins—We must believe your statistics and not the others.

Mr. DUNSTAN—They do not happen to be my statistics, but Mr. Robinson's. He recently revealed that the statistics to be put to the commission were prepared in close collaboration with our Under Treasurer.

Mr. Ryan—And he asked the commission to accept them.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes. Mr. Robinson has forecast that Mr. Seaman will give them in great detail. I have here the statistics, which are current at the moment, on the subject of this State's growth compared with the growth of other States, and I should be glad if the Treasurer would be—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable the Treasurer.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The statistics that the honourable member is quoting are those that were handed in at 12.30 today to the Arbitration Commission and are therefore matters directly before the commission. They were the subject of the ruling by you, Sir. If the honourable member wants to mention the statistics at this moment will I be precluded from making a statement later about matters before the commission?

Mr. Lawn—You do not want to make a statement.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have been trying to do so but honourable members do not want it.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member would be out of order in referring to those statistics. From what I understand from the Treasurer they are before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I have mentioned earlier that any evidence or matter before that commission cannot be referred to in the debate in this House.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I ask for your ruling on this subject, Sir. Is it the case that anything that is canvassed in evidence before the commission, which includes the whole of the economy of the State, cannot be debated in this House? It is not necessary for me to cite evidence before the commission because, as a matter of fact, no evidence has been called before the commission yet. Am I therefore precluded from referring to something which I am not stating here but which is something

that someone else is referring to elsewhere? I am simply asking the Treasurer to comment on certain statistics supplied to me. They are statistics relating to the economy of this State and I should be glad if you would rule whether, because an Arbitration Commission hearing is now proceeding, I am completely precluded from putting to this House statistics supplied by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics referring to the economy of this State? Because of that hearing, am I to be refused permission to debate the economy of this State from those statistics?

The SPEAKER—A little while ago the honourable member referred to Mr. Robinson's making use of those statistics.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—He said they were prepared by Mr. Seaman.

Mr. Loveday—He did not mention Mr. Seaman.

The SPEAKER—I understood the honourable member to say that Mr. Robinson was utilizing them, and I understand that Mr. Robinson is appearing before the commission. I rule that those statistics cannot be referred to or debated in this House, as it has been shown by the honourable member himself that they are being used before the commission.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I shall refer not to Mr. Robinson's working on those statistics but to matters prepared by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, and shall make my comments on them. According to figures published by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, if we take certain base years of value of output—these figures are from the factory statistics published by the Commonwealth department—we find that in the year 1942-43 South Australia's output had a value of £67,569,000; in 1945-46, £66,223,000; in 1949-50, £141,573,000; in 1951-52, £232,853,000; in 1952-53, £234,813,000; in 1955-56, £316,962,000; and in 1958-59, £342,758,000. Those years, if we take them and compare them for various periods, give us contrasts with the amounts shown by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics as the value of factory output in other States. If we take the years 1942-43 to 1951-52, this gives us a fair jump from the middle of the war period to the end of the immediate post-war reconstruction period—the time of the common recession that occurred towards the end of 1952 in the Commonwealth. That shows that South Australia's rate of growth during that period appears (if we compare the amounts given to the House with the amounts for other States) to have been about

the third in the Commonwealth. That is not too bad. It is not the situation that the Treasurer outlined as having been by far the best in the Commonwealth but, of course, immediately after the war we were in a position in which the Commonwealth Government had placed in South Australia a series of war-time factories that we were able to turn over to peace-time use, and that gave us a considerable boost in economic growth during that period.

Mr. Jenkins—So did other States.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Other States did not have the same advantages that we had. For instance, Tasmania did not do too badly in that period although it did not have the same advantages from Commonwealth investment as we had. A contrasting figure, however, is obtained if we take the period from 1952-53 to the present time, when we slip in development from the third position in the Commonwealth to the sixth position. That is the clear result of the statistics that I have already given.

Take any post-war period we like—trough year to trough year or peak year to peak year—we find that after the 1951-52 slump this State's economic development has consistently been the worst in the Commonwealth. I may not go further than this and use some statistics mentioned earlier this afternoon to show in detail just how that arises, but it seems extraordinary that this should be the case, that certain people in this State should be saying freely that it is the case, and that their view in this regard should be supported by the Government on the one hand but that the people should be told a completely different story in this House and on the hustings on the other hand.

Upon any analysis of the expansion of post-war industrial output this State has a poor record over-all compared with other States, and the grandiose statements of the Treasurer to the contrary are so much hogwash designed to give the view to the people of this State that everything in the garden is rosy, that they are getting benefits that people in other States are not getting, and therefore they can be perfectly satisfied with his administration. But, in fact, the picture is not nearly as rosy as the Treasurer would make out, and his own supporters reveal that perfectly clearly.

When the Government is speaking with two voices in this matter one might ask, just why? I think it is perfectly obvious. To the general public the Government wants it made clear that

it is doing extremely well by them. The Government is unable to give any satisfactory story on the development of social services in South Australia, a fact which has been repeatedly pointed out in this House by Opposition members, for our social services have been the worst in the Commonwealth by far, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission has made that obvious year after year. The Government says, "While we have not spent on social development we have spent on development, and look at the magnificent progress the State has made as a result." Statistics on that subject are not too good for the Government. As I have just pointed out, the Government wants the people to believe that there have been these great developments here as compared with other States. There have been developments, but not out of comparison with those of the other States. If we make comparisons, the comparisons are not very greatly to our advantage compared with other States.

Why is it then that the Government wants to tell the people this and yet say something different elsewhere? I think it comes back to this: while the Government wants the people to feel great confidence in the development of this State, as it evidently does from the Treasurer's statements, nevertheless the Government is prepared to have this State a cheap wage State. Not only are the people of this State to have the worst social services of any in the Commonwealth, but apparently they are also to be the lowest paid people in the Commonwealth. The Treasurer has talked about the increase in school population. We know the situation in our schools and how far this Government has been prepared to cope with it in spending less per capita on education than any State except Queensland. In addition, we have the situation in hospitals which is fantastic, and which will be adverted to later when we debate the lines. Poor people in this community, particularly in the metropolitan area, are being given shocking treatment by our present administration, and by the administration of this iniquitous means test which the Government has introduced as far as reductions on hospital bills are concerned. Not only are we spending less on relief of the aged and on child welfare than other States, but our position in relation to the average income of wage and salary earners is a very poor one indeed.

We have, next to Queensland, the lowest basic wage in the Commonwealth. If we have a look at the weighted average real wage of employees we see that we have also the next lowest to

Queensland: we come fifth in the Commonwealth in this. Now it has been suggested that even this situation will not be maintained, but we shall get, through the action of the Government—it hopes—a situation where the average employee in this State will be the worst off in the Commonwealth, and the average employee in the rural areas will be even worse off than his metropolitan counterpart—a situation where the average wage in Sydney will be £5 9s. a week higher than in this State. If that is the position, then what has been revealed by the Government's recent action is a totally iniquitous position. We find that the Government is not concerned to assist the ordinary people of this community, but only to see that there is a decline in their standards. It is not concerned to see that we have the attractions to artisans to come to this community to live satisfactorily here; it is content to see a decline in their standards also. It is not concerned to see that country areas can attract workmen who are needed in those areas, not only for the development of industry there but for the maintenance of the businesses already established in those areas. Those workmen will not have the purchasing power to be able to carry this on, but this worries the Government not at all.

It seems to me to come back to this: the Treasurer on the one hand will go to the people and tell them a story about the development of this State that is not supported by his own supporters nor, evidently, as far as we are able to judge, by the Under Treasurer; but his actions speak differently. His actions are not those of a person who is happy about the economic position of this State, for he is concerned to see a reduction in the real wage levels in this State. That is a situation in which this Government ought no longer to possess the confidence of this House; it should never have done so anyway, because it certainly has not got the confidence of the people. If this Government is to continue speaking to the people with two voices, then it is time that the people were told in detail just what the Government is at. I should be very happy to hear the Treasurer reply on this issue and say precisely what is his view on the matter of development. We heard him only yesterday on the subject but I should be very glad if he would show what the fallacy is in the figures I have already quoted. If he can show that this State's development is of the inordinately great degree he suggests to people, I should be glad if he would do so with some statistical evidence, and not by the sort of general, vague

statements about our getting more migrants and having a higher birth rate than the other States.

Mr. Jennings—Or more wireless licences.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes, or higher Savings Bank deposits.

Mr. Lawn—We might have more wild dogs, too, or rabbits.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes. Let us have some convincing statistics in answer to the ones I have put forward. If the Treasurer is not prepared to produce statistics at this stage he stands convicted, not only before the members of this House but before the people of this State, of having misled the people of this State about the activities of his Government, and of having spoken in places other than here, through his officers, in a completely different fashion from that in which he speaks here and upon the hustings at election times. I am glad that the Treasurer will have the opportunity to answer the statistics which I have put before the House.

Mr. CLARK (Gawler)—One of the things that caused most joy in South Australia, and about which I have received telegrams and letters, was the fact that recently the Government saw fit virtually to endorse a motion by the Opposition regarding decentralization. For people throughout the country districts and for many in the city too, it was a cause for joy that an investigation was to be made to see whether just a little bit more could be done towards decentralization in this State. After all, many people had been beginning to think that decentralization was just something the Government talked about for political purposes, and I believe it probably did itself the best turn it had done for many years when it agreed to an investigation into decentralization.

Mr. Bywaters—It got a lot of praise through the press.

Mr. CLARK—Yes, it received praise from all sources. Now, when we could have been led to believe that something was at last to be done for the country in a tangible and visible form, we find an attempt being made to prove that the country cost of living is less than the city, and to widen the differential. Let me remind the House of a statement made by the Treasurer recently regarding the cost of living in country areas. In reply to a question on August 25 he said:—

The Prices Commissioner has advised that prices of commodities in country areas are dependent on a number of factors. In some instances country prices are the same as or below prices in the metropolitan area, and in other instances higher.

He went on to give the position regarding a number of essential goods and services. The first reference is to milk and the report is:—

Milk (controlled).—In many instances prices fixed in country areas, particularly those enjoying favourable climatic conditions, are lower than metropolitan prices. In other country areas where dairying is not undertaken and it is necessary to obtain supplies from distant milk producing districts prices are naturally higher.

The report on firewood is what we would expect and reads:—

Firewood (controlled).—With few exceptions, country firewood prices are below those fixed for the metropolitan area.

The report continues:—

Meat (decontrolled).—When meat was controlled prices were fixed on the following basis:—

- (a) Pork.—Uniform maximum prices for the whole State.
- (b) Mutton.—Uniform maximum prices for the whole State with the exception of Iron Knob, Whyalla, and Upper Murray towns where the differential was 2d. per lb. above prices in the rest of the State.
- (c) Beef.—Uniform maximum prices for all towns within 100 miles radius of Adelaide and in the South-East; a differential of an extra 1d. per lb. in all other areas with the exception of Iron Knob, Whyalla, and Upper Murray towns where the differential was 2d. per lb.

Bread (controlled).—Prices are higher in country districts because whereas metropolitan bakeries are highly mechanized, country bakeries are either only partly mechanized or have no mechanical equipment. In addition, many country bakeries have only a very limited turnover.

Groceries and Foodstuffs (largely decontrolled).—Prices are generally slightly higher in the country due to the freight factor. However, in some localities items such as eggs, cream, and honey and other farm produce have always been lower than in the metropolitan area.

Clothing and Footwear (controlled).—Country prices are slightly higher in most instances due to the freight factor. However, a number of proprietary brands of clothing and footwear are sold at the same prices in the country as in the metropolitan area.

Services (controlled).—Footwear repair rates, together with charges for most building services, are the same in the country as in the metropolitan area.

The statement made by the Treasurer does not, except in part and only on a small number of items, illustrate that the cost of living is appreciably lower in country areas than in the city and it certainly does not show any necessity whatever for establishing a lower country differential. However, we know there

is a further move afoot to drive people from the country to the city. That is what the move will do and I was pleased to hear the member for Ridley also imply this. People will be driven to this because their capacity to provide for the living of their families will be lessened. I say (I have said it over and over again, and other country members have said it too) that more amenities should be taken to the country, not taken away from it.

To decentralize industry adequately we must make more amenities available to country people and I must speak out when any move is made to detract from the general standard of working people in the country or metropolitan areas or when an attempt is made to take from them something they have earned and need. The more workers and industries we have in country areas the better it will be for the State and the Commonwealth.

I am reminded of the words of the Treasurer which I believed he uttered in all sincerity at the official opening of the annual Federal council meeting of the Australian Journalists' Association in the C.T.A. building. This statement was reported in the *Advertiser* of November 14, 1959. He said:—

The vast undeveloped areas of Australia were in a sense a reproach to Australia. Today numerous stretches of Australia are open and vulnerable. In the next 25 years we have to populate this country and occupy it in the complete sense, not just by establishing a few capital cities.

I agree with that statement and applaud it. I understood, and everyone else who heard it believed, that the statement was made sincerely by the Treasurer. What about the present actions? Surely they refute the sincerity of a statement like that? I will not be a party to a move by the Government or its representative before the commission to lower country wages. Country people need higher, not lower wages.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I explained at the beginning the first part of my reason for the vote I gave on the motion, but that has been challenged. All I say is that it was to uphold the dignity of your office, Mr. Speaker, when you gave your ruling and if the people who moved the motion disagree with the ruling that is in their hands.

Mr. Lawn—Can we debate the Speaker's ruling?

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is out of order in debating that.

Mr. QUIRKE—From statements in this debate it would appear from some speakers that the country is a scene of desolation and in a

bad way, but that is not so. Country towns today have a fair measure of prosperity and the working people have a reasonable standard of living, but they do not want any reduction in that standard; nor can they afford to have any reduction in that standard. Any move, wherever it is started, to bring that about must be rejected and must be opposed by anybody representing a country constituency, otherwise he is failing in his duty to the country areas.

It is not true that the country is desolate. A Government that has made great strides in providing amenities for the country in the form of electricity and water supplies is to be commended for that. I should be sorry indeed if that Government were to take action that was so retrogressive as to break down the record it held. The Government does hold that record and I say that without any qualification. The works have taken place in country districts, and in regard to my own district I cannot say anything else because there is only one hundred in the district of Burra, apart from those in the far eastern parts of the country, that has not yet a proposed and dated installation of single wire earth return lines or lines that are there in actual fact. That is very good and I have taken a fair part in the provision of those amenities and the people are grateful for what has been given in the way of water and electricity supplies and other amenities. One thing lacking is roads and the country people say that not enough money is spent on some roads. There are good roads in the country; I am not one who says all country roads are bad. That would not be true because some of them are good and they are better than those in the metropolitan area. There is no doubt about that but there are bad ones and a little more spent in giving the people, particularly in the north-eastern part of South Australia, something in that regard would be acceptable.

However, there is a record. Here is a Government with a good record in country districts and anything that would drag down that record would tell against it and there is nothing that will tell against it more than decreasing the purchasing power of the country people in any way. As the member for Gawler said, it is not correct to say that it is much cheaper to live in the country than it is to live in the city. If you are only a wage-earner in the country and have not access to your own produce materials, it is not cheaper and in some respects it is more expensive. It is not to be tolerated by any country member that the standards that have been built up and are so acceptable today shall in any way be broken

down, particularly by a reduction in the purchasing power of the people who work for wages in the country.

Mr. RALSTON (Mount Gambier)—In my opinion the Government has aligned itself with employers in commerce and industry in a rather vicious attempt progressively to reduce the living standards of country workers compared with those of employees in the metropolitan area. Does the Government think that the labour of the country worker is worth 12s. a week less than that of his city counterpart? Have the investigations of Treasury officials shown living costs in the country to be 12s. a week less than those in Adelaide? If this is so, let them say so to the Parliament of South Australia. Let them go to the Prices Commissioner and tell him that he has failed in his investigations and that his decisions are based on false premises. The ruling of the Prices Commissioner upon goods subject to price control has invariably been that the freight charges to the country are permissible. Most goods subject to price control are supplied from city merchants. They are supplied to the country traders, and freight is charged on all goods transported from the metropolitan area to the country. The percentage of price mark-up is identical, but the goods are dearer in the country than in the city. Those goods subject to price control are essential goods, most of them being in the C series index which is used as a basis for assessing the cost of living. There is no question that the standards of living for country workers are equally as costly as they are in the city. In fact, I have just said that they are dearer, and I defy any country member on the other side of the House to say that in his electorate the essential goods subject to price control are cheaper than in the city.

Mr. Loveday—Do you think any of them will say that?

Mr. RALSTON—They have had the opportunity in this debate. Nobody has denied them the right to get up and speak for their electorates. Members on this side of the House are anxious to express their views. We shall not be doing so for ever—members opposite will get their opportunity. Let me draw the attention of honourable members to a recent decision of members of the British Medical Association in the South-East and the reasons which they claim justified their decision. I will read the published statement of the secretary, Dr. I. G. Campbell of Naracoorte.

This statement was published in the *Border Watch* on Saturday, March 26, of this year. This is what it says:—

Higher fees for doctors. Revised medical fees have been operating in Mount Gambier and most places in the South-East since Tuesday, March 1. They are the same as those which have been recommended for Adelaide by the B.M.A., except that surgery consultation fees are 2s. 6d. higher.

Thus, in Adelaide surgery consultation fees that were 15s. are now up to 17s. 6d. Surgery consultation fees in the South-East that were previously 15s. are now £1. These were the reasons for this pretty substantial increase, for the statement goes on to say:—

This was confirmed yesterday by the Secretary of the S.E. Medical Association, Dr. I. G. Campbell, Naracoorte. Dr. Campbell said that the basis for surgery consultations in the South-East had been made the same as Victoria's because of the obvious difference in the cost of living and other costs in the South-East, and particularly in towns close to the Victorian border, as compared with those in Adelaide. The differences between conditions in the South-East and Adelaide were quite large.

I draw the attention of the House to this. These are members of the medical profession, of the B.M.A., who say that the costs in country towns are substantially higher than those in Adelaide.

Mr. Loveday—Didn't you know that they got their firewood free from the friendly farmers?

Mr. RALSTON—I do not think the farmers are particularly friendly about these costs. The article continues:—

and Victorian factors had a definite effect on conditions across the border. The Investigating Committee of the B.M.A. in Victoria had assessed the sum of £1 for surgery consultations as reasonable, having regard to increased costs of living, salaries, etc., and the South-East medical profession felt it reasonable to adopt the Victorian assessment.

I pointed out earlier that the surgery fees rose in Adelaide by 2s. 6d. while in the South-East they rose by 5s.—100 per cent more than they rose in the metropolitan area. The ground for this 100 per cent increase was that the cost of living in the country area was higher than that in Adelaide: it warranted an increase 100 per cent greater than that applied in Adelaide. I shall suggest that certain Treasury officials of South Australia did not invite Dr. Campbell to express his views on the cost of living in country areas, and I can only form the opinion that the Playford Government has bowed to the demands of the real masters of South Australia, the people his Party represents—the

financial institutions and industrial magnates of Adelaide. If ever I was anxious to hear the views of members opposite representing country electorates, I am anxious to hear them today. It is a golden opportunity for them to raise their voices in defence of the rights of the workers and also the rights of the trading community, that is, the shopkeepers in their electorates who will find 12s. a week less put into their tills in the future. There is nothing to commend the Playford Government to them. If those members fail to speak, they are failing in their duty; the Government is failing in its duty to the people it represents. In conclusion, reverting to the claims of the members of the B.M.A. in the South-East, I cite the views of the Council of Trade Unions representing 23 unions in the South-East and, of course, thousands of unionists. In the *Border Watch* of March 29 the following appeared:—

The Mount Gambier Council of Trade Unions is puzzled over reasons given for doctors' surgery consultation fees in Mount Gambier and other country places being raised 5s. in comparison with an increase of 2s. 6d. in Adelaide. A spokesman for the council said today that the matter was discussed at their last meeting, with particular reference to the statement that the extra rise was applied in country areas because the cost of living in the South-East was greater than in Adelaide. The spokesman said, "This is extraordinary reading to the C.T.U., as Federal awards for years have rated the cost of living in Mount Gambier as 3s. per week cheaper than in Adelaide, and still do. This warrants an inquiry by a Parliamentary Select Committee as to the justice of some of these claims: either the British Medical Association is right and the Federal Arbitration Court is wrong, or *vice versa*."

I conclude on that note.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray)—All country members of the Opposition are perturbed at the move to reduce the standard of living in country towns, particularly as the Government supports that move. It will cause concern in all country electorates because there is no proof that it is cheaper to live in the country than in the city. The member for Gawler instanced that the Prices Commissioner stressed the increased cost of many commodities to country consumers. Anyone who thinks that country people get hand-outs (and firewood has been mentioned) has another think coming. Some country people may get free firewood on occasions, but that is not the general rule. Freight charges apply to most essential commodities, including groceries and vegetables, and these are dearer in the country. House rentals are slightly higher in the country. Last year we debated the difference

in petrol prices throughout the State, and all members know that it costs more in the country.

At present the country basic wage is 3s. a week less than in the city, but I have been advised that David Shearers Limited at Mannum are able to secure employees at that wage. However, if the difference is 12s., it and other industries will not be able to get sufficient labour to continue their operations. People could not be blamed for remaining in the metropolitan area where they could get 12s. a week more. If this differential is granted the wage earners in my electorate will be in difficulty. Prices will not be reduced, for the experience of past reductions in wages proves that prices do not drop when wages decrease, although when wages are increased prices rise before the worker secures his additional remuneration. If the differential is granted there will be an uproar unprecedented in the State's history. I hope there is no reduction in country wages.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I protest against the Government's action in using the taxpayers' money to assist employers in the case before the commission. The Treasurer has not yet spoken because when he does he will close the debate. I have no doubt that he will say that the Government was served with a summons to appear before the commission as a respondent and that, therefore, it had to appear. However, that is not so. Many respondents merely notify the court that they do not intend to appear in a case of this nature, and that is the end of it. If they want to make a plea then they must appear to be heard. I do not know to what extent the Treasurer is in the confidence of Government departments because he apparently does not know what is happening. I do not think he knew until this afternoon, when it was stated here, that the employers were collaborating with the Under Treasurer in preparing a case for the commission. There is no doubt that the Government, through its departmental officers, is collaborating with the employers in preparing the case for a difference of 12s. a week in the wages paid to country and metropolitan workers and for the commission, when it increases the basic wage, to increase the wage in Adelaide by 25 per cent less than the Sydney increase until there is a difference of 10 per cent in the basic wage of both cities. In other words the basic wage in Adelaide will be 90 per cent of the basic wage in Sydney. I have heard Government supporters say that they represent all sections of the

community and I previously challenged that. Here is an instance of the Government's using the taxpayers' money to collaborate with employers in preparing their case even before they go to court. Fancy the Government collaborating with the Trades Hall for the introduction of a 35-hour week! What would Government supporters say if it did that? Following the next election Labor will be occupying the Treasury benches and if it were to collaborate with the Trades Hall regarding a 35-hour week what would present Government supporters say? They stand condemned in what they are doing today. I do not think that a Labor Government would even collaborate with trade union officials in any application for a 35-hour week or an increase in the basic wage. As Mr. Robinson has said, he is collaborating with the head of a Government department, the Under Treasurer.

We have heard Government members opposing Labor's suggestion for electoral reform and saying that we must not interfere with country representation. Only recently the Treasurer moved an amendment to a motion providing that there should be no interference with country representation in Parliament because this would have a deleterious effect upon decentralization. The Government wants its country representation in Parliament to look after one section of the community. Here we have a definite attack in the court on the basic wage, and supported by the Government, so that workers in the country shall receive 12s. a week less. How then can the Government justify the present electoral set-up and say that we must preserve country representation in this House to look after country interests? It is doing just the opposite and is looking after the interests of a certain section—not the interests of the country people. The Government's attitude in this case is not conducive to the furtherance of the decentralization policy in South Australia.

The member for Murray indicated that people in his district would not want to receive 12s. a week less than workers in Adelaide and I interjected, "What about Leigh Creek?" I could also have included Radium Hill and the district of Frome. People in Frome will be interested to know that the Government is supporting an application for decreased wages in the country. The Secretary of the Labor Party has been in the district this week and the Leader of the Opposition was also there with the member for Port Pirie last week-end. Everybody knew

that a case was coming before the Arbitration Commission this week and questions were asked because they had heard that the Government was appearing. From what Mr. Robinson has said, the Government is collaborating with employers in the preparation of their case. What will people in Frome say on November 5?

Mr. Ryan—Out with the Government!

Mr. LAWN—But with the gerrymander, they cannot “out” the Government. A wage reduction of 12s. a week will not encourage people to leave the city and go to live in the country, but will drive many country workers back into the city. Many of these people have gone to the country in good faith and purchased or are purchasing homes, and yet they may find themselves receiving 12s. a week less than workers in the city. Is that what we expect from a Government that claims to represent all sections of the community? Of course not. This action of the Government condemns it. It is hypocrisy for the Government to say that it believes in a policy of decentralization. It knows what happened in the Light by-election. It had the jitters properly when it saw the literature and the claims made by Labor. Members on the Government side were told by their master—Samson—during the campaign that if they did not get out into Light the Government would lose the seat. They were afraid of the decentralization policy placed before the people of Light by Labor. Government supporters cannot honestly, sincerely and truthfully go out into Frome and say that they believe in a policy of decentralization.

Mr. Shannon—You are encouraging me to go to Frome!

Mr. LAWN—I would welcome the honourable member going there. The Government has not named its candidate, whoever he will be.

Mr. Shannon—We know who our candidate is. Do you know who yours is?

Mr. LAWN—I believe that nominations will close this week-end. I do not know how many there will be nor does the honourable member, but I believe, following past experience, we shall have at least three; but no-one knows. It does not matter how many we put forward because our candidate will be elected.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—Can you say how he is going to be selected?

Mr. LAWN—I could tell the Treasurer what is going on before the commission, but the Speaker would tell me I was out of order. The Treasurer is protected there. The selection will not be done with a card vote. The

Liberals are not giving their candidate a fair go because whoever he may be, even if it were Sir Thomas Playford himself, the electors will know at Radium Hill, Leigh Creek and other places what the position is. They know that the workers are being told that this Government wants to reduce their wages to a figure 12s. below that paid workers in the metropolitan area, and those who depend upon the spending of the wage-earners will also know that if the Government has its way the workers will have 12s. a week less to spend and therefore their livelihood will be affected. I do not expect the Government to change its attitude to the basic wage case. As I indicated earlier, the Treasurer does not know the actual attitude of the Government's representative appearing before the commission. When I made that statement the Treasurer left the House. It may have been to check with the Crown Law officers as to whether he was correct or not.

Mr. Shannon—I am not paid to listen to this sort of stuff.

Mr. LAWN—I am paid a lousy salary by the Government to represent the district of Adelaide in this Parliament and, indirectly, the people of the State. I don't care if I sit here all night debating this or any other matter that affects the wellbeing of the people. The Opposition has always advocated that this Parliament should sit longer than it does. Because of interjections by Government members I have kept the House longer this afternoon than I intended. On two occasions previously I have said that despite representations from members on this side over the years for country pensioners to get the same concession fares for railway transport as city pensioners not even one Government member has supported me. Many members on this side have spoken today. I explained why the Treasurer has not spoken so far. I went across to him and he said that as the mover of the motion he could not speak until everyone else who wanted to speak had done so. If he speaks he closes the debate. He is anxious to speak and several times has endeavoured to rise. No member of the Government side has so far spoken. Must they wait on their master to know what they have to say, or haven't they the courage to declare themselves on this question because most of them represent country electorates? I have no doubt that the previous member for Light could have given us much information on country versus city costs, and he would have done it most capably.

Mr. King—It would have been of value.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. This is part of the employees' submission to the commission, but the advocates of the employers are trying to show that country costs are cheaper. Over the air every week the Treasurer tells us that millions of pounds are coming into South Australia for the establishment of new industries, yet our Under Treasurer is trying to prepare a case indicating that industry will not come to South Australia because the basic wage is too high. This afternoon my colleagues have quoted statements by the Treasurer about the prosperity of the State, yet his Under Treasurer is in close collaboration with the representative of the employers preparing a document to prove that the Treasurer's statements are wrong. That is a ridiculous state of affairs. Is the Government getting industry to this State? Will the Treasurer tell us of the State's industrial growth in the last 10 years? Does he think that it has been better in that period than in the previous 10 years? According to statements over the air by the Treasurer the State has made tremendous progress. At election time almost every Government member goes out with the Playford pamphlet showing what has been done for South Australia, yet the Under Treasurer and the representative of the employers are preparing a case to prove that the growth of South Australia in the past 10 years has been less than it was in the previous 10 years. Does the Treasurer know all this?

All this will be placed before the electors of Frome and the people of South Australia. It will not only be the legal bigwig who sits in this House half and half on the front bench who will have to worry about his electors. Some country members, as well as some metropolitan members, on the other side will have to worry also. If the workers in Unley know that their wages have been depressed 12s. a week because of the Government's attitude, and country workers know that their wages have been similarly depressed because of that attitude, the member for Unley and more than one country member on the other side will have a headache before the next State election. I said that the wages may be depressed 12s. a week, but the Leader of the Opposition reminds me that the differential could be higher. If the basic wage increases, the differential could go up to 30s. or £2 a week. I await the remarks by the Government spokesman, and there is only one spokesman on that side. It is unfortunate that the Government has intervened before the commission on behalf of one section against

another. Because of it this debate has lasted several hours, yet no Government member has taken part in it. They are all relying on their Samson. I hope that as a result of this debate the Government will do the right thing in the interests of all sections of the community and withdraw its representative from the commission. Any material concocted or compiled between the Under Treasurer, or other Government officer or Government department, and the employers' representative should be scrapped and withdrawn from the commission.

Mr. RYAN (Port Adelaide)—This debate has taken place because of the intervention of a servant of this Government before the Arbitration Commission in absolute support of an application by the employers. I hope to show that this is true, and that this place and another place have been fed with a pack of lies regarding the representation in the court. I am pleased that Mr. Shannon made such a brilliant interjection when he said that he was not paid to listen to this rubbish.

Mr. Shannon—That is a fact, too.

Mr. RYAN—We shall be pleased to tell the people that, because of the Government's successful application to the court, wages will be cut not only in the country but all over the State, that is rubbish as far as the Government is concerned. The workers will be extremely pleased to know that as far as Mr. Shannon is concerned any reference to their wages being depressed is rubbish.

Mr. Shannon—You encourage me to say a word.

Mr. RYAN—I will say a word, too. Government members have not the so-and-so to put forward a case on behalf of the people they represent.

Members interjecting.

A member—Speak up!

Mr. RYAN—I shall be speaking up shortly in Frome and when I, together with my colleagues, speak up there we shall tell the people the absolute truth. We welcome the opportunity to speak up there with the members of the Government.

Mr. Shannon—If you do, it will be the first time in history.

Mr. RYAN—History has always to be written, and it will be written that the member for Onkaparinga said that dealing with workers' wages was rubbish.

Mr. Shannon—I should like to appear on the same platform with the honourable member.

Mr. RYAN—I should like to appear with the honourable member before the Arbitration

Commission—and I am not a solicitor! Apparently the honourable member is not even a politician.

Mr. Shannon—You would be easy meat. Why not have a go at it?

Mr. RYAN—I am prepared to meet the honourable member on any occasion. The truth has not been told about the Government's intervention in this case; it has not been told this afternoon by the Government. The Treasurer seems to be the only spokesman for the Government. He probably thinks, "There is another white lie that I hope the public will swallow." I hope to amplify my statement that the truth has not been told about this matter. So that I cannot be accused of telling lies, I shall quote what has been said and recorded. On August 10, when this matter was first raised in another place, the Hon. F. J. Condon sought leave to make a statement prior to asking a question. He said:—

It was stated in today's press that the South Australian Employers' Federation has lodged an application with the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission for reduced wages in South Australia—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is out of order in referring to a statement made by a member of another House in another place.

Mr. RYAN—Someone told me that a statement was made somewhere or other, the text of which was that the South Australian Employers' Federation had lodged an application with the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission for reduced wages in South Australia, based on the claim that Adelaide's capacity to pay was lower than that of the larger cities.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—On what authority is the honourable member speaking?

Mr. RYAN—Someone told me this. I shall be quoting the Treasurer a little later as the authority for an answer that was received.

Mr. Coumbe—What paper are you reading?

Mr. RYAN—The truth, which will not hurt anyone. I was also told that if the application were successful it would result in a lower standard of living in this State. The federation asked that the basic wage increases in Adelaide be 25 per cent less than increases ordered for Sydney, so that the Adelaide wage eventually would be stabilized at 90 per cent of the Sydney wage. The South Australian application was supported by the Playford Government (I have heard that somewhere before), which briefed one of its top-rankers in the person of Mr. W. A. N. Wells, of the Crown Solicitor's Department, to support the employers' application. It was requested that the

Government withdraw Mr. Wells from the hearing. It was further stated by somebody or other that no application had been made by the South Australian employers or by the South Australian Government either to reduce the basic wage or to lower the standard of living. There were applications in respect of the basic wage before the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission concerning two awards. The South Australian Government was a respondent to both of those awards, was served with notice of all proceedings and was therefore necessarily involved in the applications. It was said that the Government therefore had not appeared as a party to intervene—it had no alternative but to appear.

I stress this last statement, which I shall verify by actual proof later. So that the matters involved could be understood, a brief statement of those applications in respect of the basic wage before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was made. The statement showed that the first—to be heard on August 23 next—was an application by the Federated Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association to vary the Engine-drivers and Firemen's (General) Award. Their claim, as far as it would affect South Australia, was that the wage under that award for Whyalla and Iron Knob should remain at £13 16s. and that elsewhere in South Australia it should be the flat rate of £13 11s. The effect of this would be to remove the "country differential" rate in this award whereby country areas (apart from Whyalla and Iron Knob) have a wage of 3s. less than city areas. The second and third applications were each in identical form—one by the Metal Industries Association of South Australia and one by members of the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures (who are respondents to the award). It was mentioned by that very reliable source that the Government had no option but to appear and that it did not want to intervene. I shall now quote from another very authoritative source—case No. 333 of 1960 on an application to vary the Metal Trades Award *re* the Basic Wage of South Australia, appearing on the transcript of August 9, 1960, at page 6. The transcript states:—

If the commission pleases, I entirely support the application by my—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is quoting a statement made to the commission by someone appearing before it.

Mr. RYAN—With deference, Sir, I am dealing with a statement made by an officer

employed by this Parliament. I have been told by the Treasurer that this Government is not supporting a certain application. I am not dealing with the application but am bringing forward proof of a statement made by an employee of the Crown that he was supporting the application.

The SPEAKER—Order! I understood the honourable member to say that the statement was made by the person to whom he referred before the commission. If that is what he said, I must rule that the statement is out of order. The honourable member cannot quote that statement, as it was made to the commission.

Mr. RYAN—With all deference to your ruling—

The SPEAKER—I have ruled accordingly.

Mr. RYAN—The statement was made by a responsible public servant.

Mr. Lawn—Contrary to a policy statement of the Government.

Mr. RYAN—Contrary to a statement made by people in another place and further verified by a statement made by another responsible person in this House, that he was appearing and entirely supporting an application made by the employers.

Mr. Lawn—Did he say whom he was appearing for?

Mr. RYAN—He was appearing—

The SPEAKER—Order!

Mr. RYAN—The person concerned was an employee of this Government, and this debate has taken place because an employee of this Parliament is making representations to a certain commission requesting a reduction in wages not only in the country but in the metropolitan area. That is the reason for, and the text of, this discussion here this afternoon. We believe that as the authoritative body in South Australia we should have at least some jurisdiction over the people that are employed by this supreme authority. It has been stated by certain people that the Government's intervention is an indirect one, but the truth of the matter is that the Government is entirely supporting the application before the commission. Although members on this side of the House have put forward their views on how it will affect the country, the matter has to be further amplified, and it certainly will be amplified by members of this Party in public where the matter could not possibly be ruled as being *sub judice*. We will certainly tell the public that the Government also intends to reduce the wages of all workers in South Australia, something which is at

least equally as important as the attempt to reduce the wages of workers in the country.

I distinctly remember that recently we had the privilege of being in a country area and seeing one of the very large socialistic industries in this State. On that occasion the Treasurer made a public statement that that industry had prospered because of the harmony that existed between employers and employees in South Australia. I assure the Treasurer that whatever harmony existed prior to this application will be set back by the Government's interference in this matter. If there is to be a case before a commission let it be fought on its merits between the employer and employee parties. We do not want to see collusion between Government officers and the employers. We must remember that if that intervention is taking place it is taking place at the expense of the South Australian taxpayers, for it is the taxpayers' wages the Government wants to reduce. It has been said elsewhere that this State is in the lowest possible ebb of prosperity. I remind members of the Speech made by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor—and he is the mouth-piece of the Government when making this Speech—in opening Parliament on March 31. He said:—

During the year 1959 the rate of increase in employment in South Australian industries was much higher than that in any other State. The increase in numbers in civilian employment was 3.9 per cent as compared with 2.6 per cent for the whole of Australia and in factories 4.9 per cent compared with 3.5 per cent. The number of persons receiving unemployment benefit has been the lowest of any of the mainland Australian States, representing only $\frac{3}{10}$ ths of one per cent of the estimated work-force.

I believe the next part of the Speech is something that is going to bounce, and that the Government may be sorry for the action it has taken. His Excellency said:—

The loss in working time caused by industrial accidents now exceeds by far that caused by industrial disputes and efforts to reduce accidents have met with encouraging results, employers and trade unions generally co-operating with Governmental activities in this field. The Treasurer has often spoken about the harmony that exists in industry, but I believe that harmony will cease to exist when the truth of this matter is really known. Does the Treasurer honestly believe that the Trades Hall is going to take this lying down? I'll say it's not! If the Trades Hall not only raises its voice but takes certain other action, I should say that on this occasion it is probably justified in doing so.

Mr. Loveday—No “probably” about it.

Mr. RYAN—If another industry with which I am familiar had been involved it would not have waited this long; it would have found out the truth and taken the necessary action, and it would have let the Government know its attitude. The Government’s intervention presupposes a depression in South Australia and that such a depression warrants a reduction in wages. There is no other answer to it. If things are prosperous, why should there be a reduction? Some will say that this application applies only to the country, but those people lose sight of the fact that there are two applications before the court, one of which deals with a reduction in the metropolitan area basic wage. It is all right to try to camouflage it, but the intent behind one of those applications is that an increase in the South Australian metropolitan basic wage shall be reduced by 25 per cent until the Adelaide wage equals 90 per cent of the Sydney basic wage. In other words, the South Australian worker is worth only 90 per cent as much as the worker in Sydney.

Mr. Lawn—Holdens could not afford the full basic wage!

Mr. RYAN—No. Holdens, unfortunately, is one of those very poor companies that could not possibly afford to pay the full wage!

Mr. Lawn—What about the Broken Hill Proprietary Company?

Mr. RYAN—According to the Government, it can afford to pay only 90 per cent of the basic wage. The Government has lost sight of the fact that Elizabeth—the new creation, the Playford myth—is in the country.

Mr. Lawn—Is it in the country or not? I should like to know.

Mr. RYAN—I believe it is in the country.

Mr. Loveday—We have been told that it is.

Mr. RYAN—If General Motors-Holdens is in that category in Elizabeth, I should not like to be one of those to have to convince its workmen that they have to accept a reduction in their wage packet if this application is successful.

Mr. Ralston—What about the oil refinery at Port Stanvac; will it be able to pay?

Mr. RYAN—The Government will protect that company; it will say that South Australia is only a poor State and can afford to pay only 90 per cent of the full wage. It will tell the company that it will be on a better wicket in South Australia than in other States. It is vastly different from the case the Treasurer presented to this House when he came back and told us of the greatest piece of financial

wizardry that ever happened in South Australia; that we were no longer a poor relation of other States but on an equal financial footing with the big States of Australia, and did not have to go and cry poor mouse to the Commonwealth as a claimant State. The Treasurer may do some terrific somersaulting on this point because after having said that we are on an equal financial basis with other States and do not require further assistance from the Commonwealth he then sends a representative to the Arbitration Commission saying that what he then said was not true and that he wants the commission to disregard it and believe what he now says. I am extremely pleased that this debate has taken place because members on this side have had an opportunity of voicing their opinion on behalf of the workers, which is vastly different to the support the Government is giving to the employers. It is quite apparent that this issue—and it is quite all right for members opposite to say it is rubbish, that it is not worth worrying about and that it is trivial—may develop into one of the biggest industrial fights that has occurred in South Australia. I hope it does not, but that the commission sees the wisdom and the logic of the statements made in other places and in this House and does what it justly should do—throw that application into the gutter where it really belongs.

We have had an opportunity this afternoon of expressing our opinion in no uncertain manner as to where we stand on this issue and I am pleased that we have had the opportunity at this stage because some of us will probably be packing our swags shortly and telling the people what took place in this House today. I hope the statements made here, the intentions of the Government, and accusations about the intentions of the Government will be related by the press so that everyone in the State will know what is taking place in the commission today.

It is noticeable that whilst country and metropolitan members on this side of the House have spoken we have not yet had one speaker from the Government side representing either country or metropolitan electorates. We believe that probably there will be one speaker, the mouthpiece of the Government, and he is not going to get away with a pack of lies similar to those told elsewhere that the Government is only intervening because it is a respondent. This State, through the legal mouthpiece of the Government, is supporting the application and is in collusion with the

employers. It was recently stated in the press that a high Government financial expert will, at the request of the employers, give evidence. He is to present a thesis which was probably prepared in the taxpayers' time at the taxpayers' expense for the purpose of penalizing the taxpayers.

We have nothing to hide but I believe a terrific amount has been hidden and will be hidden. We are accordingly awaiting what the financial genius will tell us but, whatever it is, we will tell the truth on all occasions.

Mr. HUGHES (Wallaroo)—It is not my intention to take up more than a few minutes of the time of the House in this debate. It is rarely that I attack members in this House but I do offer criticism and this afternoon I must say that I am really disgusted at the attitude taken by country members opposite in not speaking on the matter before the House. They are hiding behind their Leader and if I know anything of the Treasurer he would not wish them to hide behind his apron strings. I have known him for a long time and he would not wish them to hide behind him if they had anything logical to put before us.

When I look at members opposite representing country districts I feel they are not taking up the plea on behalf of their people in this case. I do not care what any of them say, all I know is that as yet not one has risen to his feet to say what he thinks of the points put forward by members of the Opposition. I know there are honourable members opposite who will not be greatly affected by this matter but there are also members who are primary producers and the South Australian primary producers rely to a great degree on the assistance given them by workers in the country. I know that, because for 14 years I was on the land, and I learned to respect what the workers can do for primary production. I also know that we are living in an age of automation, but automation does not do away with farm labour in primary industry. At a particular time in certain periods of the year the primary producer needs a certain amount of labour that he would not have needed in years gone by. It is a skilled type of labour.

Mr. Nankivell—We have to pay skilled rates for it.

Mr. HUGHES—That is so, but it is skilled labour which the workers give to the primary producer. Even though the honourable member has an agricultural diploma against his name he is not the only one who knows a good deal

about primary production. I have lived with it all my life and am conversant with the requirements of the primary producer and I know how much he relies on the workers in this State. There may be some honourable members living in farming communities who do not have very large towns in their electorates. The member for Gouger lives in the country and comes from Owen, which is not a very large town, and it is known that farmers telephone the employment officers in the larger country towns seeking labour. Am I right?

Mr. Nankivell—I did not hear the honourable member.

Mr. HUGHES—I directed that question to the member for Albert because of his interjection. That is what primary producers do today. Not having enough labour nearby they telephone the nearest large town and ask the employment officer to send them labour. I recently spoke to an employment officer in a large town and he told me that already primary producers were ringing for assistance to cope with the coming season and he said that he had not experienced such a demand in the three or four years that he had been in that office.

Mr. Nankivell—Is not that a good thing?

Mr. HUGHES—Yes, it is. I do not deny that for one moment. I want the State to progress. I uphold the primary producer getting as much as possible out of the land. He pays the basic wage because the men earn it: make no mistake about that. I have already told honourable members opposite that I was a primary producer and I know what I am talking about. I know that if one is prepared to pay a decent wage one can always get a decent man.

I rise this afternoon to protest against any move that will cause the people living in my district to suffer a severe reduction in their standard of living. Apparently the employers and the Government feel that there is nothing wrong in strangling a person; they feel that as long as the pressure is applied gradually, perhaps the person does not feel it and, after a while, he will accept it. If this sort of thing is allowed to continue, there will be strong resentment against the Government and any honourable member in this House who condones this. I have already intimated that I have worked in industry as well as being a primary producer; therefore, I speak with knowledge of both sides of the question. I know that country employees will not take very kindly to any further reduction in their standard of

living. The Treasurer himself has stated in this House that there has been less industrial trouble in South Australia than in any other parts of the Commonwealth. I believe that to be true, the reason being that the workers of this State have co-operated fully in building up the State to its present standard. Yet, what is the gratitude that is offered to them?—a differential in their rates! People in country districts are denied many of the amenities enjoyed by city people, yet another move is afoot to deny them still further the necessities of life.

In towns where business people rely to a great extent on pay envelopes to conduct their businesses, they will suffer. They are the ones who will suffer in country districts because the people who live there will suffer as well as the primary producers, and after a while we shall find, as I stated recently, that the country districts will decay and become stagnant and that more people will flock to the city—and the Lord only knows that the business people in many country towns of this State have suffered enough already.

I believe someone said that Tarlee would not suffer. Of course it will not suffer—there is no-one at Tarlee to suffer. I cannot see any logic in that argument. If the primary producers there or in similar set-ups require assistance in labour, all they have to do is to get on the 'phone and contact the employment officer, who assists them to what degree he can. Government members, led by the Treasurer himself, are always stating in the House that the Government is in front of the Commonwealth in doing this and that, and that the rate of growth in South Australia has more than kept pace *pro rata* with that of other States. Yet, when I opened the *News* this afternoon—I know I shall not get very far so I shall not take any liberties—I read:—

Very low rate of growth in S.A.—The rate of growth in South Australia from 1952-3 until today was very low compared with other States. I strongly protest against any move for a reduction in the standard of living in the country areas.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie)—The people I represent are most concerned about this. Your ruling, Sir, on the debate rather restricts one from exercising an important right that I believe democracy stands for—freedom of speech. As the member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) pointed out, all country members, and particularly those on this side of the House, are concerned in this but it is apparent that country members opposite are not so

concerned. Possibly they are but they are suppressing their thoughts. The position as I see it is most drastic. I have had several 'phone calls from people in my electorate who are concerned and want to know what is going on. They cannot justify the Government's action in this matter. In fact, they are astounded by this after reading the Budget debate, when every honourable member on the opposite side of the House told us that the State was bursting at the seams with prosperity.

Mr. Lawn—And was sound, and everything was rosy.

Mr. McKEE—Yes.

Mr. Lawn—With a near record harvest.

Mr. McKEE—Yes; and they said there was a gilt-edged future before us; but now they are concerned with what is going to happen to the gilt, and to whom it is going. It is astounding to think that the Government can justify a reduction in wages today when prices are soaring. There has been no reduction in the cost of living. In Port Pirie and other country towns, transportation costs are added on to all the articles we buy. I know that honourable members opposite realize that that is so. Therefore, they cannot justify the argument that living is cheaper in the country. Water rates have been increased, although the increase may have been camouflaged. The people, and particularly workers and pensioners, find themselves in a position where they can barely survive. Wives are forced to go to work. No wife should be asked to go to work; her proper place is at home looking after the children. But, if the people are forced to accept a reduction in wages, that sort of thing will happen. General Motors-Holdens published a financial statement the other day showing a profit of £15,000,000. Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, manufacturers and other industrial giants are expanding, moving and buying property in all parts of the Commonwealth of Australia on the efforts of the workers. I shall say no more. I am greatly concerned and strongly protest at the action taken by the Government in this case.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I am wondering what prompted the Opposition to become suddenly interested in the matter under discussion. Before today we heard little about it. The member for Port Adelaide asked a question on Tuesday, and I promised him a reply on Wednesday, but he was so interested that he forgot to ask for it! What has

prompted my friends opposite to suddenly become the great friends of the worker?

Mr. Lawn—It wasn't sudden. If you look at *Hansard* you will see that we have been talking about it for the last fortnight.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I must confess that the new Leader of the Opposition disguised the matter effectively. He did not come right out in the open, but used camouflage.

Mr. Lawn—He must have copied you.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The member for Norwood used some guile. In fact, he seemed unhappy. He wanted it both ways. On one hand he wanted to say that the State was marvellously prosperous, and on the other, that it was not prosperous.

Mr. Dunstan—That is what you do.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—He disguised his feelings reasonably well. However, as this debate progressed, the more indiscreet members of the Labor Party began to get their heads, and we heard from the member for Adelaide, the new Whip (and they are under new management at the present)—

Mr. Lawn—It's a pity the State isn't.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It has become obvious that this debate is merely a stunt to try to win over a few votes in Frome. It is a Frome campaign. Let me tell the member for Adelaide that there will be a new member coming to this House, but he will not be subject to the honourable member's whip.

Mr. Lawn—We have a seat ready for him.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—He will be a member of this side. The Opposition should realize that the "stuff" that has been spoken this afternoon will not appeal to the vast majority of the industrial workers in the Frome electorate who are, in point of fact, Government employees.

Mr. McKee—Reducing their wages will not appeal to them.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—They know from experience that at present they are receiving from the Government, in most instances, margins infinitely higher than any that have been proclaimed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Lawn—Tell that to the railway workers!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I shall most certainly be talking to the railway workers, and, what is more, they will be listening to me.

Mr. Ryan—Perhaps!

Mr. Clark—Aren't you on Frome propaganda right now?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not intend to canvass matters that are before the commission, and I am not going to try to get around your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on this matter. Other speakers have flagrantly disobeyed your ruling, saying that they are repeating what they have been told or are reading from *Hansard*. I will not indulge in that, but will candidly express my views on arbitration matters generally. These views have been publicly announced on many occasions, and will be in the future. In expressing these views I have been completely off-side with many of the traditional supporters of my Party.

Mr. Lawn—Are you on-side now?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There are two main factors that any tribunal must consider in determining the remuneration of employees, and I defy any member to disagree with me on this. Firstly, it must consider the capacity of industry to bear the cost and, secondly, it must consider the cost of living. I do not hear members opposite complaining about either of these fundamentals.

Mr. Lawn—Your supporters are not too happy.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—My supporters are well able to express their own views.

Mr. McKee—They haven't done so today!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Let us not get away from the subject. There are two main criteria that any wage-fixing tribunal must consider: firstly, the capacity of industry to pay, and secondly, the cost of living. Unions consistently put those matters to the court. The unions say they want an increase in the basic wage or in margins, as the case may be, and claim that the prosperity of the country will stand increased payments. Secondly, they say that they want the restoration of the C series quarterly adjustment figures.

Mr. Ryan—There is nothing wrong with that.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Exactly. The honourable member comes right in, because those are the principles that my Government stands for and has always stood for.

Mr. Lawn—It doesn't stand for any principles.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I ask members opposite: why does the Government consistently place price control legislation before the House? There is silence!

Mr. Lawn—You tell us why?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Why does the Government place rent control legislation before the House?

Mr. Frank Walsh—To assist the Government.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It is all very well for the Opposition to talk about the welfare of the worker, but which was the first Government to run away from price control? Who wrecked price control?

Mr. Lawn—You wrecked it!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member knows that only this week there was a reduction in the price of petrol. How did that come about? It came about because of the work of our Prices Commissioner and through his investigations.

Mr. Lawn—You have spoken for 10 minutes and have not referred to the subject matter of this debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Later I will give honourable members more information on this topic, but at present I want to discuss generalities. Generally speaking, the Government stands for two things.

Mr. Lawn—The gerrymander! What's the second?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—On industrial matters the Government believes that wages must be fixed on the capacity of industry to pay and, secondly, that the wages must be related to the cost of living.

Members interjecting.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have listened this afternoon to honourable members opposite for nearly four hours and interjected only once, when I asked the member for Port Adelaide what authority he was quoting. The two things I have mentioned are essentials. If wages are fixed above the capacity of industry to pay, we immediately get dire results in the form of widespread unemployment, because immediately industry cannot pay the wages prescribed men are thrown out of work. If we fix the wage below the capacity of industry to pay, harm is done to the worker, who should have a fair share of the results of his labour. Union advocates time and again have said that the worker must be paid enough to enable him to provide his wife and children with a reasonable standard of living. That standard must be maintained.

The facts are that union representatives advocate these very things themselves. The second thing I want to say is that members on this side of the House believe in arbitration. We believe in the Arbitration Commission hearing all the facts associated with any application. It is an impartial tribunal and having heard the facts it gives a determination upon them. My Government has not at any time refused to honour a court decision as soon as it is made, and has never tried to evade it. Members opposite do not believe in arbitration. What they want is a court before which only one side will give evidence and the other side will be precluded from doing so. That is not arbitration. The member for Norwood, who has some knowledge of court affairs, would never stand for anything that prevented anyone who wanted to do so from giving relevant evidence.

After all, the duty of a court is to sift the evidence and decide whether it should accept it or not; and that is the whole purpose of the Arbitration Court. The fact is that my Government has from time to time been represented before the Arbitration Court in other States, particularly in Melbourne, in hearings of a general nature; and on several occasions the court has commented on the factual evidence my Government has submitted. Our views have not always been accepted; it would be unusual to expect that. However, the court has paid a tribute to South Australian officers for their impartial, straightforward and conclusive evidence. That is the only way that arbitration can work. If any party is precluded from bringing evidence before the court that it believes to be necessary, then we immediately hamper the court's effectiveness and it ceases to be a court and becomes an instrument to give effect to the desires of only one side. What would honourable members opposite who have been so vocal all the afternoon and who are now so strangely silent—

Members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I thought for a moment that members opposite were not listening to me, but I find they were. What would be their attitude if, for the sake of argument, some of the evidence that a union desired to present to the court was shut out by action taken by this Parliament?

Mr. Ryan—That has been done before.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—What would be the attitude of honourable members opposite if an authority desired to give evidence in an application for an increased wage

and was refused admission to the court? They would say, "This is not arbitration at all. This is merely getting a result by pressure of numbers or argument." While my Government is employing officers who are subject to arbitration awards, it will continue to give evidence before the court. It has supported applications on numerous occasions and on one occasion the Electricity Trust supported an application by its employees for increased wages. While my Government is the employer of labour and is subject to Federal awards it will continue to exercise its right to give evidence before the commission.

Mr. Jennings—For one side.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have already said that on occasions the Government has supported applications before the court and I gave an instance.

Mr. Dunstan—Against employers?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I gave an instance just now of the Electricity Trust supporting an application against employers. My Government will continue to give evidence as to what it believes to be the rights and wrongs of a case. If it did not do that, it would not be doing its public duty. I believe that if a case were placed before the Privy Council it would refuse the Arbitration Court the right to fix the salaries of Government officers. That is probably one High Court decision which, if taken to the Privy Council, would be upset. I believe that the fixing of salaries of South Australian Government officers should be the prerogative of this Parliament. While the present decision stands, and I see no chance of challenging or upsetting it, we are part of the action, whether we like it or not. I repeat that while my Government is an employer and subject to awards of the court it will be the Government's duty to be represented in the court.

Mr. Lawn—There is no need to assist the employers.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member is a little farther ahead than I am. This afternoon the member for Norwood quoted from a document, and that gave him some difficulty. He did not know whether to agree with it because if he did he agreed with the employers' case, and that would not have suited him politically. He wanted to have it a little both ways. That document came into the hands of any Government officer for the first time at about 12.30 p.m. today, when it was handed in to the commission by the employers' advocate. Probably Mr. Dunstan got his copy at about the same

time. Up to that time the Government had not seen the document in any form whatsoever.

Mr. Lawn—Was Mr. Robinson right in saying that it was prepared in collaboration with the Under Treasurer?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as I know he was not correct.

Mr. Lawn—Note the qualification!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I categorically asked my officers and they said, "No".

Mr. Lawn—Don't you accept your officers' assurance?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as I know there has not been any assistance. When he was pressed to say where the information came from Mr. Dunstan said the figures were from the Commonwealth Statistician. He acknowledged that as the source of the information. With some surprise I heard a certain word used in this debate. It had not been used before. It was that the Under Treasurer had helped to concoct this document.

Mr. Lawn—If it were contrary to your statements about the prosperity of the State somebody must have concocted something.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In this place it is easy to defame an officer because that officer cannot reply. Anyone with a knowledge of Mr. Seaman would know that under no circumstances would he concoct anything. He is an officer of the greatest integrity. In this place he has no opportunity to reply to statements made about him. If the honourable member says that Mr. Seaman concocted something it means that he has no knowledge of Mr. Seaman. As far as I know this case has been prepared by Mr. Robinson. It is the employers' case and not the South Australian Government's case. When it is presented the South Australian Government's case will be entirely different.

Mr. Frank Walsh—With all due respect to Mr. Seaman, is it his intention to present to the commission a thesis on this case?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Seaman will give evidence on behalf of the South Australian Government, and there is no suggestion otherwise. For 10 to 15 years he has given assistance to the court by giving evidence. I suggest that members wait and see what his evidence is before they jump to conclusions. With all the guile in the world the Leader of the Opposition asked yesterday whether I believed that this State was prosperous. I told him frankly that I believed

that to be the position in this State. Mr. Fred Walsh immediately quoted Mr. Robinson and I suspected that the words had been taken from the context and did not represent the full statement by Mr. Robinson. I immediately said that I did not agree with Mr. Robinson's statement if that was what he said. That should have shown members that they were completely barking up the wrong tree in this matter. Many people make statements, but authentic statements are those submitted to the court by witnesses. That is the only authentic evidence.

Mr. Lawn—Do you suggest that Mr. Robinson is lying to the commission?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have already said that I am not going to discuss the action before the commission. The Speaker has ruled that out of order. I have not heard one word of what Mr. Robinson said in the court. I saw a press report of it today, but whether it was a factual report I cannot say. Mr. Fred Walsh read the statement and asked whether I agreed with it and without any hesitation I said, "If that statement represents what was really said and has not been taken from the context I do not agree with it." Surely that should have made members aware of my position in this matter. I have repeatedly said, and I repeat it again today to my admiring audience, that this State is going ahead. If I may say so, I am not going to be concerned with only one set of statistics. I think members opposite will agree that there are so many ways in which the advance of a country can be registered and so many periods that can be picked that any result that one sets out to get can be obtained. For instance, although I just glanced for about three minutes at the document that I received this morning, I saw a most glaring omission. I know that the member for Norwood is still undecided about which way to jump in this matter, although I think he will ultimately stand up for South Australia. At no time in the last five years have I said anything but that this State was going ahead by leaps and bounds. No evidence can be given that will alter my opinion on that.

Mr. Lawn—Do you believe in the reduction in the basic wage as asked for? Will you answer "yes" or "no"?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have already told members what I believed to be the basis upon which the basic wage should be determined. Whether there should be a reduction or an increase in the basic wage

obviously depends upon whether those factors point one way or the other.

Mr. Lawn—Which way do you think they point?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the factors point to increased productivity they immediately point to an increase in the basic wage. That is obvious. If they show that the cost of living is going up they again automatically point to an increase, in my opinion. If they show that the cost of living is higher in one part of Australia than another, in my opinion that justifies a higher wage for that part of Australia. I think the member for Adelaide will agree with that. If the cost of living at Leigh Creek, for instance, is higher than that in Adelaide, I believe there is a good ground for a differential rate for Leigh Creek. As a matter of fact, the member for Whyalla agrees with that too. Yesterday he said that school teachers at Coober Pedy had an excessively high cost of living and therefore should get more than their present allowances. That position is also met at Radium Hill and Leigh Creek, where district allowances apply. This argument cuts both ways.

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

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—When the House adjourned I was saying that I thought every honourable member had at some time or other expressed the view that where the cost of living was abnormally high that fact should be considered. The Government has done that quite generously in a number of ways. All sorts of provisions have been made at Leigh Creek and at Radium Hill to meet the very fact that the cost of living in those areas, which are somewhat remote, has been higher. We have done it also in a very much more general way. Has any honourable member taken trouble to find out—possibly it has never occurred to members to do this—how many houses we have provided for the Education Department in the country, the cost of those houses, and the rents charged? If honourable members look into this matter they will see that that is something that has been done specifically for the country. It has been done because where there are problems in living conditions the cost of living in those areas naturally must be higher.

Mr. McKee—The workers living in trust houses are not paying low rents.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The teachers actually living in trust houses are tenants of the trust and not of the Government,

and they are paying a normal rent. Members will therefore see that trust houses are very unpopular with the Education Department. Every Loan appropriation that comes into this House has a large amount on it for teachers' houses. In answer to honourable members who talk about country conditions, I point out that prior to my Government's coming into office no Government had provided any houses at all in the country for the Education Department, except for the top men—the headmasters. The provision of houses for assistants and for those other than headmasters was a policy that was brought in by my Government, and it has been carried on persistently year in and year out. Where people are living under disadvantageous conditions this Government, in some way or other, compensates them for it. The moment the Government provides a house in the country for an Education Department teacher in grade 3 that teacher is better off from the point of view of his emoluments than a grade 3 teacher in the city. That is obvious. If there is a district allowance or some other compensating factor, then obviously there is a difference between them. I turn now to the question of arbitration awards in the country. As far as I know the Government is not directly affected in this matter. I have not checked up on the point, and as honourable members did not do me the courtesy of telling me that they wanted this matter debated today I have not had time to do so.

Mr. Shannon—This is the Frome dark horse.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that it is something that cuts both ways. It is advantageous to the Leader to know what business the Government intends to go on with from day to day. That is a long-standing arrangement between the Leader and the Government; I have always indicated to the Leader what I proposed to do and he has always extended the same courtesy to me. It cuts both ways, and I would think that if we want to get the facts of this matter it would be advantageous to have some co-operation in carrying out the processes of the House. The Government is in charge of the Notice Paper for three days of the week with the exception of Wednesday afternoon, and if matters are to be considered in their best light it is necessary for members to have some idea what is coming before the House. I say advisedly that in these matters there can be better co-operation if it is possible to know the precise things that are coming before the House.

Mr. Lawn—We had fuller information, but we were not allowed to place it before the House.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The motion the Opposition was not allowed to bring before the House was a matter about which, quite contrary to the usual practice, the Government was not informed. The Government is usually informed of a motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. Lawn—What we are discussing now is not a motion for the adjournment of the House; we are going to support your motion.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not saying this is a motion for adjournment. The honourable member referred to a matter that he was not allowed to debate, and I am pointing out that the Government was not advised of that matter. As far as I know, the Government is not in any way directly involved in the question of marginal differences between the country and the city; all the Federal awards the Government is a party to under the Commonwealth Arbitration Court are industry awards. I have not been able to check that, but I believe that is so. For instance, the Railways Award is a Federal award, and I think it is an industry award.

Mr. Lawn—No.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think it is an industry award. Various unions have awards, but those awards apply to every one of their members in the Railways Department.

Mr. Lawn—An industry award is one covering that industry.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member is taking a different interpretation of "industry award" than I am.

Mr. Lawn—Mine is the correct one.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have no doubt the honourable member is always correct. I am not arguing that point.

Mr. Lawn—An industry award is one award covering that industry.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The point I want to make is that I do not believe there is a different wage in any classification in the railways between one part of the State and another. In other words, I believe the Government is not implicated directly in any way in the question of the differential between the capital city and the country. I do not know of a case where that is so. It could be the case because, as I have pointed out to honourable members, I did not have the opportunity to check that point. As far as I know the Government is not directly implicated in the

question of there being any difference between the railway worker in the Peterborough division and the Adelaide division.

Mr. Bywaters—Then there is no point in Mr. Wells being in the court.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member is beginning to get some conception of the issue now.

Mr. Lawn—He is a jump ahead of you.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have given no directions at all to any of my officers or anyone else to meddle in the question of the differential between the country and the city; I have given no instructions whatever in the matter.

Mr. Lawn—You are accusing people outside this place of being liars.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Two things are involved, one being the welfare of the State, and that could be involved in the general question. As far as I am concerned, the welfare of the State would not be beneficially affected in any way at all by altering the present ratio between the country and the city. I know of no reason why the welfare of the State should be involved in the differential between the country and the city. If any honourable member says that the Government is anxious to worsen working conditions in the country he is saying something contrary to fact. That is clear, and I want it reported in *Hansard*. If any honourable member says we want to bring down relative conditions of people working in the country he is saying something absolutely contrary to fact.

What is the issue that interests the Government in this matter? I remember the comments of the member for Norwood who had so much to say this afternoon, but who is not present now, and whatever his argument may be as to whether he desires to support a bigger or brighter or a gloomier State, the fact remains that in 1939 there was no argument from anyone as to whether this was a bright and happy State or a gloomy State. In 1939 Mr. Curtin said to me at a Loan Council meeting, "Of course we realize that South Australia will always be a sub-standard State, a mendicant State, and the other States will have to support it".

Mr. Ryan—In what capacity was Mr. Curtin acting in 1939?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—It may have been early in the 1940's if the honourable member wants a correction. Mr. Curtin at that time at a Loan Council discussion said, "South Australia has no physical advantages whatever. It has no power supplies,

a large area of its country is unoccupied and cannot be effectively occupied, and it must be a State that the Commonwealth will always have to regard as a more or less mendicant State that has to be supported by other States". In 1939—or 1942 if the member for Port Adelaide desires—there was no argument at all regarding South Australia, either from an agricultural point of view or an industrial point of view, but the Government set out with a deliberate policy and built up South Australia. It realized if we were going to build up South Australia the best way would be industrially.

If honourable members look at the rainfall map of this State they will see, if they have not already done so, that 90 per cent of the State has a rainfall of less than 10in. At present one-third of the total area of the State is unoccupied Crown land that no-one could possibly occupy. We have no large rivers except the River Murray, upon which we have a precarious hold, so obviously if we are to build up the State we have to build up industrially. We can build up to a certain extent agriculturally, but any honourable member who has had any association with the land knows that the areas available to South Australia are so limited that already prices of land have been forced up to uneconomic levels and the primary producers in those areas are already in trouble because the land is over-valued.

What are the factors that will enable South Australia to build up industrially? We have one or two factors which are good, but we have a number of very disturbing factors. The first good factor is that we have had a remarkably good record from the point of view of industrial disputes in this State, and the industrial record of South Australia is one of which any State may be proud. That is something which is very attractive to industry. Firms know that if they open a factory here they will go into production and not be subject to all sorts of even brief stoppages that send up the cost of production.

One great disadvantage from which we suffered was a lack of markets. At that time the population of the State was about 580,000. We did not have a market for our industries and indeed today if honourable members take the trouble of making some economic study of this big problem they will find that much of our factory production must go to the eastern States and to the eastern markets. I hope no honourable member has any doubt about that—the member for Murray Bridge

cannot have any doubt because he sees the tremendous movement of commerce by road and rail every day of the week. That means that if we are to continue with a good record of employment and with a high standard of living we have to continue to export our commodities to the eastern States. Every honourable member here, if he gives any thought to that problem at all—

Mr. Lawn—Are you arguing for a basic wage?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member listens to me he will hear what I have to say and I believe I can make him understand. At any rate I will do my best. What I am discussing at the moment is increased activity in South Australia. I have heard union officers presenting a case to the Arbitration Court on a number of occasions, and I have the transcript which honourable members may see if they so desire. What the union advocate has always put up, and what honourable members here and certainly honourable members of the Labor Party in the Commonwealth Government have put up, is that the thing which really affects the standard of living of the worker is not whether he gets £1 or £2 a week, but what he can buy for his money.

Mr. Frank Walsh—That is what we are concerned about.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That is the standard that affects the living of a man in any occupation, and every honourable member will agree with me on that. In an effort to overcome the disability which this State—and I ask members not to get the employers mixed up in this for a moment—must overcome, namely, the manufacture of commodities and transporting them 500, 800, 1,000 or even 1,500 miles to their market the factor that we have to contend with is the factor of the cost of living. I come back to what I have said here time and time again. This Government has been abused, not by members opposite but by staunch supporters of the Government, because it has maintained steadfastly over the last 20 years an attempt to keep the cost of living down. We have not always been successful, and I am not pretending that we were. We are confronted with another increase in the C series index this quarter, and if I were to prophesy what it will be I would say that there will be an increase of 5s. on meat alone this quarter.

Mr. Jennings—It will be less than the last one.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Last time it was 5s. 10d. on meat. If the wages in Sydney are £20 a week, I want the wages in South Australia to be as much as economically possible. If we can provide in South Australia a house at, say, 10s. a week less than the rent of a house in the other States, then that is something that will help overcome the problem of transportation to the other States. We are criticized by honourable members opposite who say that we do not build more schools and hospitals. If we liked to put the whole of our Loan appropriation into schools and hospitals, we could have school-rooms with only a very few students in them, but each year we have concentrated continually on what I believe is the best possible way to get houses available for the worker in this State at the lowest possible cost. This year, in one way or another—and I point this out to honourable members opposite—of the State Government's money we are putting between £21,000,000 and £22,000,000 into housing. I listened to the member for Whyalla (Mr. Loveday) last night and I thought that, if ever there was a one-sided argument made in connection with the first line of the Estimates, that was it.

Let me go back into the history of Whyalla. When Whyalla was first established, the Government owned the land and the regular policy of the State till then had been that any land sold by the Government would be sold by tender or by public auction. That was the policy of the Crown in those days and it is still the policy as far as broad acres are concerned. What did we do? We said: "Right; we will cut this land up and make it available to the workmen at the cheapest possible price." I believe that the upset price at that time for blocks of land in Whyalla was about £20 or £30.

Mr. Loveday—They were first sold by auction and at the deputation, of which I was a member, we got it back from Mr. Rudall.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—They are still sold by auction for business purposes. If the honourable member will look at the Whyalla legislation he will see it applies to that. That in itself showed the earnestness of the Government because, if all those building blocks had been held by the Government for greater prices, we could have secured consistently £200 for any one of those blocks, because we were the only seller.

Mr. Lawn—Will you tell us whether or not the Government will support the application for a reduction in the basic wage?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am not debating the case before the commission.

Mr. Jennings—That is true.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The case that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Adelaide have put up is that we were undertaking the case on behalf of the employers. That was their case.

Mr. Lawn—No—supporting it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That we were undertaking the case on behalf of the employers.

Mr. Lawn—We said you were supporting it; you are not speaking the truth now, either.

The SPEAKER—Order!

Mr. Lawn—We said you supported the application for the employers.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member actually went so far as to cast doubt on the validity of the type of case—

Mr. Lawn—I said you were supporting the application of the employers; I did not say you were undertaking the case on behalf of the employers: that would be a lie.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member used the words that Mr. Robinson had been preparing a case in collusion with the Under Treasurer.

Mr. Lawn—No, in collaboration.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I have been introduced into the reply on this debate. I specifically want the permission of this House to state that, when I made any reference to any high official officer—

The SPEAKER—Does the honourable Leader ask leave to make this explanation?

Mr. Shannon—After the Treasurer has spoken he should make his point of explanation. Why break into the Treasurer's speech?

Mr. Frank Walsh—I do not want to interrupt the Treasurer but I want to put him on the right road:

Mr. Shannon—We did not do this to you; we gave you an open go.

Mr. Lawn—He was out of order all the time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have listened to the Leader and, as I understood him, he commenced his remarks by saying that there was an officer of the Government who was doing work for an outside authority. If I am correct, it will be shown in *Hansard* tomorrow. If I am not correct, the Leader of the Opposition need have no worries about it. All he has to do is to read *Hansard* to me next Tuesday and, if I am not correct, I will willingly withdraw. I do not want a mistake.

Mr. Shannon—You are not the only one who heard it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not want to misquote the Leader. The whole purpose of the discussion this afternoon introduced by the Opposition was that we were assisting to conduct, or were urging on, the employers' case.

Mr. Lawn—Assisting the employers' case.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Let me say this: we do not urge on the employers' case or have anything to do with the employers' case.

Mr. Lawn—You are supporting it, aren't you?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—To that question I thought I had already given the answer.

Mr. Lawn—Are you saying that Robinson is a liar? Is Robinson a liar or not?

The SPEAKER—Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr. Lawn—Are you supporting the employers?

The SPEAKER—Order!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The case that will be presented by the Government in this matter will be directed towards the matters I have discussed tonight.

Mr. Lawn—Supporting it?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do support the cost of living margins that are involved as between State and State. I have said already that, as far as I know, we are not involved in it.

Mr. Lawn—You should know; you are the head of the Government.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as the cost of living is concerned as between State and State, it is always open to the Arbitration Commission to make an adjustment in the marginal rates as between State and State which has some bearing on the cost of living. It has been supported by the unions year in and year out, and the Government supports that.

Mr. Lawn—But we do not ask for a 10 per cent lower basic wage.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—May I ask the member for Adelaide not to interrupt so much?

The SPEAKER—Order! There are too many interjections. Under the Standing Orders they are out of order. If there are any further interjections, I intend to deal with the members concerned.

Mr. Lawn—I said—

The SPEAKER—Order!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—In the interests of the Government in this case, we are an employer and are therefore involved in the case. That is point No. 1.

Mr. Lawn—Tell us whether you are going to support it or oppose it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There is no alteration in the basic wage proposed at present. What is proposed at present is to get the differential between this State and other States determined.

Mr. Ryan—Reduced!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—There is no suggestion of a reduction in the basic wage at the present time so far as the State is concerned. The employers have not asked for it. They have asked that the ratio, which would be based upon the relative costs of living of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and the other States, be determined and adjusted in accordance with the real costs of living. Strangely enough, that is what the unions ask for on every occasion. I am not taking this matter any further tonight. The Government will present its case, and evidence will be tendered on behalf of the Government by the Under Treasurer, but so that the member for Adelaide will know what the Government stands for I will see that at the earliest opportunity a copy of the transcript of evidence that will be given officially (and not unofficially or by hearsay or on behalf of somebody else) is made available to him so that when he ventilates this matter in the Frome electorate he will be able to read some of it to his audience, who will then be able to understand the issues involved.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

Hospitals Department, £6,003,762.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Bedford Park hospital is mentioned in this line and I shall refer to it later. However, I am vitally concerned with the conditions applying in metropolitan and country hospitals. I know that certain industrial awards operate in this State, but I do not know whether there will be differential rates for employees of metropolitan and country hospitals. In this regard I must refer to some information provided by a Minister of the Crown who said:—

By having a provision inserted that upon any variation increasing the basic wage prescribed in this award for Sydney, the amount by which the basic wage prescribed for Adelaide is increased shall be 25 per cent less than the amount of the increase for

Sydney, until the proportion which the basic wage for Adelaide bears to the basic wage for Sydney is reduced to 90 per cent. At present that proportion is 95.8 per cent.

He also said:—

The effect of the second variation would be that as Adelaide's basic wage rose the basic wage for the country—

The CHAIRMAN—Order! Where is this in the Hospitals Department? Can the honourable member show me where it is?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am discussing whether there would be a differentiation between hospitals so far as employment is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN—Which page is this on?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—If you look at page 29, which we haven't dealt with yet—

Mr. Clark—You wouldn't know.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I ask the honourable member for Gawler to withdraw that.

Mr. CLARK—I withdraw it, Sir, but it was not directed to you. I was making a joke.

The CHAIRMAN—Were you? It was a most unseemly remark to pass.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am referring to information I received from a Minister. Can the Treasurer indicate whether there will be a variation in the industrial awards governing employees of country hospitals as compared with their counterparts in the metropolitan area? I believe that if a Minister can supply information I can pass it on to this House. The Minister also said that the basic wage for the country areas—

would remain at £13 8s. (its present figure) until Adelaide's figure was 12s. in front. From then the country figure would continue to rise at a figure which would remain 12s. behind the Adelaide city figure. If the application is successful it would appear to be to the advantage of both industry and employees.

I cannot agree with that latter statement. Earlier this evening when I rose on a point of order I intended to explain that although I had referred to a high ranking Government official I had not named him. However, I am prepared to do so now. I understand that Mr. Seaman, an expert witness, will be called by the Government to demonstrate the order of difference of living costs between the States. Evidence will be given in the court by Mr. Seaman that may affect the wages paid in the country compared with those paid in the metropolitan area. I should like to know whether Mr. Seaman is to be compensated for the preparation of the case he is to present to this tribunal. I am concerned about the 12s. mentioned in the document made available by

the Minister. This would amount to a reduction in the living standard of these country workers. According to information given to me, should there be the alteration mentioned, the difference of 12s. a week will remain for all time. This amounts to discrimination. Irrespective of the basic wage paid in Adelaide compared with that for Sydney, and excluding Whyalla and Iron Knob, the wage paid to workers in the country will always be 12s. below that paid in the metropolitan area. I accept that the Treasurer does not know what evidence is to be presented to the commission by Mr. Seaman. Once the practice referred to is established, I am fearful regarding the employment position of these people in the country. Under no circumstances would I attempt to reflect upon the Under Treasurer or any other public servant who was unable to defend himself.

I notice that mention is made in the Estimates of certain increases for the Bedford Park Sanatorium, to which I do not object, but I should like to know what is to be the future of this institution and whether, if this money is not used this year, it will be reserved for some other organization?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—Under Federal awards there has, as far as I know, always been a slight difference between wages paid in the country compared with those paid in the city. These hospitals are under State control and are not covered by Federal awards. As far as I know there has never been provision for a differential. When alterations are made to the salaries of nurses only the salaries are considered; there is no differential. There will be no alteration to this position in the future. During this session a Bill will be introduced dealing with the Bedford Park institution.

Line passed.

Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, £774,000.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am concerned about the future of the Magill Boys' Reformatory. Speaking of the security block, I would not have chosen the site where it was built. Is there sufficient staff at the institution to care for the boys placed in that block? I do not think that they should be just left in the detention block. Attempts should be made to rehabilitate them in the hope that on their release they will be able to lead normal lives. I know that the Public Works Committee is still investigating the future of the reforma-

tory, but I would like to have further information about it from the Treasurer. Struan Farm is an asset to the State, but I think it is capable of better use. Is there any proposal to increase its activities when the next superintendent is appointed? The boys sent there are trustworthy. It may be that they did not have a reasonable chance in their early life because of the type of life led by their parents. Before I became Leader of the Opposition I made some inquiries with a view to getting further information about the farm. It should have a good standard of discipline and in their rehabilitation the boys should have a continuity of interest. The farm has accommodation for between 50 and 60 boys, but the department must decide whether or not that is too large a number to be accommodated. We should also have more information about the future of the farm. I do not know of a more dilapidated building in the State than the Magill Reformatory. People must be horrified at merely entering its front doors. It is not a decent place in which to work. The Treasurer should indicate Government policy in relation to Magill, particularly the security block, and state whether a plan is to be implemented for the future of Struan.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Leader knows that this matter is being investigated by the Public Works Committee, which is taking evidence not only in this State but in other States to see what alternatives can be considered. The committee has requested the Director of Public Buildings to draw up additional plans and information. I am not sufficiently versed in the proceedings of the committee to know what it will recommend. Recently the chairman said he hoped to be able to give a report in time for next year's Estimates, and that is as far as I can take the matter. The Government bought Struan some time ago to provide a farm school for segregation. It has maintained this farm but the cost to keep the relatively small number of children there has been prohibitive and I feel that we have not yet got the answer relating to this school. I know the department is trying to get a better use for it. As these matters are before the Public Works Committee, I cannot take them any further.

Mr. HUGHES—A sum of £140,000 is provided for provisions, special monetary relief, etc. In certain cases the police should be empowered to allocate small sums of money (say, up to £5) to people in necessitous circumstances. When I returned to Wallaroo last weekend a person telephoned me and told me he had

applied for an invalid pension and had been waiting some weeks for a decision, after which he was notified that he was not eligible to receive a pension. On inquiry I found that the medical officer had made a mistake in filling out a form and, as he was ill, we could not take the matter any further. The applicant was unable to buy food, so I approached the police who told me that there was no provision under which they could advance him any money. The officer in charge suggested that perhaps some arrangement could be made between the Treasury and the department by which a small sum of money could be advanced to people in necessitous circumstances.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Certain administrative problems are connected with this matter, as relief matters take a certain amount of policing. However, I shall have the matter investigated and advise the honourable member when the investigation, which may take a few days, is completed.

Line passed.

Department of Public Health, £316,000—passed.

Public Service Commissioner's Department, £87,409.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I believe that the Public Service Commissioner is responsible for administering long service leave payments and superannuation, so I think I am in order in referring to these matters.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—I think the honourable member is in order in referring to long service leave but not to superannuation.

The CHAIRMAN—Although I cannot see it here, I rule that it can be discussed.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Many public servants had to be retained in their jobs during the two wars, and some, perhaps, had disabilities rendering them unfit for armed service. When we returned to peace-time conditions many of these men were retrenched and were out of the Public Service for two years or more. For any person to be engaged on the non-salaried staff in the Government service it was necessary for him to register at the Labor Exchange, and because of the shortage of jobs married men received preference over single men. What can be done for the men who had a break of service of more than two years and then came back into Government service, although not necessarily in the same jobs as they had previously occupied? I know of cases where the period of time that elapsed was up to four years, yet the men concerned had their earlier service recognized for long service leave purposes. Can the Treasurer say

whether it would be possible to obtain information to assist the persons whose claims have not been recognized, or whether any record could be made available to prove that those persons were entitled to a further amount on account of long service leave? Perhaps the Government could accept a declaration, or obtain information from officers (some of whom may now be in the Commonwealth service) who were at one time associated with those people.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If I follow the Leader's request correctly, he is dealing with the case of certain officers employed by the Government at various times who have broken their service and therefore do not normally qualify for long service leave. As members know, long service leave is prescribed for a certain period of unbroken service. I think the particular examples the Leader is referring to occurred during the depression.

Mr. Frank Walsh—And prior to that.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think the cases the Leader is particularly interested in are cases where there were retrenchments, particularly in the Railways Department, and mainly during the depression. Those people did not leave the department of their own free will or because they had been dismissed for unsatisfactory service, but because the Government of the day could not afford to pay them. An amendment to the Act provided that where the head of the department certified that the persons concerned returned to the Government service as soon as employment was again available to them, their period of service was considered not to have been broken. Many officers have benefited under that amendment, which was designed to compensate persons who had been retrenched and who came back as soon as they could. From time to time, some difficulty occurs where an officer has not come back within the prescribed time.

Mr. Jennings—A few miss out.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Only about four or five cases have been referred to me at various times. The difficulty usually arises because they cannot get the certificate required by the Act that they returned within the prescribed time. The long service leave provisions are mandatory on the Government in that they set out specifically the classes of people entitled to long service leave, and the Government has no power to go beyond those classes. It is true that long service leave has never been given by the Act as a matter of right; it always has had to be approved in Executive Council, but except in cases of very

grave misconduct it has always been recommended. If the Leader gives me the names of the persons concerned I will have the cases examined to see if there is any solution.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Would you include the word "re-examine"?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes.

Mr. Jennings—Does that apply to all of them?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I am in a very good humour today, and I will see that cases are re-examined for the Leader.

Mr. LAWN—While the Treasurer is in a generous mood, I draw attention to the item on page 37, "Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and Other Courts—Reimbursement of travelling expenses of South Australian Government representatives and witnesses, fares and sundries, £1,850." Can the Treasurer say how that £1,850 will be used? Page 3 of today's *News* contains an article headed "Very Low Rate of Growth in South Australia." The final part of that article, under the sub-heading "Twenty-five per cent less", states:—

It asks that future increases here be 25 per cent less than those ordered for Sydney. This refers to the application of the employers before the commission. It proceeds:—

A second application seeks to increase the country differential from 3s. to 12s. Mr. W. A. N. Wells is appearing for the South Australian Government, which is supporting the applications. Opposing the applications on behalf of the Australian Council of Trade Unions is Mr. R. J. Hawke. Interstate employers are represented. (Proceeding.)

The *News* is not the only newspaper dealing with the question, because the *Advertiser* included a statement that the South Australian Government was entering an appearance supporting the application. During the course of proceedings Mr. Robinson, appearing for the Metal Industries Association of South Australia, the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures and the South Australian Employers' Federation, said that Mr. Seaman, an expert witness, would be called by the South Australian Government and would demonstrate what is the order of difference in living costs between the States as it relates to South Australia, and would show that living costs in Adelaide are 10 per cent below those in Sydney. The application asks for a basic wage that will ultimately be 90 per cent of that applying in Sydney.

Mr. Loveday—It is now 96 per cent.

Mr. LAWN—It is actually now about 95 per cent. Is the £1,850 being used in any way

in connection with the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission proceedings at present, and is Mr. W. A. N. Wells appearing for the South Australian Government to support the applications? Is the Mr. Seaman mentioned by Mr. Robinson the Under Treasurer? Is Mr. Robinson speaking the truth or lying when he says Mr. Seaman will be called by the South Australian Government to demonstrate the difference in living costs between the States and that his conclusion will show that the basic wage in South Australia should be kept 10 per cent below that in Sydney?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have already informed the honourable member in a speech that took much longer than I desired of the attitude of the South Australian Government on the question of cost of living adjustments. I cannot add much to that, but I have also offered him a complete copy of Mr. Seaman's evidence so that he will have it by him and be able to quote from it whenever he desires to quote. As a special favour for the honourable member—I cannot guarantee that for every honourable member—I will autograph it myself as an authentic copy. The Arbitration Commission usually sits in Melbourne and Sydney, and it is necessary from time to time for officers of the State Government to go, with witnesses, to the Arbitration Commission to give evidence and the amount set down is for that purpose. It has no bearing upon these proceedings, and so far as evidence is concerned in this case, it will not be used for that because the evidence will be heard in Adelaide. When the honourable member sees Mr. Seaman's evidence he will be entirely happy. I am certain the honourable member for Adelaide wants to know the facts of the case and the evidence produced to him will show conclusively what the Government's view is. If the honourable member asks me whether the Government is supporting the case as outlined by Mr. Robinson I can tell him honestly, without any heat at all, that I have different views to a lot of the stuff Mr. Robinson has put over today.

Mr. LAWN—The Treasurer has not answered my question, and he could have done so in a few seconds. He said he is prepared to give me a copy of Mr. Seaman's evidence, but Mr. Seaman may not give evidence before the Adelaide hearing concludes. All I have asked is whether the press reports are correct, and I ask the Treasurer to say yes or no.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Government supports the application in respect of the cost of living figures as adjusted between the States. The Government supports the application so far as the cost of living figures justify alterations of the basic wages as between the States, up or down. The Government is not interested in supporting the application of the employers with regard to country towns because I have already told the honourable member that, so far as I know, it does not concern us. It does not make 2s. difference to the amount the Government pays. We do support the application that the basic wage should be fixed in view of a real determination of the cost of living as between States: If our cost of living is higher, then we support an application that our workers get more.

Mr. McKee—In other words, you believe in quarterly adjustments?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not take it as far as that because I feel that quarterly adjustments themselves are rather inclined from time to time to distort the effect. Seasonal adjustments distort them from time to time. But what I am interested in is that the cost of living, which I believe every member of the unions would support, should be reflected in the basic wage. Mr. Seaman's evidence will be directed only, as far as I am concerned, to the relative measures of prices between the various States. That is what we are interested in. Perhaps the honourable member can follow me there. We are not interested in all these other miscellaneous items: we are interested that the court shall take into account the relative cost of living figures as between the States. If the honourable member wants to know the reason for that, it is that the industrial capacity of this country is not evenly divided as far as population is concerned and, if our industries are to continue to flourish, if there is any advantage in having goods here to enable them to compensate for transport, they should have it. That, I think, clears it up. It is a matter of travelling expenses when something is interstate. The other thing is this. As far as I am concerned the honourable member can have Mr. Seaman's evidence as soon as it is prepared—even before it is presented to the court.

Mr. Lawn—They know what it is now; Mr. Robinson said so.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The honourable member can have the evidence as soon as it has been prepared. It has not yet

been submitted to me, so it has not yet been approved to be forwarded. In fact, as far as I know, it has not yet been completed. Mr. Seaman is a most capable officer and I know that this week he has been making some investigations into costs. I could tell the honourable member that the C series index this quarter will, I believe, have a very unpleasant rise. I say that from his recent investigation. I have not seen his evidence yet. As soon as it is available, an autographed copy will be forwarded to the honourable member.

Mr. LAWN—At last we know the attitude of the Government, although it has taken some hours today to find it out. Now we know, I shall oppose this line. The Treasurer has said that, so far as the application of the employers' federation and the metal industries' association is concerned for a 10 per cent basic wage lower than that in Sydney, the Government is supporting it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not said anything of the sort.

Mr. Lawn—The Treasurer said they are supporting an application for a differential rate between Adelaide and Sydney.

Mr. Shannon—The Treasurer never said anything of the sort.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Perhaps the honourable member would listen again, for he is stating something that I did not say. Let me explain again: let me get one or two ideas into his head. I do not yet know what the evidence of Mr. Seaman will be. I do not believe that Mr. Seaman's evidence is yet completed. I doubt very much whether his figures are yet sufficiently advanced for him to know himself but I believe that the cost of living is an essential of wage justice and, if Mr. Seaman's figures show that we should have a higher basic wage in South Australia and that is proved, then I shall support a higher basic wage. I am saying that the Government supports a differential between the States—not between here and Sydney but between all the States—based on the complete cost of living figures.

Mr. Lawn—That is what we have today.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If that is what we have today, we are entirely in accord but I do not know whether or not we have it today. The court is inquiring into those matters and will no doubt come to a decision upon them; but we are not supporting the application of the employers in connection with the country—we are not interested in that. But we are directly interested to see

that the cost of living figures shall be reflected in the basic wage. With that the honourable member himself cannot disagree. In fact, if he disagrees with that, he disagrees with every union leader in Australia.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I am interested in the Treasurer's reply. If what the Treasurer says is correct, then Mr. Robinson's statement must be incorrect. Will the Treasurer tell us whether Mr. Robinson's statement is incorrect, because Mr. Robinson has made this statement categorically in his evidence. He has said this:—

Mr. Seaman, an expert witness who will be called by the South Australian Government, will demonstrate what is the order of difference of living costs between the States. His conclusion is as it relates to South Australia, that the living costs in Adelaide are 10 per cent below Sydney.

Mr. Robinson is speaking as if he knows what Mr. Seaman's conclusions are, and yet the Treasurer is telling us that he does not know what the evidence is. Mr. Robinson says he knows it, and he has said to the commission that he does know it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As I say, I would not venture to express an opinion upon what Mr. Robinson has said because, in the first place, I did not hear it and, in the second place, there is the question of taking a statement from its context. For instance, when I got a full statement yesterday, I found it was taken from its context and there were a number of other factors put into it that were not mentioned.

Mr. Loveday—Assume that that is correct.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not know what Mr. Seaman's conclusions are. I have not yet seen his evidence. I shall see it in due course. He has given evidence before many times on this very issue and, strangely enough, the last time he gave evidence in Melbourne on this issue I believe his submissions were approved completely by the unions and disapproved by the employers. That is interesting. So that, as far as Mr. Seaman is concerned, he will give the facts as he sees them. The court will decide whether the facts are correct and whether Mr. Robinson has interpreted Mr. Seaman's evidence correctly.

Mr. Jennings—It is a funny thing that Mr. Robinson knows what Mr. Seaman is going to say.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Robinson may have discussed this matter with Mr. Seaman. To my knowledge he has not discussed it, but it is conceivable that he has. I have seen in the courts many a time a

statement by a leader that the evidence will disclose something or other and, when the evidence comes up before the Court, it is nothing like it.

Mr. Millhouse—It depends whether the witness comes up to proof or not.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. However, I do not want Mr. Robinson's or anybody else's version of it. The Government believes that the alterations in the basic wage that exist from State to State are something that the court must take notice of. Every trade union leader in Australia advocates exactly the same thing. That is all there is in it. We did not ask for, or encourage, this hearing, but we will present our evidence fairly and squarely as we see it.

Mr. LAWN—I am not trying to harrass the Government. The trade union movement believes that if the cost of living in Sydney is higher than in Adelaide, Sydney should have a higher basic wage and, conversely, that if the Adelaide cost of living is equal to that of Sydney, our basic wage should be adjusted accordingly. Does the Treasurer believe in that?

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—Yes.

Mr. LAWN—However, the employers are not seeking that in their application to the court.

Mr. Millhouse—Go on, keep talking.

Mr. LAWN—Shut up! Mind your business! You're not running this House. You're not my dictator. You may dictate to some people in Colonel Light Gardens, but not to me. Apparently the Treasurer and I agree that the basic wage should be adjusted by the court on the actual cost of living in the particular capital city, but that is not the application by the employers' association to the Industrial Commission. Apparently the Treasurer and I agree on the method of fixing the basic wage. The application to the court is that the basic wage in South Australia, irrespective of the cost of living, shall ultimately be 10 per cent below that of Sydney, even though the cost of living may be the same in both States. Mr. Wells has announced his appearance on behalf of the Government in support of that application by the employers. If the Treasurer believes that if the cost of living in Adelaide is equal to the cost of living in Sydney and that the basic wage should be based on the cost of living, will he assure the House that he will instruct Mr. Wells to make such submissions to the court?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Wells will make submissions to the court in accordance with his directions from the Government. I have told members what the Government's policy is. Mr. Wells' submissions to the court will be in accordance with Government policy. Government officers in the court do not enunciate their own policy. They state their own facts; and let me make that clear. Under no circumstances would I ask Mr. Seaman to alter the facts that he knows to be true. Mr. Seaman will give evidence of the cost of living in accordance with the facts as he sees them, because it would not be his evidence otherwise.

Mr. Lawn—But you will direct policy?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We direct policy.

Mr. Lawn—Will you direct the Government officers to oppose the application?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—We will direct our policy in accordance with what I have said and I am not going to say any more to the honourable member about it. I have made the Government's policy abundantly clear a dozen times and the honourable member cannot, under any circumstances, disagree with it because every union leader in Australia has advocated it time and time again.

Mr. Lawn—That is not what Mr. Wells is advocating.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Mr. Wells has not yet presented the Government's case. He has merely made an appearance.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.16 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 11, at 2 p.m.