

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Tuesday, October 11, 1960.

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

**QUESTIONS.****TROTTING BOYCOTT.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Following negotiations between the Bookmakers' League and the South Australian Trotting Club, has the Treasurer anything further to report on the issue of tickets formerly made available to bookmakers for trotting meetings at Wayville?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—No, I have not had any report this morning from the Betting Control Board in connection with that matter. It is just possible that the report did come to my office but, as there was a Cabinet meeting, I would not normally have had the opportunity of going into it had it been there.

**LANGHORNE CREEK TO WELLINGTON ROAD.**

Mr. JENKINS—Will the Premier, representing the Minister of Roads, ascertain from his colleague whether there are any plans for sealing the road from Langhorne Creek to Wellington; and, if there are not, will he consider sealing two or three miles of this road each year because during the winter it gets into a bad state and needs attention?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will get a report for the honourable member.

**NORTHFIELD WARDS.**

Mr. HUTCHENS—Recently, I have had occasion to visit the Northfield hospital wards, and in particular the rehabilitation ward. While I have the highest admiration, and the patients generally are most grateful, for the treatment they get in that ward, some patients have expressed concern about the highly polished floors on which they are asked to rehabilitate themselves by learning to walk anew. The view has been expressed that, if the boards were not so highly polished and were kept with a non-slippery surface, both the patients and the nursing staff responsible for the training would go about their rehabilitation and training far more confidently, and the rehabilitation period would be far shorter than it is. Will the Premier take this matter up with the Minister of Health to see if the slipperiness of the floor surface can be reduced

by people refraining from polishing, to make it easier for all concerned?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Yes. I will bring the honourable member's question to the notice of the Minister of Health. This is not a new problem. The housekeeping staffs in hospitals like floors to look well, and there is a tendency to over-polish. The problem arises not from not doing sufficient, but from doing a good job in making wards look attractive.

**NOOGOORA BURR.**

Mr. HEASLIP—In reply to a question I asked recently regarding the spreading of Noogoora Burr from sheep imported from New South Wales, the Minister of Agriculture asked for further information. During the week-end I was advised that at Dalgety's sale at Jamestown on September 3, 2,600 sheep from New South Wales that were sold were infested with Noogoora Burr. I understand that 600 to 700 of them are still in the wool and agisted in a local paddock five or six miles from Jamestown. They are still spreading the burr on the highways adjacent to the property. Four hundred were shorn, thus getting rid of the burr; 80 were killed locally; 1,000, still in the wool, were sent to Apsley in Victoria (and, naturally, getting them on to the railway spread the burr and transporting them by rail through Victoria also spread it); and the remaining 400-odd were sent to the Adelaide abattoirs still in the wool and spreading the burr. I am concerned because the burr is still being spread. Can the Minister say what action, if any, will be taken in future to prevent a recurrence of what has happened this year in spreading this pest, which adds to production costs in South Australia?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The case the honourable member mentions is well-known to the department and the owners of the sheep have been given precise orders by the department. The sheep held at Caltowie at present will be shorn today or in the next few days.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE GUARDS.**

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on September 7 concerning the guards at Government House?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I took this matter up with the Chief Secretary, who has discussed it with the Commissioner of Police. I am not sure what action has been taken, but I will find out for the honourable member.

## PORT PIRIE HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. MCKEE—Can the Minister of Works indicate when work is likely to commence on the reconstruction of the Port Pirie wharves; what line of progress the work will follow; whether shipping is likely to be affected or restricted during the progress of the work; and whether the proposed bulk handling facilities are likely to delay the commencement of the work?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member will appreciate that I could reply only in general terms, and as his question requires much detail, I will communicate with the General Manager of the Harbors Board and bring down the information sought, probably tomorrow or Thursday.

## MURRAY BRIDGE RAIL FACILITIES.

Mr. BYWATERS—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question regarding the railways parcels office and the side loading ramp at Murray Bridge?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Railways Commissioner reports that plans for the improved facilities to be provided at the Murray Bridge parcels office are being prepared by the Chief Engineer. The provisions of the side loading ramp at the stockyards has been authorized and the work will be undertaken as soon as labour is released from other projects.

## MILITARY SERVICE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Although I am not sure whether my information is correct, I am told that public officers in other States are granted leave without loss of pay when serving in the military forces. It is feared that this is not the position in South Australia and that the recruiting campaign is thereby being affected. Will the Premier say whether the Government has determined its attitude in this regard, and, if it has, what that attitude is?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Recently the Commonwealth authorities requested the Government to grant leave with pay to officers attending special camps. I asked the military authorities if they would give me a list of the officers concerned so that I could examine the matter and see whether it was desirable to take action. Firstly, about 103 officers were concerned and, on looking at the list, I found that nearly all would be in reserved occupations in the event of military activities. In other words, they would be of little value to the Commonwealth in the event of hostilities because they would, I think, automatically be in reserved occupations.

Secondly, Government employees would be on double pay but I doubt whether people from private employment would have the same benefits. Thirdly, on inquiry I found that it was not the uniform practice of the States to grant this concession. True, one State (New South Wales) and the Commonwealth Government have granted it but I have been led to believe that other States have deferred action pending further investigation. I now come to the honourable member's general observations. The Government would be anxious to assist the Commonwealth Government in its recruiting activities. I think all members support it in that action, but I think that there should be a uniform practice regarding payments, as it would not be desirable to have two persons serving side by side under totally different conditions. If the matter has not been determined, I shall certainly raise it at the next Premiers' Conference in order to get uniformity.

## KANGAROO INN SCHOOL.

Mr. CORCORAN—In last Friday's issue of the *South-Eastern Times* the following article appeared:—

70-17 vote favours Kangaroo Inn for Area School.—A meeting of 100 people in Furner Community Hall on Wednesday night voted 70-17 in favour of Kangaroo Inn as the site for an area school in the region. People gathered from Furner, Mount Bruce, Fox, Beachport, Bray, Robe, Lucindale and Claywells for the meeting, which had been called by the Furner School Committee and Furner Community Centre.

I received a letter from the secretary of the school committee expressing apprehension about certain elements opposing the site selected. I also received a letter from the owner of the property who said some time ago that, although he was willing to sell it for £30 an acre, the Education Department had told him that it wanted the price reduced. In reply to a question I asked previously the Minister said that the owner had been approached but was reluctant to deal with the department. In view of the present high prices of land, there is no reason why the department should not accept the offer.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should not debate the question.

Mr. CORCORAN—As a decision on this matter is urgent, will the Minister of Education say whether he has more information?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am indebted to the honourable member for the information he has just supplied concerning the public meeting called to consider the proposed site at

Kangaroo Inn. The overwhelming majority vote in favour of the site confirms the opinion of the Director of Education, his principal officers and myself that the site selected is the best in the interests of the community. Negotiations for the purchase of the land have been protracted because our Property Officer found difficulty in making contact with the owner and then, despite what the honourable member has just said, found difficulty in arriving at a price considered reasonable by the independent authority constituted by Parliament, namely, the Land Board of South Australia. As we could not arrive at a price in conformity with the Land Board's valuation, Cabinet last week authorized me to take steps to acquire the land, and such steps are now being taken.

#### COMAUM SCHOOL HOUSE.

Mr. HARDING—I understand that two or three years ago the Education Department purchased land for the erection of a school house at Comaum. A forest home some distance away from the school is now being used. As I have been approached on this matter by parents of scholars, will the Minister ascertain whether the department intends to build a school house, and if it does, whether a house is likely to be built during this financial year?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to inquire and let the honourable member know.

#### STOCK FEEDING.

Mr. HEASLIP—Yesterday's *Advertiser* contained the following article on a new system of stock feeding:—

Sydney, October 9.—An American expert in animal nutrition arrived in Sydney today to help introduce a system of stock feeding which could solve the beef shortage in Australia. The expert, Mr. Philip C. Anderson, is president of the Feed Service Corporation, of Nebraska. Feed Service Corporation has a 20 per cent interest in an Australian company, Feed Service (Aust.) Pty. Ltd., which will launch liquid feeding in Australia. The company expects the new product to be marketed next month. The product, a synthetic feed in liquid form, improved efficiency of feed and increased production and profits, Mr. Anderson said. "It speeds up fermentation in the rumen, enabling animals to eat and use more feed in a shorter time," he said. When marketed here, it would enable thousands of poor cattle from dry areas to be fattened within 20 to 50 miles of our main cities within 100 days.

Can the Minister of Agriculture give any information regarding this suggested new system of fattening up cattle quickly, as this sys-

tem would be of the utmost importance to graziers? Can he say whether this system is possible?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I saw the report referred to, but cannot give an answer on the matter today. It is somewhat reminiscent of the research work being done by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization on the feeding of urea and roughage to cattle where the urea stimulates organisms in the rumen. Regarding the liquid feeding, I have no knowledge on the matter. I should say the question would depend on costs as well as on whether the method is effective. I will obtain a considered report from the Director of Agriculture.

#### ACTIVITIES OF LICENSED BAILIFF.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Premier a reply to a question I asked on August 31 relating to a letter written by a bailiff to a tenant in Adelaide threatening to take her possessions when he repossessed goods from her to compensate him for his expenses?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Crown Solicitor reports:—

This matter has been investigated by the police. I do not think that any action against Abbott is called for. Abbott was wrong in adding to his notice the statement about taking possession of Mrs. Birch's goods, but his explanation is that this was due to his failure to observe that the warrant was for possession of the premises only, and that the portion of the warrant relating to seizure of goods and chattels had been crossed out. This was carelessness on his part, but is not misconduct serious enough to warrant any proceedings against him.

The report goes on to say that what appeared to be a serious misstatement by the person concerned to Mr. Lawn, that he had not written the second paragraph of the notice, is explained by the fact that the person to whom Mr. Lawn spoke was not the person who wrote the notice, but that person's brother.

#### RENT CONTROL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice)—

1. How many rental fixations pursuant to section 21 of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act have been made since the 1957 amendment thereto, in respect of the following premises:—(a) houses; (b) flats; and (c) shops with dwellings?

2. How many rental fixations pursuant to Part IV of the Act have been made in the last 12 months in respect of the following:—(a) caravans; and (b) land upon which caravans have been placed for the purpose of habitation?

3. For what number of premises in South Australia is the rent and recovery of possession respectively controlled, pursuant to the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the South Australian Housing Trust reports:—

1. (a) 3,514; (b) 447; (c) 1,101.

2. (a) None; (b) some applications are in process of being dealt with but no rent fixations have been made within the past 12 months.

3. The information is not available as the South Australian Housing Trust only has information with respect to premises as to which rent fixations have been made and has no information as to which of those premises have ceased to be subject to control by virtue of one or another of the exemptions now provided in the Act.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION: SCAFFOLDING ACCIDENTS.

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

Leave granted.

Mr. RICHES—Last week, when speaking on the Scaffolding Inspection Act Amendment Bill, I mentioned accidents that had occurred at the power station at Port Augusta, and my remarks could have been construed to imply that the accidents had occurred in the building of the chimneys. I am informed that they did not, and I want it clearly understood that I intended no reflection whatever on the contractors for that important work. In fact, the accidents occurred at the power station.

#### THE ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 6. Page 1233.)

CHIEF SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HEALTH.

Miscellaneous, £2,289,818.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—On page 42, nearly £53,000 is provided for an additional grant to the South Australian Fire Brigades Board. I recently introduced a deputation to the chairman of the board, and included in the deputation were the fire chief and representatives of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Mitcham and Marion Corporations. A recent survey of the Edwardstown area, extending from Cross Roads to Tonsley and for probably half a mile on either side of the South Road, disclosed that 135 industries of one type or another operated in that area. It is estimated that nearly

£11,000,000 is invested in industry there. It must depend on Unley and Glenelg for the provision of additional fire services, with headquarters in Adelaide. The chairman of the board said there had been tremendous development in the northern areas and considered it would be necessary to re-site the fire stations at Prospect, Unley and Glenelg, so that the Unley fire station would be sited elsewhere and the Glenelg fire station would be brought closer to Oaklands; also that, in view of the rapid development of the northern areas, it was necessary to consider Prospect the first priority. He was sympathetic about Edwardstown and appreciated its difficulties, but the big problem was finance. The building of new stations would be costly. Can the Treasurer say whether, in the event of the Fire Brigades Board being prepared to erect these new stations, the Government would give a pound for pound subsidy on the capital cost involved, to relieve the board of some expenditure while at the same time providing a better fire service? The many new motors being driven by electricity and the increased quantities of inflammable materials used in industry in that area are a potential fire hazard.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—When the Fire Brigades Board was established in South Australia it was established on the principle that there would be three main contributors to its upkeep and maintenance—the insurance companies, the local authorities and the Government, each of which would provide a certain proportion of the cost of maintaining the board. After some years Parliament amended the Government's contribution, placing an overall limit on the amount it should contribute. The honourable Leader will see that the special grant provided here is additional to the amount provided under the main Act. The method by which the Government determines its contribution here is that a report is prepared by the Auditor-General on the operation of the Fire Brigades Board, and he recommends that an additional grant be made on the basis of the proportions set out in the original Act. I do not favour altering those proportions by giving a pound for pound subsidy.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I mean, only for buildings.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I do not favour doing that for the people who get the main benefit from the Fire Brigade's activities are the insurance companies, which get paid for the protection of buildings; the Fire Brigades Board adds to the protection.

The insurance companies are not adversely rated compared with companies in other States, so there is no call for any special provision to assist the insurance companies in this matter. Furthermore, the insurance on the class of building to which the honourable Leader refers is not unprofitable, so there is no case for the Government's asking the taxpayer to bear a cost that logically should be apportioned under the original provisions of the Act. The answer, therefore, is that the Government will continue to subsidize the Fire Brigades Board on a recommendation from the Auditor-General along the lines of the percentages set out in the original Act.

Mr. LAUCKE—On page 40, under "Ambulance services," I note that the grant for metropolitan and country services is to be increased by £10,000, while the special grant for country services is to be increased by £2,500, making £12,500 for this year. Are these extra grants to be applied for specific purposes?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not that information here. The honourable member knows that, when the original country grant of £10,000 was provided, there was a basis for its distribution. I presume, without having the information, that this is a continuation of that policy, but that with the expansion that is taking place additional money is necessary. However, I will check up to see if my conjecture is correct.

Mr. COUMBE—Is the grant of £100,000 towards the building programme of the Adelaide Children's Hospital intended for the new project that the Children's Hospital is about to undertake at North Adelaide, and what is the basis of the subsidy?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I would not know the answer to the first question. As regards the second question, the Government subsidizes the Children's Hospital capital cost on a basis of £2 for £1.

Line passed.

#### ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

Attorney-General's Department, £50,436; Crown Solicitor's Department, £48,587; Parliamentary Draftsman's Department, £8,042—passed.

Public Trustee's Department, £112,416.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The amount provided for this department is an increase on last year's expenditure. I do not reflect on the department, but I understand that there has been a tendency for the Public Trustee to farm out to the legal profession work that normally

should be performed by his officers. I believe that estates exceeding £3,000 in value are handled by the legal profession. For some years this department has rendered a valuable service to the community, and I am concerned that such service should continue. Some estates take a long time to settle, even though they are apparently straightforward. I realize that if an estate involves the sale of a house, the question of whether it can be sold with vacant possession is important, but the longer the house remains unsold the more likely is its deterioration. Can the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General, indicate whether the increased expenditure arises from an increase in the staff of this department; whether there is any need for the department to farm out so much of its work; and whether there is any possibility of expediting the settlement of some estates?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—In the past it was the department's practice to farm out estates, according to a monetary basis (that is, on the value of the estates) irrespective of whether or not there were any complexities in their administration. That practice has been discontinued and the Public Trustee has been given a discretion as to whether his department will perform the legal or semi-legal work or whether it will be given out to solicitors. The reason is perhaps twofold: The department was labouring under lack of trained staff, and the Public Trustee was no doubt anxious to give the work out to the legal profession. However, he is increasing the number and quality of his staff and, as the legal profession is busy at present, he is able to increase his department's efficiency generally. The present Public Trustee has gone into the matter with much zest and is increasing the all-round efficiency of his department and is expediting the work. Those who are closely associated with the department realize that that happy state of affairs is prevailing.

Mr. RALSTON—This department renders a valuable service, particularly to people residing in the metropolitan area who have easy access to it. However, country people find it difficult to transact business with the department unless they come to the city. Has the Government considered, and reached a decision on, extending the services of this department to major country centres—Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Mount Gambier? If permanent offices could not be established, could regular visits to the centres by departmental officers be arranged?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—To my knowledge this matter has not been considered: certainly no decision has been arrived at. I shall be only too pleased to place the honourable member's remarks before the Attorney-General, because I know that one or two trustee companies have offices in some of the principal country centres and it may be possible for the Public Trustee's Department at least to send officers out at stated intervals as has been suggested.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am pleased that this matter has been speeded up and that the people will know that they will get a better service from this department.

Line passed.

Supreme Court Department, £92,321; Adelaide Local Court Department, £47,287; Adelaide Police Court Department, £42,606; Country and Suburban Courts Department, £89,588; Coroner's Department, £6,313; Registrar-General of Deeds Department, £186,205—passed.

Miscellaneous, £26,239.

Mr. DUNSTAN—The sum of £10,000 was provided last year for the Royal Commission re Rupert Max Stuart. Now that the furore about this matter has died down I think a re-appraisal of some matters concerned in this unfortunate affair should be made. Various features about the report made to Parliament are unsatisfactory to me and, I think, call for comment. Early in its report the Commission had something to say about the possibility of getting witnesses in support of Stuart at the original hearing. The Commission said:—

Mr. O'Sullivan endeavoured to make the point that he had been hampered by the difficulty of communicating with his client and by his inability to find an interpreter speaking Arunta. In the Privy Council he stressed the lack of funds, which had prevented him from finding the Giesemans and obtaining their evidence at the trial. In view of what has been published in the press, we think that it is right to correct an obvious misapprehension about these subjects. As any legal practitioner should know, there is no substance in either of these complaints. The counsel assigned to defend the petitioner were charged with the duty of ascertaining whether he had any defence to the charge and of submitting it to the jury at the trial. We experienced no difficulty, whatever, in taking the petitioner's evidence without the aid of an interpreter. But, be that as it may, if counsel were unable to obtain their client's instructions without the assistance of an interpreter, it was their bounden duty to bring the fact to the notice of the court. In that event the court would not have entered upon the trial until an interpreter had been provided.

Much the same answer must be given to the complaint of the lack of funds to find and bring the witnesses to prove the alibi that has now been set up. All that the defence had to do was to use the means provided by our system of administering criminal justice. It is true that the petitioner could not be expected to set up his alibi until the time—the period for which it was required—had been ascertained, but that was made apparent by the evidence given on the first day of the preliminary examinations, if it was not known to Mr. O'Sullivan prior to that.

We agree with Mr. Starke that the evidence at the preliminary examination left the time of death somewhat indefinite, but the evidence of the fisherman, Jorgensen, made it fairly clear that the child had disappeared before 4 p.m., and that her body must have been lying in the cave since that time, or before then. If there was any truth in the alibi—if the petitioner had in fact returned to the show before 2 p.m. and had been given his lunch, and had worked on the darts until 4 p.m.—it was a simple matter for the defence to ensure the presence of the witnesses at the trial. All that was necessary was for the petitioner to say where he was at that time, and to apply to have the Giesemans called as witnesses. The show was still at Moonta Bay, and there would have been no difficulty whatever in securing the attendance of the Giesemans or, if necessary, the whole troupe.

Frankly, from an examination of any of the evidence, I find these paragraphs are extraordinary. In the preliminary inquiry the time of death of the child was left hopelessly vague. It was not the case that the witness Jorgensen was able at the preliminary inquiry to fix the time of death. All he was able to say, as in his later evidence before the court, was that at the time he came to the beach the child was not there. The time of her disappearance was not in fact fixed until evidence was given at the trial which had not been given at the preliminary inquiry. Moreover, at the trial the doctor who had examined the girl was able to give more definite evidence of the time of death than had been apparent at the preliminary inquiry. Counsel for the accused was in the unfortunate position at the preliminary inquiry that he could not have known the time of death or the time for which any alibi would have to be established. What is more, he made it clear throughout his representations on behalf of Stuart that he had the gravest difficulty in obtaining any sort of clear instructions about what had happened on the day. In view of the mentality and background of Stuart, who seems to have been an extremely unsatisfactory character at all times and a man not given to the truth on any occasion, it is not surprising that counsel was faced with these difficulties.

My complaint is that the Commission completely overlooked something that is important to the future administration of justice in South Australia: it is not merely a matter confined to this particular unfortunate case. Where counsel are assigned by the Law Society to an impoverished person they are gravely hampered by lack of funds. They can spend their own moneys and attend at the courts as required by their assignments but, after all, most counsel are not in a position to expend their own moneys on lengthy and expensive inquiries, particularly where their instructions do not, at the stage where those inquiries might sensibly have been made, lead them to any time that they can pinpoint for making their inquiries. In this case Mr. O'Sullivan was severely out of pocket and one could hardly suggest that he should have engaged inquiry agents at his own expense to make inquiries of people who might have been able to say where Stuart was at any particular time, for he did not know what time he wanted evidence about.

When he came to the trial Mr. O'Sullivan was faced with the unfortunate position that for the first time some definiteness as to the time of death was established at the trial. What position was he then in? Was he to ask the court if it would adjourn while he made inquiries of people who might have been somewhere in Queensland (but where they were or what they would say he did not know)? Could he ask the court to adjourn while he made inquiries as vague as those? That was putting an impossible task on counsel and, of course, he did not make the application because no court would have acceded to it. What I am disturbed about is that out of this inquiry an obvious recommendation from the Commission did not come, and it was clear on the facts before the Commission that this recommendation should have come, namely, that some independent assistance should be available to counsel to make inquiries when they are assigned as counsel under the Law Society's scheme. They should not be required to be not only solicitors and counsel in the matter but public inquiry agents as well, to forgo the practice upon which they must rely for their livelihood and for the keeping of their wives and children, and to go about making inquiries at their own expense on behalf of clients who are as inarticulate in giving instructions as obviously Stuart was in this case, and as other Law Society clients are that counsel have assigned to them from time to time.

I am dismayed that the Commission did not see fit to make such a recommendation for the future, because I believe much of the difficulty and trouble that arose out of the Stuart case could have been disposed of if inquiry agents had been made available to counsel. An alternative suggestion that has been made is that any inquiries that Mr. O'Sullivan wanted made for the sake of the defence should have been made by way of a request by Mr. O'Sullivan to the police: that he should have gone to the police who, after all, were agents for the prosecution in this matter, and said that he would like them to make certain inquiries on his behalf. No counsel in his right mind would go along and reveal the tenor of his inquiries to the prosecution because, of course, the prosecution would promptly adapt its case to the result of matters that came out of any such inquiries. It is impossible to ask counsel to do things of this kind. On that score I am dismayed that the Commission did not recommend some alteration in the present administration so that the situation Mr. O'Sullivan found himself in could be overcome in future cases.

Under our legislation there are, in fact, means by which this could have been done in this case. The Aborigines Department is specifically charged by legislation with doing just this sort of thing, and it could have undertaken the duties I suggest. In fact, the Aborigines Department did not do so. The only appearance of an agent of the Protector of Aborigines in the whole matter was the appearance of Mr. Kleinig at the police station after Stuart had been questioned. He looked in at the door, saw nothing he thought was untoward, was informed that Stuart had made a confession, and went away again. That was the only thing the Aborigines Department seems to have done in this matter. The Protector is specifically required to protect aborigines from any possible injustice under the legislation, and what he could have done was to assist counsel to see that inquiries which counsel desired made could be made at the expense of the Aborigines Department and through its officers. It seems to me that would have been the only proper course under the legislation as it exists, but no such course was taken by the department.

On reading the Commission's report, I find it strange that the Commission seems to have adopted one attitude towards one witness's credibility and a completely different attitude toward another witness's credibility when, in fact, the complaints that could have been made about each witness were identical.

Evidence was given by certain of my constituents who were not witnesses for Stuart and who at no time approached the defence or put anything in the hands of Stuart's counsel. Seized with what they considered to be a public duty as a result of the appointment of this Commission, they took the proper course for witnesses to take in this matter; that is, they approached counsel assisting the Commission and gave statements.

In the report of the Commission the major matter upon which the Commission saw fit to discount the evidence of Mr. Wardrop was the fact that in his statements to Mr. Ligertwood (acting for Mr. Brazel, counsel assisting the Commission) he said he was satisfied from what Mr. Whitrod had said to him that physical violence had been used towards Stuart. In his evidence he gave specific words that were used; he said he had a clear recollection of what had been said in the conversations to which he deposed, and because there was a difference between a summary of an impression of physical violence and the particular words that were used later (of the man having "got his corner"), Wardrop's evidence was dismissed on this discrepancy. However, the Commission later, in examining police evidence, decided that some police witnesses had not told what was exactly the case when they said in court that the conversation with Stuart to which they had deposed was in the exact words Stuart had used. Indeed, in paragraph 124 the Commission said:—

Another criticism, to which Constable Jones' testimony is admittedly open, is that in giving his evidence at the trial (Ex. 1, p. 61), he was led into claiming (or at any rate into appearing to claim), first, that his account of the oral interrogation was word perfect, and, secondly, that the words used in the written confession (App. I) were what the petitioner had said, *i.e.*, "they are exactly his words, except as I said before where he was spoken to by Turner and the first part (referring to Appendix I 'A' and 'B')." In saying this we have no doubt that the witness was speaking incautiously, and with less than the care that is expected of a police witness in a case of this kind. As a matter of common sense, and speaking from some experience of the way in which these things are handled, we have no doubt that the witness—who had been entrusted with the task of noting and remembering what was said—was doing his best to remember the exact words, but it is always foolish to claim infallibility, and, it stands to reason that the witness would relax his attention, when Whitrod was taking the statement down on the typewriter. We have no doubt that the petitioner had more help with the wording of the written confession than Jones was prepared to admit.

However, as I have read to members from the transcript on previous occasions, Jones was adamant in cross-examination that that was not the case, and that it was untrue to say that he had had any help with the wording. He deposed that the wording that had been given in his evidence in the court was the exact wording that had been used. The discrepancy in Jones' evidence on this score was more serious than the discrepancy in Wardrop's evidence, but Wardrop, on the basis of his discrepancy, was disbelieved whereas Jones was considered to be an incautious witness who could be believed.

I do not intend to subject the whole of the Commission's report to a detailed scrutiny, but that is the sort of thing that causes uneasiness about the Commission's report. The Commission, in what appears to me to be a somewhat cavalier fashion, saw fit to dismiss the Giesemans' evidence. It said, in effect, that because the Giesemans had deposed to a period of two hours between two o'clock and four o'clock in which Stuart was actually at the funfair, not only was it the case that Stuart had not been at the funfair from two o'clock to four o'clock but the Giesemans' evidence that he was there from two o'clock to four o'clock went to confirm, in effect, the fact that he was there from four o'clock to six o'clock. The Commission decides that since a period of two hours is involved it can simply transfer those two hours and make the Giesemans' evidence that he was there from two o'clock to four o'clock mean that he was there from four o'clock to six o'clock. I find that logic difficult to understand.

On reading the evidence of the Giesemans it is difficult, to my mind, to dismiss it as cavalierly as the Commission has seen fit to dismiss it. It seems to me that it is going a bit far for the Commission simply to say, "This is incredible, and no jury would have any doubts about the matter at all." I cannot say, on reading the Commission's report and the transcript, that a jury would not possibly have had some doubt. On that I make this reservation: it is clear that the Commission has disposed of—and rightly disposed of—some objections raised concerning the original case. It is proper that they should have disposed, for instance, of certain allegations about Stuart's ability in English, and certain of his allegations as to how he was treated. From the evidence before the Commission, and what the Commission reported, Stuart clearly is a liar, he had a most unsatisfactory character and, in fact, the suggestion that he was unable



to understand English did not bear any sort of examination.

Having said that, I am still not happy about the terms of the Commission's report. I think, after examining the transcript and the Commission's report (which, as I say, I find unexceptionable in most of its sections) that Stuart was a strong candidate for guilt in this matter, and I consider him much more probably than not to have been guilty of the crime of which he was found guilty; but I still have the reservations about the Commission's report that I have mentioned. I hold no brief whatever for Mr. O'Sullivan; I have my considerable and severe differences with Mr. O'Sullivan, but I am distressed that it should have been suggested that Mr. O'Sullivan did something less than his duty. I feel it unfair that Mr. O'Sullivan should have been put in the position by the Commission's report of seeming to do less than his duty in this regard whereas, in fact, he fought hard and at great expense to himself for what he believed to be right for his client. He did not have—nor does any other counsel in his circumstances have—the assistance that I believe is necessary for poor people in making investigations in Law Society assignments.

I hope that at any rate the Government will not allow the glossing over of that matter by the Commission to deter it from seeing that counsel assigned to Law Society cases, where there are impoverished and inarticulate clients, are given some assistance towards the expenditure necessary for the carrying out of investigations. If this had been a rich man there would have been no difficulty in counsel's engaging an inquiry agent to make the necessary inquiries and to follow up every avenue of inquiry for the protection of the accused; but, because this was a pauper, that was not done and there was no means open to counsel other than under the Aborigines Act, as I have mentioned, to get it done. As the Aborigines Board, the protector, did not act in the matter, nothing further could be done. If it had been done at the proper time, we should not now be faced with an expenditure of £10,900 in respect of this particular Commission, but the whole thing would have been dealt with at the original trial and that would have prevented unfortunate considerations arising later, as they did to the considerable impairment of the reputation of this State in many regards.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have listened with attention to the honourable member's remarks and in due course I shall discuss them

with my colleague, the Attorney-General. On the general aspect, I think something may be done in the future after discussion with the Attorney-General but I do not intend to discuss the Stuart case publicly. I think it would be imprudent, if not improper, for me to do so as the whole matter has now once again become *sub judice*.

Line passed.

#### TREASURER AND MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION.

Treasury Department, £34,603; Superannuation Department £52,082; Motor Vehicles Department, £218,031; Agent-General in England Department, £52,557; Land Tax Department, £132,959; Stamp and Succession Duties Department, £42,832—passed.

Publicity and Tourist Bureau and Immigration Department, £267,111.

Mr. KING—Does the opening of a tourist office in Melbourne foreshadow the opening of such offices in other States?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—Of all the interstate offices we have, the most important from the point of view of business is the Melbourne office. We were badly placed there and had only a small corner of the Victorian Tourist Bureau. Our officers were working under great disability and we could not get any additional space. The Victorian set-up was unsatisfactory. It was the centre where we were getting the biggest amount of interstate business but we were badly housed. We have been trying to take up separate premises of our own. The position will be carefully watched to see if we get any more business from having separate premises. We are located near the Western Australian Tourist Bureau, which has its own office, and I think the New South Wales Bureau is also coming into the immediate neighbourhood, so we are well placed; but we shall see how much additional business we get and feel our way forward. I do not think there are many places in Australia where it would pay us to have separate premises. We are comfortably housed with the New South Wales Tourist Bureau in their building and I do not think that a separate office would pay us. It would cost much money to set up separate establishments. But in Victoria, after careful consideration, Cabinet approved of our purchasing premises and we are establishing a separate unit there. It cannot be taken as a general rule but we shall watch it to see to what extent it pays dividends.

Mr. HARDING—I see no provision for improvement of the Wilpena Pound resort. I

was there during the first and second weeks of September, when 2,000 people were there, and I hear that during the past week-end (October 8 to 10) many more than 2,000 people were there. Is any provision made for the improvement of toilet and water facilities there during the current year?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The chalet was established at the instigation of the Tourist Bureau, and was leased. The first lease was not successful but the second one is turning out well. Since the present lessee has been in occupation, he has requested approval to spend a large sum on improvements and to have it considered in connection with rent he has to pay. That has been approved. So that, although it does not show in the Estimates, the lessee is making provision to improve, and the Government has agreed as an off-set to make certain adjustments in his rentals to meet his costs.

Mr. LAUCKE—On page 55, a subsidy of £15,000 is provided towards recreation areas—an increase of £10,000 over last year. The subsidy towards the cost of swimming pools and sundries is to be £30,697—an increase of £19,698. I commend the Government for the increased subsidy towards swimming pools which, in country areas particularly where there is no natural water-way or nearby beach, are a boon. This subsidy will help improve the health of the country dwellers and enable their children to learn to swim there. Is the £10,000 increase in the grant towards recreation areas to be devoted to amenities on existing recreation areas?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—If the honourable member looks further down the page, he will see a line “Tourist resorts—Subsidy to municipal authorities for development of”. That line has increased by over £16,000, and that is the line that the Government uses to subsidize the development of tourist activities in various parts of the State. It is generally a pound for pound subsidy. In some activities, only £1 for £2 is granted, where areas are not so closely associated with tourist activities, but normally it is a pound for pound basis for approved projects. That is the line the honourable member is really thinking of. There has been a great increase there. The Government believes that these three lines are paying good dividends. The fact that the local authorities are making some contribution towards the activities means that they take an interest in them, that we are getting good value for the money spent and,

what is even more important, that the facilities are well maintained and cared for afterwards. We believe that this practice has given a stimulus to local activities in many parts of the State and is paying dividends. That is the reason for such a substantial increase.

Mr. SHANNON—I notice that a grant of £600 is proposed for the erection of a toilet block at Loftia Park. As many people visit this area, which is one of the prize picnic spots in the Hills, where facilities are available for various types of sport and there is plenty of open space, a new swimming pool there is most desirable, for at the moment there are no swimming facilities there. This affects the surrounding schools. Only this morning I was approached by representatives of the Scott Creek school which has difficulty in finding a suitable place for teaching children to swim. We do not need a swimming pool of Olympic standards for we should not have the accommodation necessary for people to view Olympic swimming and the expenditure would not be warranted; but we should like a modest pool in which the children could learn to swim. I understand that swimming pools are now being constructed on a new principle of having the longitudinal side of the pool shallow and the other side of the pool deeper, thus giving children an opportunity to use the length of the pool in learning to swim rather than confining them to the width of the pool at its shallow end. But, of course, a pool should be sufficiently large to take all pupils coming from nearby schools to learn to swim. This method would cut down the cost not only of structure but also of the water conditioning necessary to keep the pool fit for people to swim in. My second point is that it is desirable to increase the amount available for the development by country local authorities of recreational areas for young people. The amount of £16,000 more available this year than last year is a good step-up. Some such areas in my electorate have been assisted, but others are struggling to get the fundamentals that attract visitors. Where reasonably level areas exist in the hills we should do our utmost to develop them, even if only for picnicking purposes. I do not believe that the elaborate proposal for the Loftia Park swimming pool is justified, but it is important that children who have yet to learn to swim should have facilities available, and I ask whether the Government will consider providing a moderately sized pool at Loftia Park?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Minister of Education and the Stirling East

school committee have combined in establishing an excellent learners' pool at Stirling. The proposal for Loftia Park was for a pool of Olympic standard to cost about £36,000. That would not only absorb the whole amount provided in these Estimates for such purposes, but would be grossly unfair to other localities that have been tied down to an initial subsidy of £1,500 with up to a total of £4,500. In all other districts local residents raise large sums towards the cost of establishing swimming pools, frequently three times as much as the Government provides by way of subsidy. However, I will have the honourable member's suggestion examined.

Line passed.

Prices Control Department, £68,200—passed.

Miscellaneous, £6,145,854.

Mr. FRED WALSH—At page 209 of his report, the Auditor-General, dealing with the purchase and control of stores by the Housing Trust, states:—

The attention of the trust has been drawn to certain weaknesses in the purchase and control of stores. Details of action taken to overcome these weaknesses have not yet been received. The result of stocktaking at June 30, 1960, was unsatisfactory.

A constituent of mine has been harshly treated (and, I would suggest, has been made a scapegoat) as a result of this comment by the Auditor-General. This man was employed at the Torrensville supply depot and during the days of June 29 and 30 and July 1 was stocktaking. On June 30 at about 3.30 p.m. he was detailed by the chief clerk of the supply section to re-check a number of stock items. He thoroughly checked the items, except the Tilux sheets in sizes 6ft. x 4ft. and 6ft. x 3ft. He said, "I considered the number of sheets stated on the stocksheets to be correct and not the actual count as taken. A check at the present time will prove my figures to be correct." This statement was made only a few days after his stocktaking, but this is the first opportunity I have had of bringing this matter forward.

He was advised by the head clerk on Tuesday, July 5, that the stock count was incorrect. He admitted his error and stated why he had put down the figure that he did. On Friday, July 8, at about 3.30 p.m. the chief supply officer discussed the matter with him at Torrensville. As there was no mention of dismissal during the discussion he was shocked to receive a letter from Mr. Ramsay, on Monday, July 11, to the effect that his services would no longer be required. He appreciated the seriousness of

the matter but considered the punishment most severe and believed that some other matter had motivated the action. He would have welcomed further investigation by Mr. Ramsay.

Although his service with the trust was not lengthy (about 18 months—he started on February 9, 1959, at a salary of £856 per annum and finished on August 9) he brought to his position about 20 years' experience in this type of work and he exerted all his knowledge and energy to ensure that the stock control was functioning well at all times. He claims that reference to his work and his ready co-operation with other members of the staff could be given by the manager of the Torrens depot if required. I point out that the Auditor-General's report refers to the position as it then existed at June 30. My client had a discussion with the chief supply officer at 3.30 p.m. on July 8, and on Monday, July 11, after the job had been advertised, he received a letter from Mr. Ramsay, dated July 8, stating:—

It has been reported to me that you failed to physically check certain stock at Torrens depot when directed to do so and that in lieu thereof a theoretical figure was used in connection with the annual stock-rate. A very serious view is taken of this and you are given notice that your services with the trust will be terminated as from the close of business on July 22, 1960.

This man has not had an opportunity to discuss the matter with Mr. Ramsay or with a more senior officer than the one who spoke to him on July 8, when dismissal was not even mentioned. Had he been given an opportunity to discuss the matter further it could have been investigated and cleared up. When I wanted to speak to the trust on his behalf he said he would let the position go as he had already secured other employment. Incidentally, he may have found it difficult to secure other employment as he had not been supplied with a reference by the trust. I believe a report should be called for from the General Manager of the Housing Trust, in whom I have the greatest confidence, because I believe that he would not have taken such a step himself. I believe the action was proposed by some other officer, although Mr. Ramsay's signature appears on the dismissal notice. Will the Treasurer fully examine this matter and ascertain whether justice was done in this case or whether this man has been made a scapegoat following on the Auditor-General's comments?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—As far as I know, this matter has not come under my notice. I do not remember receiving any

correspondence about it. As it is an entirely new matter to me I cannot venture an opinion upon it until I have made some inquiries. However, I am willing to do as the honourable member has requested, make some investigations to ascertain the grounds for the action taken by the Housing Trust, and advise him in due course.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Treasurer explain what is involved in the items “Expenses of management in connection with inscription of stock, etc., and exchange on such payments made overseas, £70,000”; “Expenses of conversion and public loans, £70,000”; and “Interest on trust funds and on temporary deposits, etc., £175,000”?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The first two items are expenses in connection with raising loans each year. The Commonwealth Government incurs certain expenditure and we have to bear our share. It is apportioned between the States in accordance with the amounts debitable to them. We cannot be particularly accurate about these amounts because we never know quite what we are up for. The £175,000 is for the payment of interest on moneys lodged as trust funds by various organizations, some compulsorily under Act of Parliament, with the Treasury. Some of these funds have been lodged by charitable organizations that desire to have their funds where they can earn a little interest and be available at reasonably short call. I believe that from time to time even the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund has credit balances in the Treasury at interest.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The sum of £22,000 is provided for insurance of motor vehicles used for Government purposes. I assume that Government drivers are insured against accidents, but are members of the Public Works Standing Committee, for instance, covered under this provision?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—Since 1955 the Government has provided third party insurance on all Government motor vehicles, as it has found this to be more satisfactory than taking the risk. Officers of the Government are normally covered by workmen’s compensation and the occupants of certain Government cars are also insured. I think the members of the Public Works Standing Committee are covered by insurance. I will check and give the Leader a list of coverages. The Government normally carries its own risk in relation to damage to its vehicles.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINISTER OF  
REPATRIATION.

Lands Department, £795,630.

Mr. DUNSTAN—With the permission and at the request of the member for Millicent I wish to raise a matter concerning an applicant for land settlement in his district (Mr. C. F. Siviour, of Merriton), who has had war service and civilian settlement applications in for considerable periods. He was not finally selected for war service settlement, as he intimated that he did not wish to be allocated land on Kangaroo Island. It was finally suggested to him that if he could find land suitable for a single unit application he might apply to the board. I understand that he applied for the purchase of a single unit area in sections 118 and 162 in the hundred of Smith, but it was apparently considered that £17 an acre was too high a price. Mr. Siviour’s complaint is that the land in neighbouring sections which was no better was purchased at £21 10s. an acre. He says that, although there was a house on that land, on the land for which he applied there were other structural improvements, and he could see no reason why the application should have been rejected. He seems to have a real sense of grievance and I am unable to discover any reply from the Minister among the correspondence he handed to me dealing with this ground of complaint. I should be glad if the Minister would tell me the basis upon which the application was refused and whether a neighbouring area of land in the hundred of Smith was, in fact, purchased at a higher price.

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I think members will realize that although two areas may adjoin they may not be of equal value for developmental purposes. I cannot remember this case, but I know that Mr. Siviour has been one of those difficult applicants who has made representations for a block on many occasions. As far as I know, he has had a courteous reply from the department on every occasion and everything possible has been done to help him. At least twice he was offered a block, but refused to accept. This delayed an allotment to him. The member for Millicent and, I am sure, the officers of my department have been patient and have done everything to help him, but his refusal to accept blocks at least twice has delayed the matter. Although I cannot remember the actual facts, I shall advise the honourable member.

Line passed.

Government Motor Garage, £47,481; Advances to Settlers, Vermin-proof Fencing and

Loans for Fencing and Water Piping, £1,727—passed.

Miscellaneous, £250,094.

Mr. HARDING—For the purchase of land for a national reserve, £36,050 is provided. Is this earmarked for any purpose?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—An area of about 1,142 acres near One Tree Hill was purchased from Mr. L. Rasheed for a national reserve. The Government had been concerned about making areas available for such purposes and readily accepted the offer. The Town Planner's interim report indicates that when Elizabeth and surrounding areas are developed about 100,000 people will have to be provided with some form of recreation, so the Government has decided to purchase this land and develop it for recreational purposes.

Mrs. STEELE—Recently I spent an interesting time with the keeper of the herbarium at the Botanic Garden and saw the value of the work there. The annual report of the board of governors stressed the great need for a fireproof building to house the collection kept by the keeper of the herbarium. I think that about 10,000 specimens come in each year from private collectors and from field excursions undertaken by the herbarium staff, and a fireproof building is obviously needed. Is it intended to provide such a building? It was recently announced that extra staff was to be provided for the Botanic Garden and, I think, a technical worker was to be supplied for the herbarium. I think there is also a great need for another botanist. Can the Minister give information about these few matters?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—Consideration has been given to the appointment of additional staff to assist in this important work. I have visited the herbarium and know that its situation is not happy. As its own architects are busy, the Government has approved expenditure to enable plans to be drawn by an outside person.

Mr. BYWATERS—The member for Barossa (Mr. Laucke) is to be complimented on his efforts to secure the Humbug Scrub area for recreational purposes. He fought on until he persuaded the Government to secure that area. I do not know whether the amount shown is the full purchase price, or whether something is left for the purchase of other recreational areas. The Minister is aware that not only is the population increasing in that area towards Elizabeth, but it will increase also in the Christies Beach area with the advent of

the new oil refinery. The Minister is also aware that, as a member of the National Fitness Council, and in company with Mr. Simpson, the director, I approached the Government and asked it to set aside an area at the Kyeema Prison Farm. This valuable property is at present held by the Government, and it is essential that it be set aside for recreational purposes. I am sure the Minister appreciates that with the development that will take place in that area it is necessary for the 500 acres there to be set aside, because it will be ideal for this purpose. Does the amount shown allow for the purchase of other recreational areas to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding metropolitan population?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—True, it was the member for Barossa who persuaded the Government to purchase the land from Mr. Rasheed. The member for Murray has often made recommendations to me regarding further recreational areas for the large population that will stretch out from the Port Stanvac area when the development takes place there. I have made two recent trips to the Kyeema area. On my second visit I took the National Park Commissioners and Wild Life Reserve officers, and subsequently I asked them to report on the suitability of the area. Their very good report—and I entirely agree with it—on the suitability of the area has just come to hand, and that report and my recommendation will be taken to Cabinet soon with a view to obtaining a decision on what we should do. In the meantime, I have leased that area to a sheep breeder in the district to assist him with his fodder. That lease ends on December 31 this year, and I hope that before then a final decision will be made in the matter. I think that decision will be a benefit to this State.

Mr. COUMBE—On page 61, £4,110 is provided for the Botanic Park, an increase of £1,780 on last year. Does this increase cover the cost of repairing the bank of the River Torrens where it passes through the Botanic Park? The erosion of the bank is causing concern to several bodies. Can the Minister say whether any finality has been reached in the recent discussions between the Adelaide City Council and the Government on the cost of this repair work, whether any decision has been reached on the apportionment of the cost, and when the work is likely to be done?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—No, the amount does not include anything for the repair mentioned by the honourable member. The Treasurer has taken up the matter with

the Adelaide City Council, and has made an offer which, I understand, is not acceptable to the council. I am not aware of any other representations having been made, but I will ascertain the true position and let the honourable member know.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF WORKS.

Public Works Department, Office of Minister, £8,365—passed.

Engineering and Water Supply Department, £3,700,000.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Government has made no attempt to relate its charges to the cost of supplying the various services. Despite the Treasurer's statement that the Government has no present proposals for increasing taxes and charges, there are still the re-assessments by the Engineering and Water Supply Department which will yield the Government an additional £1,000,000 this year. With the sewers section the position is satisfactory; there is an increasing amount of funds employed, but there is also a gradual rise in the excess of annual earnings over working expenses which is sufficient to make adequate contributions towards interest payments. The waterworks side of the department, however, is not so satisfactory. We have been bombarded with news of the grand schemes to be carried out by the Government with its major pipeline proposals. It has been quick to advertise the grand schemes it carries out, but it is loath to advertise the bitter pill that goes with the grand schemes, namely, that we eventually have to pay for them. In years past the Adelaide water district used to return a surplus to the Government, but the position has so deteriorated that during last year every waterworks undertaking in the State showed a deficit.

It may be said that it was a very dry year (and it certainly was), but in the previous year every waterworks undertaking in this State showed a deficit. We have pointed out over the years that the finances of the Engineering and Water Supply Department are deteriorating, but the Government has done nothing to remedy the position. At last it has realized that we have been correct, but what has been done? All the Government did was look around to see where it could raise additional revenue. It did this by increasing assessments all round, regardless of the fact that the sewers section was paying its way and the main deficiency was being caused by the waterworks side of

the department. In my view, the person who should bear the increased tax or charge is the person causing the additional expenditure. Some of the additional expenditure is caused by the Government's having to supply extended services due to the acquisition of land by speculators in the metropolitan area.

I consider that the Government should devise ways and means of introducing a capital gains tax on land in order to recoup itself some of the additional expenditure caused by supplying the extended services, as well as discouraging the acquisition of land by speculators in the metropolitan area. Some 15 years ago land within five miles of the G.P.O. could be purchased at about £70 to £100 a block. That land today fetches from £1,000 to £1,500 a block. Among other things, this increase has been due to the supply of services by the Government as well as the acquisition of the land by speculators, and, as I said before, I feel the Government should consider imposing a capital gains tax on vacant land in order to recoup itself the additional expenditure on extended services instead of merely introducing a blanket increase on all assessments to raise additional revenue without considering what is causing the additional expenditure.

The Opposition admits that there had to be some increases, but considers that the cost of the water should be separated from the cost of sewers. With the further increase in charges these two things are lumped together. Obviously, in making the new assessments little investigation could have been carried out, for such an investigation would have occupied the time of a colossal number of staff. Water charges have increased beyond all expectation, although the sewers are a paying proposition.

Throughout a district near Bedford Park there are water mains and sealed roads. An area within three-quarters of a mile of that district was subdivided and homes were built thereon. Some people, because they have not the deeds, cannot get a loan to build a property. Other pieces of that land have been bought for speculation. Some blocks have a temporary water supply service by means of a 400ft. pipe from a permanent supply. Surely huge profits are being made on this land and there should be a capital gains tax on those profits? Many of the department's assessments have been inflated, particularly on the older homes. After all, the older districts have no more services now than they had 20 years ago, so why have they been re-assessed so highly? True, land values have soared meteorically in the past 15 years. A greater

tax should be imposed on land held for speculation than on land occupied by houses.

In the Ascot Park, Parkholme and other areas, were it not for the Housing Trust there would be little or no building there. People have made capital gains from speculation in land. The Government should pay more attention to getting a return from its expenditure than to taxing the people on inflated assessments to produce this revenue of more than £1,000,000.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—The Leader has raised several interesting points and the Committee is indebted to him for his observations on such contentious and intricate matters. I listened with interest to what he had to say. His main points were, firstly, that we had penalized the sewerage revenue for the purposes of meeting deficits in the water revenue; secondly, that the assessments that had been made were, in some cases at least, unrealistic or unduly high; thirdly, that, as land was being held for speculative purposes, the speculator should be held liable for a capital gains tax, which would assist in meeting the cost of the services rendered to him.

In regard to assessments, the department realizes that, with values changing as rapidly as they now are and have been for several years, the actual valuation of a property must be somewhat a matter of opinion. That is evidenced by the fact that, if a property is advertised for sale at auction, there will be probably as many ideas of its value as there are people competing at the auction to buy it. Everybody sets a different value upon it. The point also arises that the human factor always enters into valuations. Nobody for one moment believes that everybody's estimates are 100 per cent correct; but the important thing is to attempt—and I think it has been achieved in the valuations—some degree of uniformity as between property and property. The reports that I have indicate that that has been achieved fairly successfully—not always to the satisfaction of the owners concerned, but there again their opinions may differ from that of the valuator, which is understandable.

It is correct that for many years the water undertakings of the State have lost money; it is also correct that sewers undertakings have shown something of a profit, which I suggest to the Leader has been largely fictitious. The sewers section, I think it will be recognized, could not possibly function as a section unless the Water Supply Department functioned first. We are well aware that the sewers depend upon

adequate water, but so far no charge has been made upon the sewers section of the Engineering and Water Supply Department accounts in regard to the water that is so essential to its functioning. Only a week or two ago, the Engineer-in-Chief and I discussed this very matter. I believe the Leader will agree, after what he has said today, that it may be proper to charge the sewers section with some portion of the capital involvement in the head and reservoir works and main trunks system of the department's works, thereby producing probably a more realistic figure of accounting for the operation of the sewers section. That matter is open to further discussion and has been discussed tentatively by the Engineer-in-Chief and myself, but I believe that would go a long way towards meeting the Leader's objection, or at least reaching the objective that seems to be desirable. It would be a proper piece of accounting if the Auditor-General, for instance, would consider it in that light.

There is the inescapable fact that the cost of supplying the facilities we need (which facilities are perhaps amenities to some extent and necessities to another extent) is becoming an increasingly heavy burden on the community. For this year's expenditure, almost £90,000 of capital funds is used by the Engineering and Water Supply Department, which in itself is a fairly heavy capital load. When all is said and done, we have to pay for the amenities and perhaps luxuries that we desire. It is a fact that 64 per cent of the 40,000,000,000 gallons of water that the State is required to supply to its consumers each year goes on household gardens.

The department and the Government have no complaint on that score. We believe that it is highly desirable that home owners should have the advantage of adequate water for gardening, but it is a fact that much of our water supply undertaking is devoted to that end. Some people have said, "Well, of course, much water is used for stock." So it is, but the 15,000,000 sheep in South Australia on a hot day would drink only one-tenth of the water used in the metropolitan water on that same day—for the consumption of 150,000,000 gallons of water a day it not unusual. It is perhaps rather extraordinary but it is a figure that we have reached on several occasions. That is ten times as much water as all the 15,000,000 sheep in South Australia would drink if they all had access to Government supplies. So, for this seeming luxury, the cost is very high; but the community desires it and the Government believes that it is

worth while and that the people of this State desire to continue that method of living even if it costs something to do so. I thank the honourable Leader for his thoughts on the matter and assure him that it has given me and the Engineer-in-Chief much food for thought. We have endeavoured to produce an equitable system and at the same time to keep up with the water requirements of the State.

The Leader mentioned the fact that areas that have long been served with water and have not received additional supplies have been called upon to share in the increased assessments. That is true, but I point out that it is one thing to make a supply and another to maintain it in a given area. Some mains laid 70 or 80 years ago must, of necessity, be removed, replaced and enlarged, and that, in itself, poses another problem that will become a greater factor in our costs as time goes on. Mains laid under cheap conditions will prove most expensive when relaid under present cost conditions, particularly when it is realized that we have 11,000 or 12,000 miles of water mains in South Australia, and that the relaying of the Warren trunk main will cost about £6,000,000 and the relaying of portion of the Tod River main about £4,000,000. It is a question not merely of the cost of serving new areas, but also of the cost of maintaining existing services. I thank the Leader for his suggestions, and assure him that any constructive proposals he outlines will receive full consideration.

Mr. BYWATERS—Can the Minister say how the assessments were made? I take it that they were, to some extent, based on property values, but was consideration given to improvements? I understand that an assessor went around the streets making notes of what had been done at the various houses. In country areas many people have not received their accounts for this year, so they do not know what their assessments are. Although it has been announced that appeals can still be made, if country people do not receive their accounts until late in the year, will the time be extended to enable them to have an opportunity to appeal? Some people have been told their assessments have increased by more than 100 per cent, but others do not know what the increase will be.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The assessments were not just a blanket increase over and above the previous assessments. They were made on an individual basis as required for each property. True, some country towns have not received their accounts, but the

honourable member for Mount Gambier sought information on this matter earlier this year and I told him that the assessments were being gazetted and that they could be inspected by people who wanted to inspect them. I made special arrangements for Mount Gambier residents to ascertain their assessments by communicating with the Adelaide office through their local office, but few people availed themselves of that opportunity. The Act, under which we work, provides that the assessments shall be gazetted, and that the assessment book shall be available for inspection by the persons concerned. The assessments are not sent to each individual owner when they are made. The accounts follow in due course. The assessments were made on an individual basis and not on the basis of a percentage increase over a previous assessment.

All factors are taken into account by the assessor, including the value of a property as it stands at the time of the assessment. It is, therefore, not necessary for him to say, "Well, last time I looked at this house there was not a sleepout on it: at present there is, and that adds so much to the value." He would, I think, probably assess the house as it stood and relate its area, type, and the land on which it was built to values in that locality. That is the correct method of making an assessment. This year we had a larger body of men than usual making assessments and, so far as I am aware, they did as efficient a job as would be possible for human beings to do.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Could a different procedure be adopted in notifying assessments? It is clearly unsatisfactory for householders, where assessments are going to change, to have to refer to the gazettal of new assessments or to inspect the assessment book. As assessments do not change annually (indeed, they have not changed for a long period), surely it would not be too expensive for the department to notify a landholder that it intends to increase his assessment so that he may take action to dispute it if he wishes to do so.

So far as I am able to ascertain (and this is from a published statement by an officer of the Minister's department), when assessments are made they are made on a conservative basis so that, in fact, the amount assessed is not normally the full, fair and average price, but something below it. My complaint is that if that is so, then the margin of error on appeal is considerably greater. One can only win an appeal if the assessment is shown to be more than the full, fair and average price, and it is too great a burden upon the landholder to be



required to prosecute an appeal on the basis that he is being assessed at more than the average level of assessments. If there are two properties, equal in value, and the average level of assessments is about 70 per cent (and that was the figure that has been quoted) of the full, fair and average value, then one property could be assessed at 20 per cent more than the other and yet the person who was assessed at the higher amount could not win an appeal. Mr. Hogarth gave a long opinion in a case relating to a rate appeal (a case which received notoriety at some stage of the proceedings) when he said that one may take into account the value of neighbouring properties, but he cannot take into account the assessments that have been made on neighbouring properties and say, "Well, I am being unfairly dealt with, because that property is of a similar value to mine, yet it has been assessed at less." If the assessments proceed upon this basis, then people are being deprived of a right of appeal, and that is entirely contrary to the tenor of the Act.

The third matter I am interested in is the Government's intention regarding remissions or relief to people in low income groups. Norwood, an old district, has a high proportion of aged people, and probably a higher proportion than in any other electorate. These people are to receive some small relief from the recent Budget increase in the Commonwealth pension, yet on receipt of their assessments they find that the relief they will get is likely to disappear in the amount they will have to pay in increased assessments for water rates. Some of these people are in difficulties in paying rates, and I ask whether provision is to be made in the Waterworks Act, as has already been made in the Local Government Act, for giving some relief to people of this type?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—On the question of sending out notifications of assessments to individual owners when the assessments are made, the department has always advised me that this would substantially increase, if not render impossible, the clerical side of the department's activities, and that in view of the few appeals lodged against assessments the procedure, with all it involves, would not be justified. I said earlier that special arrangements were made to enable residents of Mount Gambier to ascertain their assessments, but they were little availed of.

Mr. Ralston—Those arrangements were for the previous year and not for this year.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—They could have been available this year, but that is not

the point. The main point is that so few appeals are lodged that the department does not feel that the suggested procedure would be justified. The honourable member made an interesting point regarding the assessments being, as he put it, on a conservative basis, and the fact that it would therefore be possible for a disparity to exist as between adjoining house properties, one being assessed at up to 99 per cent of its value and another at 70 per cent of its value. Theoretically that position could arise, but in practice the department's valuers are concerned that there shall be no inequalities in adjoining valuations. They realize that neighbours discuss these matters over the fence and that if there were inequality it would be the first thing criticized. Although that situation could theoretically arise, in fact most of the queries the department receives are verbal, relate to assessments and are not, in themselves, complaints. Some people come in to discuss their assessments with the Chief Assessor, and in many instances they say, "Well, my property is valued at a certain figure and my neighbour's property down the street is only valued at so much. There must surely be some mistake!"

Where an inquirer could demonstrate that there was a disparity the department considered the matter without waiting for an appeal. There may be 30 to 40 cases where adjustments were made because it became evident that there was a disparity that justified re-examination. Although the position legally may be as the honourable member set out, in actual practice it does not apply. The department is anxious to have the assessments without serious disparities of that kind. From time to time much thought has been given to providing in the Act for the relief of people who are in the low-income class. This year for the first time the accounts carried an intimation that where both water and sewerage rates were involved the payment of the sewerage rate might be deferred if the ratepayer so desired it. That assisted some people to meet their accounts.

People in low-income groups, and pensioners in particular, are good at paying their accounts. I have been told by the department that such people strain their financial resources to meet the payments, and that is recognized and appreciated by us. I and the department have had a number of requests in this matter and we have never pressed anybody in serious financial straits to pay his account. If the ratepayer can show that it is not possible to meet the account immediately, and there must

be proper reason for a postponement, the department does not press for immediate payment but leaves it to the ratepayer to meet the account as he can, and if it is not all paid fairly promptly it is allowed to stand until it can be paid. The department meets the position in this way.

Mr. QUIRKE—Many times I have said that the present method of fixing water rates is improper. A pensioner with a house worth about £5,000 may not use more than 100 gallons of water a week, yet a person with a big family may use a large quantity. The disparity in the value of the two houses is not apparent until the water assessments are received. I think the method of assessing water rates is more inequitable than any other method of fixing rates. I should like to see water paid for as a direct water charge rather than on the assessment of the value of the property.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I have had inquiries on this matter. If we were to base the water charge on the quantity of water used we would have some valuable properties in our country towns paying comparatively no rates for an extremely valuable service, namely, a water service nearby for fire protection purposes.

Mr. Quirke—I did not lay down a formula.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member was careful not to do that, but if we could devise one I think we would adopt it. We cannot avoid having a base rate, and in any case there is a rebate to the ratepayer in connection with the water used. If we were to charge actual cost per 1,000 gallons for water used it would put many graziers out of business. Other factors are involved too. Departmental officers from other States are consulting us about our system of rating. In one instance there is a desire to follow our lead.

Line passed.

Public Buildings Department, £193,844; Government Offices, £234,600; Cemetery, £18,292; Public Stores Department, £125,407—passed.

Aborigines Department, £427,909.

Mr. BYWATERS—I notice that there are lines dealing with labour required at Point McLeay and Point Pearce mission stations. I have visited the Point McLeay station and have seen some of the work done by the natives. No doubt these lines are necessary because the natives are not permanently employed and at times receive unemployment

benefits. Can the natives be encouraged to do more developmental work at the stations and be paid wages for the work done instead of being given unemployment benefits? I do not think it is wise to give them ration handouts or social service payments. Perhaps there could be some co-operative developmental work, or work sponsored by the Government, even if it were not a payable proposition. It could provide more permanent work for the natives. I understand that at the stations some work is done by means of contract labour. Perhaps more could be done by the natives themselves. I would appreciate some comments by the Minister on this matter.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—These are matters of great interest and they have been the subject of much thought by the Aborigines Department and by me. I am the first to agree that handouts without the rendering of any service are demoralizing and unfair. It is necessary to see that natives particularly do not suffer from lack of nutrition. They do not suffer in that way now and they will not unless there is some accident of administration. The stations, particularly Point Pearce and Point McLeay, do not exist for the purpose of providing the natives with employment. That is only a secondary aspect. They are places of residence for needy natives, and they are provided on a temporary rather than a permanent basis, but the tendency is for the natives to reside at the stations permanently.

Government policy is not to enlarge the stations but to reduce their size. The Government wants to train the natives and equip them with the knowledge necessary to take their place in worldly affairs. We do not encourage the natives to remain at the stations longer than is necessary. We want them to move on and we provide them with housing in other parts of the State so that they can become members of the community in the ordinary way and earn a living. It is perhaps unfortunate that under the Act the stations are there for the natives to come and go as they please. Superintendents have repeatedly told me that it would help them considerably in persuading people to take a chance in the outside world if they could tell them that they were fully capable of earning a living and that it was time they left the station. They have no such power under the Act but have often asked that the Government consider granting it. The employment of natives is limited by the amount of supervision that can be provided. I have frequently urged the Protector to give natives at Point Pearce and Point McLeay more work and he has

assured me that they are being given as much work as can be supervised. Giving untrained people machinery to work and stock to handle without supervision could incur serious results. I assure the honourable member that we give these people as much work as possible. We use them on building construction, farm operations, and tending dairy herds and stock. Both the lines referred to are increased from time to time, which indicates that we are employing all we can.

Mr. NANKIVELL—I refer to the provision made for Point McLeay station. In 1962 Narrung will come within the city milk licensing area. At Point McLeay is between 3,000 and 4,000 acres of land, mostly with lake frontage, some of which is suitable for a limited irrigation scheme. Although I do not know whether the dairy would meet the city milk licensing requirements, I should like the Minister of Works to inquire whether it is possible to build up a herd at Point McLeay and whether the dairy is in accordance with city standards. Will something be done to put the dairy on a commercial footing? If this were done it would be possible to make the station almost self-supporting. I understand that a big percentage of the population there has tried to live in the outside area but has not been able to do so. Despite what the Minister said about these stations being used only as a temporary measure to enable people to adapt themselves to outside existence, it seems that they will be more or less permanent.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I shall examine this matter with the Aborigines Board. However, the fact that, apparently, some natives prefer to live at Point McLeay does not influence me greatly because, when they can have a home from home with everything provided, some people prefer it that way.

Mr. KING—This year £500 is provided for a nurse at the Gerard Mission. Has the Mission obtained the services of a nurse? Towards assistance to the Gerard Mission, £1,750 is provided, and £1,600 is provided towards assistance for the Upper Murray Association for Aborigines Welfare. I understand this is the association formed in river districts recently to work with the United Aborigines Mission to try to put the affairs of the Gerard Mission on a sound basis. We feel that the plight of the aborigines can be solved if they can be persuaded to take an interest in the work done for them, and I am pleased that the welfare association has, by arrangement with the mission, taken over the physical working of the property which, although valuable, has

not been used to its best advantage. Although hampered by lack of funds, the association has started to re-design the orchard and has put other ground under crop. Many natives have volunteered to help because, although they know the association has not got the money to pay them, they appreciate that someone is doing something practical to put the station on its feet.

If we can develop the station I feel we shall have made a forward step to assist these people to be assimilated. The goodwill along the river has been shown in a practical way and I am sure that the Minister will help solve the problem if he can continue in the same way. I understand there has been some hold-up in granting money for some plant which the mission was to get but which the association hoped to use in its rehabilitation efforts. Will the Minister outline the present position and state future policy in this matter?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The £500 is for a subsidy towards the salary of a nurse to be appointed, but I am unable to say whether an appointment has been made. The Government is indebted to the honourable member and to the Upper Murray Association for Aborigines Welfare, which was set up expressly to render some much needed help to the United Aborigines Mission at Gerard. The committee is headed by Mr. Foote, who is well-known in the area and is a man of renowned integrity, understanding and common-sense. I appreciate his attitude and assistance and the great support he has had from a representative and active committee. Negotiations between the association and the mission have reached an advanced stage and I hope that complete agreement can be achieved, as I believe that as a result of the joint effort we can make some important advances in the work of that institution. It is an extremely valuable property which lends itself to all sorts of diverse developments, it is of considerable extent, it has a river frontage adjacent to almost its total length, it has reasonable lifts and it offers scope for employment and training of many native people. I hope that final agreement can be reached so that I can agree to make available the financial assistance that I have informed Mr. Foote's committee and the United Aborigines Mission authorities will be available as soon as agreement is reached.

Line passed.

Public Works, £1,393,100.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Time and time again Parliament has discussed the provision of

escape exits from portable classrooms. Unfortunately, however, suggestions made by interested parties have not been given effect to. At the Magill primary school a demonstration was given of a method we believed would cover the position. This demonstration was witnessed by officers of the Education Department, Public Buildings Department and the Minister and officers of the Public Schools Association. At this school a kick-out hatch was provided at the base of the wall in the infants' classroom and a lift-out hatch in the upper classrooms. Unfortunately, however, what was accepted there was not given effect to by the Public Buildings Department. Subsequently, I visited schools in my electorate and was disappointed at the poor job done in the classrooms at one school in particular. I asked the teacher to demonstrate what would happen in the event of fire but she was unable to move the crude hatch. The teacher in another classroom was able to open the hatch, as she was heavier in build.

These hatches would be of little, if any, use in the event of a fire. It was originally intended that the desk would be left near the window, but the desk has to be taken away from the window and shifted back after the hatch has been moved. The position that would arise if a panic occurred could be imagined. I am not complaining about the Education Department because it has co-operated with all interested parties. The member for Burnside was at the Magill school during the demonstration. However, the officer of the Public Buildings Department was not as co-operative as he might have been and I think he tended to resent interference from outside people. That is the impression he gave me when I attended the inspections. The department has done fairly well in providing hatches and fitting new ones but the public is generally not aware of the possibilities of fire danger in portable classrooms. When dealing with the Estimates later members will find that fires have occurred in four schools but there is no reference at all to a fire in another school and I shall refer to it for the benefit of the Committee. The fire occurred at the Mount Compass primary school at 11.30 a.m. on July 19, 1960, and the report I have is as follows:—

Weather—Bleak, rain and hail falling heavily at time. Fire was first observed by the teacher in charge of room who noticed smoke whipping past window was darker than normal chimney smoke. On looking out the window she saw smoke pouring out the wall. She promptly moved children to porch and notified headmaster, whose fire fighting equip-

ment (five rooms), one bucket of sand and one auto-type fire extinguisher was hopelessly inadequate. Fortunately there were men working in the school grounds who assisted with axe, crowbar and more water to get at the seat of the fire, thereby keeping damage and danger to a minimum.

I arrived there just as the fire was extinguished and would like to make the following points:—

Portable room erected 1953.

1. There was a well stoked fire in a Woodburn H10a slow combustion heater.
2. There was no material of any sort in the stove area.
3. The stove is apparently in good order.
4. The asbestos on the wall has cracked but none was missing.
5. There was 9in. from the stove to the wall. (I measured it.)
6. There was no sign of fire on the inside of the room.
7. The weather-boards on the outside showed smoke stains but no burnt area.
8. The caneite and weather board facing the cavity were charred but not fully caught.
9. The trimmers behind the asbestos were pine and oregon and point of origin obviously was where trimmer was nailed to upright. Fire at this point was well alight but had not destroyed the evidence of its origin. This point is directly opposite the corner of the stove.

These points are facts beyond question but I would like to make the following comments: The heat from the stove would not ignite the trimmer through the asbestos, but it would in time convert it to a type of charcoal. The nails through the asbestos would help in this. The bitterly cold weather we have experienced in the last few months has required the maximum heat from the stove to make the room livable and the heat ignited the charred section. The maintenance inspector arrived Wednesday, had a look, told the teacher she had too much fire or must have done something wrong to start it, then informed the head that a gang would be out on Monday to rebuild fire-guards in all four portable rooms. That report is of something that few people know of. I do not know if the member for the district knows of it but the report was forwarded to me because the informant knew of my interest in this aspect of protection for school children.

The only way to correct this position and to give the necessary assurance to parents of children who attend departmental schools and who are required, by circumstances, to be taught in portable classrooms, particularly of the old type, is to adopt another method of construction and I ask that the department provide inside double doors with panic bolts similar to those compulsorily required in

theatres and public halls. That would provide the necessary safety for young children, and unless that course is adopted we will always have complaints. Other members probably have parents coming to them as I have.

It is not possible to build all the necessary schools of solid construction but the fire danger could be overcome by spending a little more in providing the doors I have suggested and that would enable the disposal of the silly escape hatches which are provided by the department, but which provide practically no safety at all. The present doors open inwards instead of outwards and they create further danger in the event of fire. I appeal to the Minister to consider the alterations I have suggested.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I shall be pleased to investigate the matter but would appreciate a copy of the report read by the member regarding the fire at Mount Compass.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £57,752.

Mr. CUMBE—I draw attention to the line "River Torrens (Prohibition of Excavations) Act and River Torrens Protection Act—Administration of" on which it is proposed to spend £600 as against £100 which was spent last year and which was the normal amount spent for some years prior to that. Is the increase to provide for clearing the river bed and the banks, which in some places are greatly overgrown with weeds and bamboo, or is it to deal with the sand washing plants or their removal? If not, what is the reason for the increased amount?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—Certain steps were taken to delegate powers under the River Torrens Protection Act to all constituent corporate bodies abutting the river at certain points. No doubt that has raised the question. Considerable areas of the river are still not covered by the delegation I have referred to. Prior to the arrangement with the corporations the department raised the question of a full-time inspector for work in this area and for other similar duties and the increase in the amount is to provide accordingly.

Line passed.

#### MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £11,783,100.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Earlier in this debate I referred to a report by the Minister of Education but I was unable to find the answers I sought. The conclusion I have drawn is that over a period of four years from

1955 to 1959, and after excluding capital expenditure, such as the building of new schools, the average cost per pupil instructed in our State schools has increased by 28 per cent. Over the same period the general level of prices increased by 11 per cent. We still have overcrowded classrooms and lack of teachers and, with the unsatisfactory conditions still continuing, I am of the opinion that we are not receiving value commensurate with the increased expenditure being made. We hear all sorts of excuses, such as greatly increased population and a greater proportion of this increased population being of school-going age. Both of these factors would legitimately increase the total amount spent annually on education but, when the cost is converted to the cost per pupil instructed, the figure should remain fairly constant except for general price increases.

In view of the increase in average cost per pupil instructed being more than two and a half times the increase in the general level of prices in the four-year period 1955-1959 I still say that the present Government has not the answer to the education problem in this State.

The Minister is probably aware of the unfortunate outbreak of hepatitis at the Sturt primary school. Many children in the Edwardstown district are obliged to attend that school. Will the Minister further review this position because the school is in his own district. I am informed that the mothers' club at this school made representations, I think to the Director of Education, regarding toilet facilities. Originally they provided for 40 children, but 400 are now attending and I can hardly believe that the original accommodation still prevails. Can the Minister of Education say what increased toilet facilities have been provided during the last 12 months, and when additions are to be built? Somewhere down the line there has been a lack of attention to these things.

The Forbes primary school and the Marion high school have come under notice in recent months because of fires. There are between 800 and 900 children attending the Forbes primary school (excluding the infant section), and most of these children are being educated in portable classrooms. The Minister of Works has indicated that it is too costly to provide concrete portable flooring for these rooms, but in my opinion such costs would be offset because of the cost of replacing the buildings already burnt down. In answer to a question by me, the Minister indicated that there was merit in my suggestion, but why this sudden change of front by departmental officers on

the question of costs? Investigations have been made by honourable members on the desirability of safety measures in portable school-rooms. In my opinion the most important question is the number of children housed in these portable buildings. The erection of so many is denying the children of sufficient playing area. Even if the headmaster were provided with a motor scooter, he could not possibly visit all the rooms in the time available, because they are so scattered; nor could he hope to know the children and know what the teachers are doing. If proper building provision were made he would be able to visit all classes in half the time.

What will be the position next year at the infant school when new scholars are admitted? Will additional portable classrooms be erected? Why did the Government purchase 10 acres at this school if it did not believe that it was necessary and why is so much land taken up with portable school rooms? My complaint is that no plan is envisaged to remedy the present position.

The Marion high school is in the same position, and it is becoming more aggravated. The number of students is still increasing. The school is more or less divided, there being the section comprising permanent buildings, a number of tennis courts, and then a mass of portable buildings. Those burnt down 12 months ago have been replaced and others also included, and thus the area available is being reduced. Even the oval area may be invaded.

The South Road primary school is a forest of portable buildings. It has a committee that is prepared to work in the interests of the school, but members consider that too much of the area is being taken up with portable rooms. Such committees are not receiving the assistance they expected from the department, and are becoming somewhat disgruntled. The committees of the three schools mentioned have worked hard to accomplish an objective.

The cost of education is being added to because of unfortunate fires in school buildings. Portable rooms are being erected at the expense of permanent buildings. In the long run this will actually result in increased costs to the department. The Government is providing for further additions to the Mitchell Park boys technical school and the Vermont girls technical school. The question of the future of apprentices in industry has been discussed both in Parliament and in the press. Provision is made by the department for training students in woodwork and sheetmetal work and much machinery is installed at these centres.

In my opinion the first essential is the encouragement of students to become interested in the construction of buildings. I believe that we could examine that matter from another angle. Boys at these schools should be given the opportunity to learn how bricks are laid. Years ago houses and schools were built of the limestone found on all sides of Adelaide, but no-one would know how to build limestone houses today because the younger men have not been taught. Someone has to do this work in the future, for we cannot expect to denude some other country of its tradesmen to do all this work.

Inducement exists for boys to follow the skilled metal trades. Opportunities are given in that regard, firstly in the schools themselves, secondly, in secondary industry itself, and thirdly, in the apprentice classes. However, if people wished to erect a building similar to Parliament House they could not find the necessary skilled artisans to do that work. Men proficient in working with burnt red bricks or cement bricks are not coming on. I therefore commend for the consideration of the Minister of Education the whole question of technical high school education. Not every student who attends this type of school eventually becomes a tradesman: some ultimately take up clerical work. However, I know that many desire to enter one of the building trades, and I believe that with a little sifting out by the headmasters, with the assistance of the staff and with a lead from the top, a satisfactory result could often be achieved. I ask the Minister to note my comments concerning the outbreak of hepatitis at the Sturt primary school, and the future programme for solid construction buildings at the Forbes and South Road primary schools and the Marion high school. These things should be examined, with a view to minimizing what is known as the average cost and ensuring that we get real value for the money spent.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—I listened with great attention to the Leader's remarks, and it appeared to me that at least half of them would have been singularly appropriate to a debate on the Loan Estimates dealing with the capital expenditure on schools. However, as he has raised these matters, I shall be only too pleased to supply any information at my disposal. The Leader mentioned the lack of ablution and toilet facilities at the Sturt primary school. Some time ago, after an inspection which I made there as the member for the district, I applied urgently for extra

toilet and ablution facilities to be provided. That work was approved, and I had hoped that it would have been completed before now. The plasterers, masons and carpenters are engaged on that work, but the Director of Public Buildings has assured me that those facilities, unfortunately, will not be ready until about November.

I agree with the Leader that there are far too many portable classrooms at the Forbes primary school. We refer to these rooms as temporary classrooms, but it seems to me that these temporary classrooms have a degree of permanency about them. I am opposed to building too many portable rooms, and I am sure my colleagues in Cabinet agree with me. In fact, we are anxious to stop the further building of portable schools as soon as possible. We agree that, although they may be cheap initially, their annual maintenance and upkeep is expensive. In addition, they are extravagant in the use of space that could well be used for recreational purposes. We find such large areas as 10 acres for a primary school or 20 acres for a secondary school being taken up by this sprawling of temporary rooms, and I am therefore anxious to see this practice discontinued as soon as possible.

Forbes primary school is an illustration. I believe the school itself is too large, certainly in enrolments, which are getting out of hand, and I think we have far too many portable classrooms there. As the Leader, who is the member for the district, knows, we have just built a magnificent new solid construction infant school, probably the best in the State, and I hope that later on we will be able to build massive new solid construction buildings to take the place of the portable ones for the primary school. I hope also that we will be able to provide similar buildings for the Marion high school, which started off as a wholly portable school. We now have a fine solid construction school of which I am sure the Leader is justly proud, and I hope that as soon as possible we will be able to erect another solid construction building and take away the portable buildings. The same thing will apply—although I do not know how soon—to the South Road school and to many others that could well be named in this debate.

The important question of technical education is one which, I think, warrants the attention of all members and of the Education Department. Many improvements have been made in the system of technical education, but because of the rapid growth in the number of

pupils who are entering technical schools, and the rise in the status and prestige of these technical schools to technical high schools, I hope that further improvements will be made in the future. These schools are not in competition with the high schools but they are, in my opinion, of equal standard and status. I shall be only too pleased at any time, as I have been in the past, to have further discussions with all members who have technical high schools in their electorates, and to obtain the benefits of their practical ideas for the future progress and development of these very important schools.

Mr. BYWATERS—The question of the classification of high schools is one that is exercising the minds of many people. I understand that for some time there has been a suspension of high school classifications. I am particularly concerned with the Murray Bridge high school, which now has an enrolment of more than 500 pupils. What is the policy regarding the numbers required for a Class I high school, and can the Minister say what is the position generally regarding the classification of secondary schools?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Reclassifications of high schools and other schools are considered by me and made finally on the recommendation of the Director of Education, who is obliged to consider the reclassification in relation to the whole problem of high schools as a separate branch. Speaking from memory, I think that he regards a minimum of 600 as the basis for a Class I high school, and I should think that it would not be long before the Murray Bridge high school reached that stage. I know the Director is now considering proposals for fairly early recommendations to me for further reclassifications, but I do not think he is able to make a firm recommendation at this juncture.

Mr. CLARK—On page 77, £1,000 is provided towards preliminary expenses for Education Week, 1961. Can the Minister say what form Education Week in 1961 will take?

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

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Honourable members will recall that in 1957 Education Week was held in South Australia for the first time. It was then considered to be just an experiment, but everyone agrees it was a huge success and some people who are experts in public relations and promotions indicated, both verbally and in writing, that it was the best week of any week with which they had been associated. However, it made such a drain on the resources of the Education Department,

the teaching profession and the Public Schools Committees Association that it was felt undesirable to make it an annual feature, and it was suggested it be held every three years. It is necessary to plan a year ahead and, as members are aware, we suffered the most devastating drought in the history of the State last year and did not desire to plan ahead at that stage. Now, with Cabinet's approval, Education Week is to be held again next year. I believe it will be a resounding success.

I have had preliminary meetings and formed an executive committee consisting of representatives of the Education Department, the Teachers' Institute, the Public Schools Committees Association, the independent schools and colleges, the University, the Institute of Technology, the Kindergarten Union, the Public Library, the Art Gallery, the Institutes Association and, I think, of all persons and institutions interested in education.

I want to stress that it is not an Education Department week; it is representative of all phases of education, from the kindergarten to the University, throughout the whole range of education. Last time, Education Week was held during the month of August, largely because we were fairly late commencing the planning and were taking a risk with the weather. This time it was decided generally that the best time would be the last week in April, because the autumn weather is considered to be the most reliable. Tuesday April 25 being Anzac Day and as we could not commence on a Sunday, it was proposed to commence on Thursday April 27 and run on until Wednesday May 3, the independent schools and colleges commencing their term holidays on May 4. We hope that the Director will soon recommend to me a suitable person to act as executive officer so that he can start his preliminary planning, that Education Week will be on a wider scale than it was last time, and that it will be an even greater success. Parliament set the seal of approval on the week last time by adjourning for a week. Every member of both Houses took part in the week. I do not know what the Government proposes to do next year, but I hope, firstly, that Parliament will not be sitting during that week, and, secondly, that all members will be pleased to identify themselves not only with all the schools but also with all the educational activities during that week.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On page 76 there is a line dealing with boys and girls technical high schools. I want to refer to a matter recently raised by the member for Burnside (Mrs.

Steele) in regard to clerical assistants, to which the Minister gave a fairly lengthy reply stating that it was hoped (and arrangements had been made) that clerical assistants would be supplied to secondary schools, high schools with an enrolment of 1,000 scholars, and technical schools with an enrolment of 600. When I heard this, I thought that many of the schools would be receiving clerical assistance in the near future but, from a quick check of the *Education Gazette*, I fail to find any secondary technical school with an enrolment of 600 scholars. Nevertheless, I feel confident that the Minister and the department have seen the wisdom of supplying clerical assistants to these schools. In case I be right in regard to the numbers enrolled in these schools, will the Minister of Education have further investigations made in this matter in view of the large amount of entries and work to be done particularly in technical schools, in which the Minister knows I take some interest. The work to be done in regard to entries, materials and adult education is colossal. The headmistress or headmaster is the chief administrative officer and, in these days when staff shortages are great and some people are employed in the schools with little teaching experience, much time is needed for the administrative head to direct and encourage the other teachers. It is the common practice in these schools for the headmaster or headmistress to allocate generally to the most efficient member of the staff a certain amount of book-keeping work, to be done in addition to his or her teaching. This disheartens and discourages teachers. I am confident and know full well this has been the cause of some resignations from the department as the teachers are overburdened and become weary. In view of these facts, can the Minister tell me whether it is possible further to consider the employment of clerical assistants in these schools with fewer numbers, because they could be employed more cheaply, thus making available the more trained persons to do the job for which they are qualified?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It is an understatement on the part of the honourable member to say that he takes "some interest" in technical high schools; he takes a very great interest indeed. He is chairman of the Croydon girls technical high school committee and is interested in other schools in his electorate and in technical high schools generally. As I said a week or so ago, the question of clerical assistance to technical high schools or to schools generally is made on the decision not of the



Education Department but of the Public Service Board, because clerical assistants are public servants and are not members of the teaching profession. The policy of the Public Service Board, and through the board of the Public Service Commissioner, is to provide clerical assistance in high schools with an enrolment of 1,000 or more, and in technical high schools with an enrolment of 600 or more. That was established by the board in 1953. Certain appointments had been made prior to that year in technical high schools with enrolments of under 600, and these were allowed to continue. Therefore, although no technical high school at present has an enrolment of 600 or more, there are five with clerical assistance, namely, Unley girls, Thebarton girls, Thebarton boys, Nailsworth girls and Nailsworth boys. The reason for allowing clerical assistance for a lower enrolment in technical high schools than in high schools was that the former were required to conduct night classes but, following the taking over of night classes from the Institute of Technology at the beginning of this year and the additional clerical work caused thereby, the whole position of clerical assistance in both technical high and high schools is being reviewed, and it may result (as I hope it will) in recommendations for the supply of clerical assistance in schools where day enrolments are less than 600 but where night enrolments are large.

Mr. SHANNON—The Minister's announcement about Education Week has pleased honourable members, and I am glad that it will have such a broad basis. Every member will be delighted to play his part in that week. The bringing of higher primary schools into the category of area schools has also given great satisfaction. We look forward to the opportunity that this arrangement will give for country residents to attend night classes at many area schools. An increase of £14,000 is provided for country technical schools and adult education centres, which will greatly encourage those undertaking this work. The Minister's own staff is to be complimented on its work in conducting these night classes for adults in country areas in particular, for they normally are denied the facilities that are enjoyed by city dwellers. This policy will be much appreciated by country people.

I have discovered that the teachers are just as thrilled as others about the new set-up of area schools for it means there will be an opportunity for some of the teaching staff to move on to the job of teaching in the area

schools. The Minister's announcement that area school standards are to be stepped up to lead to the University, if necessary, has given great satisfaction to country people. Although that will not be as widely availed of as the ordinary area school course, it is encouraging to know that country pupils are not to be hampered in their scholastic career because they attend, in the first instance, an area school.

Mr. HUGHES—On page 77 there is a sum of £650 proposed for overseas visits of officers. I have stated here more than once that I strongly support the Government's policy of sending departmental officers abroad. No-one could have been more pleased than I when the Minister announced in August that the Superintendent of Rural Schools, Mr. Whitburn, was to go overseas to study education. A better man could not have been chosen. We are a comparatively young State and money spent on overseas visits by departmental officers is worthwhile. However, I believe that all members and the public generally would approve if, in recognition of his services, the Minister went abroad to study educational methods. The Minister is held in high esteem, as was amply illustrated when he visited Kadina recently to open the woodwork and science room at the Kadina memorial high school. The people were thrilled with his delightful address on that historic occasion. Can he say for what purpose the small sum of £650 is provided?

Mr. BYWATERS—Although clerical assistance is provided in high schools and technical high schools I have frequently drawn the Minister's attention to the need for such assistance in the larger adult education centres. The principal at Murray Bridge has to organize a large area extending to the Victorian border and the South-East. Can the Minister say whether the provision of clerical assistance to the larger adult education centres has been further considered?

The Hon. B. PATTERSON—Firstly, I thank the member for Wallaroo for his compliment. Mr. Whitburn (Superintendent of Rural Schools) is travelling partly on a grant he received from America. The whole of his salary and other expenses are paid out of the ordinary vote and the small sum of £650 is for additional travelling expenses. A much larger amount will actually be paid to him. In some larger adult education centres where the activities are widespread the men in charge have been appointed full-time. There are a

couple of recommendations at present for two more appointments.

Mr. Bywaters—I hope Murray Bridge is one.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It is getting higher in the list. I hope we shall be able to extend this, so that adult education will rise to the status and importance it deserves, particularly as so many adults have more leisure and desire to improve their minds as well as their bodies.

Mr. RALSTON—My constituents appreciate the department's efforts and the Minister's co-operation in establishing an adult education centre at Mount Gambier and in extending technical training facilities for apprentices. Mount Gambier has the largest adult education centre in the State and it is still growing. The teaching of apprentices in such subjects as fitting and turning, automotive engineering, electrical fitting, electrical engineering and maintenance engineering, has conferred great benefits on the Woods and Forests Department's mills at Nangwarry, Mount Gambier and Mount Burr; on the Electricity Trust's power stations at Mount Gambier and Nangwarry; on the cellulose and paper mills at Tantanoola; and on major milling companies. I understand that at Whyalla the Broken Hill Proprietary Company shows its appreciation of such training by making substantial grants to assist further the extension of this education and I hope that the firms and State undertakings I have mentioned will adopt a similar policy and co-operate with the Education Department in extending apprenticeship training, which carries with it all the advantages of qualified tradesmen. These enterprises will benefit enormously as a result. I hope that if they approach the department the Minister will co-operate.

Mr. KING—I, too, compliment the Minister on the wide diversity of education available to so many members of the public of different age groups and standards. The School of the Air, the Correspondence School, the specialized classes for handicapped children, adult education and technical education afford wide opportunities for those wishing to improve their educational standards. The Minister is to be commended for his efforts, and I am pleased that members from both sides recognize his services.

I understand that to secure promotion from certain grades of schools a teacher requires a minimum of 10 units, whereas years ago six units were sufficient. The present require-

ment makes it difficult for teachers who are getting on in years, who have raised families and who are not in the best of health, to secure promotion. If they are over 50 years of age with family responsibilities it is hard for them to settle down to study. Could some other requirement, or an age limit, be provided to enable those teachers to receive promotions to which they are entitled by virtue of their years of service but for which they lack academic qualifications that may be difficult for them to attain? Does the Minister consider that we are making the best use of the teacher material available today, particularly as we are hard put to secure experienced teachers?

Mr. RICHES—One of the best things the Education Department has done in recent years was to establish and promote the School of the Air. Naturally, I am particularly interested in the work at Ceduna and Port Augusta. It is satisfying to note that in the ensuing year that work will have to be extended and a second teacher will need to be appointed. A second class will have to be established at the Port Augusta base. I have been told that the percentage of passes from Ceduna is as high as 94, and I believe the same would be the experience at Port Augusta. It is only a couple of years since the Minister announced the appointment of the first teacher and the operation of the first branch of this school. It is a thrill to be in the classroom and hear the roll-call of a morning. Children from Oodnadatta in the north, Keith in the South-East, and from light-houses answer the call as if they were in the one room and speaking personally and individually to the teacher. It is interesting to witness the personalized instruction that can be given by this means. Additional accommodation will have to be found at the Port Augusta base if a second teacher is to be housed and if the school is to be properly accommodated. I hope that satisfactory arrangements will be made so that next year we can get off to a good start.

I would like the Minister to get a report on the department's intention regarding the Port Augusta adult education centre. Nearly two years ago the Director visited Port Augusta, and I think he was impressed with the need to provide proper accommodation for the work. At present the centre is housed at the high school, but is not considered satisfactory. The Director suggested a new building on land now used by the school for sports purposes. A double-storey building was suggested and it met with the approval of the council and the school committees concerned,

but we have heard nothing more since the suggestion was made, except that it is under consideration. We think that the department should now be in a position to provide a definite plan for the adult education work in the town. We do not forget nor are we unappreciative of what has been done, but we would like to know the future plans.

Early this session I raised the matter of the staffing of the Port Augusta primary schools. I believe that the department has done the best it can under the circumstances, but I think we should say that what has been achieved to the present is not quite satisfactory. I do not think the Minister or the department would regard it as satisfactory, and I hope that what happened this year will not happen next year. Each of the three primary schools in the town was entitled to have a deputy headmaster, but not one has been available at any one of the schools over the whole year. Port Augusta primary school had one, but he was transferred on his own application for promotion purposes to Eyre Peninsula, and he was not replaced. We are still at a loss to understand the delay, but an appointment was made in the latter half of this year. It was later than May, which was said to be the date after which it was considered undesirable to transfer senior officers of the department. No one queried such a ruling, but if it is adhered to the department should see that appointments are made earlier in the year and that schools are not left without appointments because the department has not been able to fill the positions earlier. The chief assistant lady teacher at Port Augusta primary school was transferred to Elizabeth after May and the vacant position was not filled until the beginning of the present term. I do not want to be considered a carping critic, but the position at Port Augusta has not been good and we feel that a protest should be made in the hope that the department will see that the schools are properly staffed at the beginning of next year.

Last year I mentioned the need to have a further building at the Umeewarra Mission, and I went to some length to show the hopeless position in which those teaching the native children are because of the lack of suitable accommodation. The Minister has reports supporting all I have said in this matter. There has been a query as to whether the responsibility rests with the Aborigines Department or the Education Department. I know that the existing arrangements were made and the buildings put there by the Education Department. It was done by the Hon. S. W. Jeffries, now Sir

Shirley, when he was Minister of Education. Until the school buildings became overcrowded everything worked well, and I think they could still do so. I have the greatest admiration for those carrying on the mission but they do need more accommodation. Last year the Minister of Works assured me that he was looking for a suitable building, but could not obtain one. I hope that one will be obtained and made available soon.

Mr. QUIRKE—The August issue of the *S.A. Teachers' Journal* contains an interesting article in relation to superannuation. When I read it I thought that there must be an anomaly or an explanation. Some figures are given of the cost per £100 of pension when units are taken out at the age of 30 years. South Australia has the highest figure, £8 10s. 2d.: the figure for Victoria is £6 7s. 6d., Tasmania £8 5s., Commonwealth £6 4s. 9d., Western Australia £6 12s. 3d. and Queensland £7 14s. 2d. Can the Minister say whether these figures are correct, and, if so, why is South Australia so high?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I was interested in Mr. Ralston's remarks about technical education, particularly the education of apprentices. We shall have to do more in educating our young people in order to attract them from going into jobs which are highly paid early, but which end up as dead-end jobs. I was interested in the generous attitude adopted by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company in regard to the education of apprentices, and the more generous attitude envisaged for the future. I join with the honourable member in expressing the hope that other leaders of trade and industry will follow the example. I have much sympathy for the higher primary teachers, and other teachers in the primary service, who are in their fifties, and who have rendered yeoman service in teaching without being highly trained academically. I have had much academic training, but I do not regard it as the beginning and end of everything. The human sympathy that the older teachers have is immensely important in education, and I shall be pleased to refer the honourable member's remarks to the Director and the principal officers of the department to see if a new formula can be worked out so that the opportunities for promotion will be available for these teachers who are not highly trained academically.

The school of the air has been a success at Port Augusta and Ceduna. The examination results have been remarkably high. Although the Port Augusta school has been operating for

only a short time it will be necessary to extend it. This is one of the fine things that we have been able to do for country people, particularly those in outback areas. Regarding the Port Augusta adult education centre, the Director, the Superintendent of Technical Schools and the Superintendent of High Schools have visited the town in an attempt to reach a decision. There has been a difference of opinion between them. I hope that the matter will be resolved soon and that we shall have a firm policy regarding the future of the centre.

Regarding the staffing of primary schools and the late appointments of teachers, I point out that this is due not only to a shortage of teachers generally, but to the fact that last year we created a large number of new promotion positions and all the people who considered that they were entitled to apply for them lodged appeals against the successful applicants. In some instances as many as 20 to 30 appeals were lodged against one decision, and they were mostly lodged by teachers who had no earthly chance of success. This clogged up the work of the Teachers' Salaries Board and resulted in interminable delays in dealing with appeals and making appointments. As the Treasurer announced in one of his weekly broadcasts, it is proposed to introduce this session a Bill to amend the Education Act in order to streamline the procedure of dealing with appeals against appointments, and to create a new appeals board. I feel sure that the protracted delays this year in finalizing appointments will not be continued in later years.

Regarding the Umcewarra Mission, there is a divided opinion between the Minister of Works and the Minister of Education regarding responsibility. My colleague is as interested in the mission as I am. I think the two women running it are doing a marvellous job and if we can do anything to assist them we shall do it. Concerning Mr. Quirke's remarks, I think the article he mentioned came from the *Public Service Review*, and dealt with superannuation in the Public Service generally. This is a matter that has been under consideration for some time by the Treasurer and his officers, and no doubt finality will be reached in due course.

Mr. KING—I notice that an additional amount of £41,185 is to be spent this year on the conveyance of pupils by bus. Is that due to an increase in the rates payable to the bus contractors? During the last few years I have taken deputations to the Minister from the bus operators in my district. It was considered that

the rates received by them were not adequate for the service rendered. They felt that they should get an increase because the teachers had increases in their salaries, that most people were getting cost of living increases, and that the rates for chartered buses were higher. They have seen the drivers of buses get their wages increased, yet they have not been able to get their rates raised, and in some instances that has been the position over several years. The rates are fixed under a formula controlled by a board, composed of officers of the Education Department, from which there is no appeal other than to Cabinet. These operators feel that it cannot be said that they have an adequate source of outside remuneration because, since they have taken over these bus services, their income from other sources has declined. This has been due partly to the increase in private motor vehicles, which has caused people to travel to entertainment or employment in private cars, and partly to the fact that they are required to take the children to school early in the morning and home early in the afternoon, which prevents them from taking other jobs. This work does not give them an adequate income, yet they are expected to keep their buses in good condition. I should like the Minister to investigate the situation and study the methods by which mileage rates are fixed. I ask him to remember that although these people can get extra income they are involved in extra expense. Although they receive the rate claimed by city bus operators to be sufficient to meet working costs, they cannot under present conditions maintain their buses and provide the standard of service we require.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The transport branch of the Education Department is fast becoming a huge department within itself. This year £483,000 is provided and, if we add the internal expenses of the department, the expenditure is about £500,000. The department is now providing 420 transport services and the number is continually increasing as additional facilities are made available. We are endeavouring to spread this as far as possible by introducing new services and lengthening the lines of communication to some of the existing services. A few years ago we set up a special transport committee consisting of the Deputy Director of Education, and the secretary, accountant and transport officer of the department. This committee advised me on all of these contracts and on the various rates of remuneration for the different classes of bus operators. Arising out of correspondence I

have received and as a result of deputations from members of Parliament, I have dealt individually with many cases, and the members of the committee have given a great deal of time and attention to this matter in an endeavour to satisfy the demands, reasonable or otherwise, of various contractors. Many have had their remuneration increased and others have requested an increase. If any member has a specific instance and refers it to me I will investigate it thoroughly, as I have done in the past.

Line passed.

Libraries Department, £193,270.

Mr. KING—Can the Minister of Education say what arrangements have been made for a subsidy for the Barnera library?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I regret that I have not got the specific information before me at the moment, as subsidies for free libraries are dealt with by the Treasurer and passed through me from the Libraries Board. However, I will get the information for the honourable member.

Line passed.

Museum Department, £50,210.

Mr. BYWATERS—For the salary of the Director, £2,510 is provided. I understand that the Director retired recently on reaching the retiring age, but that he is still carrying out his duties. Can the Minister say whether that is so and whether it is intended to appoint a new director?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It is intended that a new director shall be appointed, and I understand that advertisements have been inserted in newspapers in Australia and overseas. Although the director is retiring I think he will be performing some duties, either whole or part-time, until a successor is appointed. This is done, of course, through the Public Service Board, but I will get the exact information for the honourable member.

Mr. QUIRKE—Of a total expenditure of £50,210, £39,440 is for salaries and wages. The officers of this department are doing a fine job under difficult conditions but, as there is not enough room to display everything, many of the most interesting specimens are hidden from sight. Does the Government intend in the near future to provide additional space to allow for expansion?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Some modest additional space is in the process of being provided. Additions to the Art Gallery have been approved by the Public Works Committee and a proposal for expansions to the Public

Library is before that committee. I have no doubt that in due course a similar proposal for the museum will be made, but in the meantime extra space is being provided by re-arranging a wing. I know that the museum is terribly overcrowded and cannot display to advantage the fine exhibits it has.

Line passed.

Art Gallery Department, £24,500—passed.

Miscellaneous, £2,648,325.

Mr. COUMBE—Last year £1,800 was provided for the South Australian Oral School and this year £5,000 is provided for the school, which is doing a fine job. Is the increase granted because more children are attending the school, because more children need this type of education, or because this school, in conjunction with the North Adelaide Hard of Hearing School, can take on more instruction?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The grant for current expenses has been increased to £3,000 and a special grant of £2,000 is provided to clear accumulated deficits. The grant was made on the application of the president and members of the committee through the member for Burnside, who is the distinguished president of the school. We met the committee halfway. It has done a remarkably fine job over the years on a comparatively small budget and I think compares more than favourably with one or two other institutions which, for the time being, shall be nameless. I should like to have done better and would have done more but for the numerous calls on the department. There has been an increase in enrolments at this school, which has met many demands, and we are endeavouring to overtake the accumulated deficit.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Can the Minister say how the money provided for the Kindergarten Union of South Australia is disbursed?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—As I have said many times in the last few years, the State has never accepted responsibility for pre-school education, but 10 or 12 years ago commenced by making a token grant to the Kindergarten Union. The Government has always allowed the Kindergarten Union to disburse the funds. Over the years the grant has grown enormously and has now reached the huge sum of £150,000. The Government does not direct the union on the way the grant is to be disbursed. There are about 160 kindergartens throughout the State and the Kindergarten Union makes grants to some of them.

Mr. Fred Walsh—And some of them do not get a grant.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Some are branches of the Kindergarten Union and conform to all its standards as regards accommodation and teachers, and some are affiliated centres. The union decides in its own way to which kindergartens and in what proportions it will make grants. It has our blessing and financial support, but we do not dictate how it shall disburse its funds.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY.

Department of Labour and Industry, £106,221.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I refer to the item "Inspectors—Factories, Boilers, Inflammable Oils, Lifts and Scaffolding", for which an increase of £4,780 is proposed. Is the intention to employ more inspectors or is the increased amount to cover increased salaries and wages?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—An additional scaffolding inspector and an additional engineering assistant have been employed, so there has been an expansion of the inspectorial staff.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £1,775—passed.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FORESTS.

Minister of Agriculture Department, £7,328—passed.

Agriculture Department, £806,500.

Mr. LAUCKE—Does the poultry adviser receive the same remuneration as the other departmental advisers?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture)—Not necessarily. The poultry adviser does not rate the same seniority as the agricultural adviser or the dairy adviser. The agricultural adviser is one of the most important officers in the department's services and the poultry adviser's job is by no means as senior as that. I cannot tell the honourable member exactly what salary he receives. I have never had a question about the relative position of the two jobs either within or without the department, but I can obtain the information for the honourable member and will tell him what the two advisers receive.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I refer to the Blackwood Orchard, for which £5,500 has been provided for labour, as required. In the last few years I have on each occasion that we have been debating this item asked the Minister what his plans were for the Blackwood Orchard. He has not in previous years given a firm

answer. I now wonder if he has decided what he will do about that very important institution.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I cannot inform the honourable member of the exact future of the Blackwood Orchard but a certain amount of experimental work is done there. It involves trials, particularly with types of spray for fruit trees; a certain amount of cool storage experimental work and some vegetable research work is done and some pruning trials are conducted. Blackwood is an old orchard that has been in existence for a long time. At present we are reviewing its future. The conduct of research work requires planning for many years ahead and it is impossible now to give an outline of what will happen to Blackwood in the next few years. On the other hand I am very keen to have an established plan so that we may have a firm syllabus for its future over a good many years.

Mr. HEASLIP—I refer to page 87 where an amount of £58,606 is proposed for "Senior Agronomist, Senior Research Officer (Agronomy), Research Officers, Research Officer (Weeds), etc." I presume this amount is provided for the salaries of these officers and I believe that they are doing a good job in policing the prevention of the spread of weeds which are dangerous or obnoxious. They are attempting to cure an evil but my contention is that it is better to prevent than to cure. The dangerous weed Noogoora Burr is today coming to South Australia from New South Wales and is adding to the cost of producing wool. So far, in the northern areas Noogoora Burr has not been encountered except on Yadnamulka Station, where it is strictly controlled. No sheep may leave that station unless a certificate has been issued that it is free of that dangerous weed. However, it seems that we are still permitting sheep to come from New South Wales to South Australia without any certificate and without hindrance. I have asked the Minister several questions on this matter and he has asked for the names of the people who have brought sheep in. I have given him those names. The sheep have roamed through the Gladstone, Jamestown, Melrose, Appila and Wirrabara districts covering the whole of the Upper North, which so far has been free of the weed. The damage has already been done this year, but is the Government doing anything to prevent it from happening again?

Dealers have brought the weed to South Australia and under the Weeds Act innocent owners of property adjoining the roadside

have to face the expense of eradicating the weeds and burr dropped on the road. That is compulsory although these people have done nothing to introduce the burr. They will be penalized and so will the woolgrowers in the whole of the northern areas. What is the Government going to do to prevent the reckless introduction of this burr? It would not be an expensive matter because certificates could be issued. There is no need for sheep to come from New South Wales without a certificate. If they do come in and burr is found on them the people bringing them in should be fined heavily. That would prevent those people, mainly dealers, from bringing such sheep from New South Wales.

Mr. QUIRKE—I support the member for Rocky River in his statement on the burr. In the North this matter is not viewed with any degree of calm and at the Jamestown Show the matter was strongly raised by many people in the district, the bigger graziers, the small man, and everybody else. Both the member for Rocky River and I received a thrashing on this burr and it was meant with good intent. The people are fearful of the burr. Costs in relation to wool production are climbing and the growers have no control over that, but they do not wish to have to scratch burrs out of the fleece and have the trouble of eradicating another weed in the northern country.

We are told what a magnificent spectacle we could see when going to Leigh Creek, but if members wish to see a magnificent spectacle they need only go from Clare to Spalding early in the morning when the sun is in the east and they will see the magnificent spectacle of the Cape Tulip. It beggars description but to those who know it what an unmitigated curse it is. Another weed is showing strong promise but the growers do not want to have another plague and they want to prevent sheep from carrying that burr.

I refer to the Blackwood Experimental Orchard and I am interested in that orchard because many old types of fruit, which are now museum pieces, are grown there. I hope they are not destroyed so that they go out of existence. Although the trees are old the best of them are worth preserving as illustrations of the original condition of the apple such as the Old English Russet, and the Winter Pearmain. They are excellent apples which cannot be sold because they do not look well. For certain purposes they are nice apples. The Winter Pearmain is a funny apple and it is many years since I had anything to do with it, but I am not looking

forward to the time when it will reappear. It would not be sold commercially as it has purple spots and warts, but when the skin is removed it is a better apple inside than the Granny Smith. When these trees get too old, young ones should be planted so that these earlier varieties can be conserved.

Mr. BYWATERS—When speaking on the first line, I drew attention to the need for an experimental farm on the Murray swamps. An approach has been made to the Minister from the reclaimed areas for a section to be taken over for research. The establishment of this experimental farm could result in an asset to one of the biggest milk producing areas in the State.

Mr. HARDING—I am pleased to notice that increased expenditure is provided for in a number of instances. This is of importance to the farming community. Provision is made for the reimbursement of the cost of spray materials and the payment of compensation for the loss of trees infected with San Jose Scale. I thank the Government and the department for the work they are doing.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Mr. Heaslip and Mr. Quirke have mentioned Noogoora Burr, which is most difficult to remove from wool and is in the same category as the Bathurst Burr and one or two others that are a great nuisance to wool producers. There has been an outbreak of the Noogoora Burr in the north and it is still existing. Seasonal conditions have given rise to the trouble. First, we had a serious drought and sheep numbers fell by about 1,600,000, and as a result large numbers have since been imported from the other States. Now that we have a particularly good season more sheep are being imported than ordinarily, and during the last few months have been coming in at a rate of about 50,000 a month, but now that has dwindled to a comparatively small number.

Honourable members can understand the difficulty of imposing any inspection to deal adequately with sheep being imported in those numbers from many different routes. In Western Australia all stock entering that State are inspected, but they enter by only one route. The Noogoora Burr has spread throughout areas of New South Wales and the northern areas of Victoria. Many sheep entering South Australia come from New South Wales and Victoria, and there is no saying how many come from Queensland. Sheep do not enter South Australia from those States by only one direct route, and often pass through several hands before reaching here. The department was

alive to the problem early in the picture and discovered Noogoora Burr on some sheep at the beginning of August. Although the departmental officers had no difficulty in requiring the immediate shearing of the sheep, they desired additional powers. Consequently, new regulations were approved by the Governor in Council in mid-August. Four instances of Noogoora Burr have occurred in this State in the last few months and affected several thousand sheep. One outbreak was in the Murray Mallee area, two in the north and one in the central district. The department has about 15 advisers who are continually on the watch for burr, and they attend any sale of importance.

Mr. Shannon—Can you describe the plant?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—The plant has a hard burr with hooks, which attach to the wool. Inspectors are armed with wide powers, are vigilant in the exercise of their duties, and are always listening to discover any case that may have escaped their notice. A description of the plant is contained in a pamphlet issued by the department. There has been a publicity campaign in the press and also in the form of posters. Stock firms have been most co-operative in the matter and this is of considerable assistance. The new regulations give the inspectors power to order the shearing of sheep if it is considered necessary, and before infested sheep may be sold an announcement must be made that they are to be shorn. This has been effective in the outbreaks mentioned. The department has germinated seeds so that the plant may be demonstrated. In addition to authorized weed officers, authorized officers have been appointed by district councils, many of whom are doing an outstanding vigilance job.

The Weeds Act passed in 1956 was untried and there was no way of proving whether it was effective or not. It has since been under close scrutiny. It provides for authorized officers to be appointed by district councils. Whereas some councils have no such officers, others have extremely diligent men on their staff. The department exercises much energy in contacting these councils and showing them how the work should be done. Sometimes this work is shared between several councils. These authorized officers who are appointed are instructed and given every assistance by the department. Departmental officers visit any council where complaints are made about weeds, and generally speaking they lend a hand wherever they possibly can.

No-one would be rash enough to say that the Weeds Act deals with the problem of weeds in South Australia in a general sense. I do not know whether it would be possible to devise and administer a law that would deal with weeds throughout the State. In general, the Act provides for two things. It provides a list of dangerous weeds which are not widespread: they are bad ones which can be eradicated. If weeds are put on that list they must be eradicated. Those weeds that are so completely widespread that it is impossible to eradicate them are not put on the list of dangerous weeds. The attitude taken towards such weeds is that we must be realistic; we can see that we cannot eradicate them, so we must control them, and those weeds are put on what is known as the noxious weeds list.

Whatever we do, the people who own, work, and farm land are the ones who have the best chance to deal with weeds. We can assist those people in a number of ways, and there are a number of ways in which we can compel them to do certain things, but in the long run the farmers themselves are the ones who have to bear the brunt of weed eradication and control. The Act is still new and still being developed, but it is surely gaining ground in its administration of weed control, and whilst I think it would be unrealistic to say that that Act will clean up all the weeds in the State, I have been encouraged by the progress being made through the various authorized officers, particularly in certain districts.

Mr. Riches—Have you had any evidence of the Act being deliberately held up by appeals?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Some councils have had difficulty in various ways. I hear about those difficulties eventually. Some councils are held up at time by appeals, as the honourable member suggests. However, that right of appeal is something which I do not think Parliament would take away; I think Parliament would have insisted on it in the first place, and that it would be reluctant to remove it. The right of appeal is to the Weeds Advisory Committee, which consists of technical officers in the department and certain other people, all of whom are knowledgeable about weeds and can assess the worth of an appeal. To my mind, that committee is a useful one, but there are a number of disadvantages, and there is some substance in the honourable member's comment that the administration of the Act may be delayed. For



instance, certain weeds should be dealt with at certain times of the year, and any delay through an appeal may extend beyond the vulnerable time for that particular weed, but I think that problem can be countered satisfactorily by the administration of the Act. If it proves to be an obstacle that cannot be overcome, we should look at the possibility of amending the Act in some way to still provide for a fair right of appeal, but to overcome the time factor which may be involved in weed control.

Mr. Riches—There is no limit to the number of appeals an owner can lodge.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I think there is. If he loses his appeal to the Weeds Advisory Committee, I do not know of any further right of appeal. If the position were as the honourable member suggests, it would certainly be something that would require an amendment. The member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) asked, if I understood him correctly, whether there was any possibility of a research station for pasture work being established on the Murray swamps. At present it is not contemplated putting one there. Much research work on various kinds of irrigation is now being done at the Milang Irrigation Centre, particularly into the species of irrigation plants, and of course, into the important aspect of topdressing irrigated pastures.

Mr. Bywaters—There is no relationship between the Murray swamps and Milang.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—That is a matter of opinion. Obviously, the Milang centre is dissimilar in many ways to the River Murray swamps. On the other hand, they have many features in common. Research into topdressing on irrigation pastures has widespread effect. Much of the research work done in the eastern States and in other parts of the world has application to such districts as the Murray swamps. It would not be correct to say, therefore, that the Milang area has no relation to the Murray swamps. However, I can see the honourable member's point, namely, that it is not as good as having one right where he wants it.

Mr. Bywaters—It is a different matter in irrigation.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Different methods of irrigation are being experimented with at the Milang farm, but in as much as they do not have a type of irrigation that lets water on to their pasture and then pumps the surplus off the honourable member is

correct in what he says. However, some work on irrigation is being done there. In addition, a number of other irrigation research projects are going on in different parts of the State in different classes of agriculture and horticulture, and while they have no relationship to dairying, what I am pointing out is that Milang is not the only irrigation project being undertaken in South Australia. A number of other projects are being carried out in different places by the various branches.

The member for Victoria (Mr. Harding) commented on a number of matters, and I think it was he who made certain remarks supporting the department's work in the eradication of San Jose Scale, for which I thank him. The eradication of San Jose Scale has been brought about partly through the speedy work of the department and the vigilance of the inspectors, and partly through the co-operation of horticulturists in the district. The co-operation was almost 100 per cent.

Mr. BOCKELBEEG—Recently, the Government was left a property on Eyre Peninsula by the late C. L. G. Simms. Although he did not tie any strings to the bequest, it was his wish, I think, that it be used in some way for the development of agriculture on Eyre Peninsula. As the Government already has the research farm at Minnipa and several others in the State, I suggest to the Minister that this property be used for the development of stock, particularly sheep, on Eyre Peninsula. Cleve, where the property is situated, is an exceptionally good rainfall area and about 150 miles from Minnipa. The class of sheep bred there is particularly good.

Mr. KING—On page 91 there is an item, appearing for the first time, of £500 for Red Scale control. Red Scale is one of the pests of citrus trees. Oriental Peach Moth is obviously a pest of peach trees. The eradication of both these pests on the Upper Murray is now in the hands of the growers' organizations, which raise their own finance. They have, under orders issued by the horticultural inspectors, given notice to the grower that he is to spray for the control of the particular pest. These organizations have in the past arranged for contractors to go in on a grower's property. Sometimes the grower either refuses to or cannot pay and either the contractor is left lamenting or the association concerned has to foot the bill. The associations would feel very much helped if the department would accept the responsibility of paying the contractors in those cases where the grower will not pay, thus relieving the contracting

association of that responsibility, the department accepting responsibility merely of collecting from the grower. This would apply in the case of the Oriental Peach Moth and Red Scale.

At the same time, I should like to compliment the Minister on his optimism in not placing any amount on the Estimates this year for compensation on account of fruit fly eradication measures. That in itself is an inverted compliment. The effect of the fruit fly road blocks has been so good that the Minister feels confident that there will not be an outbreak of fruit fly in the fruit industry this year. If the sheep industry felt as optimistic, South Australia would have something to be proud of.

I should like finally to compliment the Minister on the way he operates his extension services, through which notices are issued and the various pests are dealt with, and also for the help he gives to the various branches of the Agricultural Bureau. Recently at Burra through the Agricultural Bureau a "gadgets day" was arranged. Over 2,000 growers turned up to see what was being done in the industry. We have also had field days in an experimental orchard, and the money spent on those particular services is indeed well spent. If the Minister can go the extra mile with us in the matter of safeguarding the interests of the contractors and the activities of the associations, which are all voluntary, he will go a long way towards fostering further confidence in his department.

Mr. HEASLIP—The officers of the Weeds Advisory Committee are doing a good job. The stock agents are co-operating 100 per cent in an endeavour to overcome the problem of Noogoora Burr, but it will be costly to the people on the land if it gets out of control. I was pleased to hear from the Minister that we were making some progress in the control and eradication of weeds. However, it is only this year that Cape Tulip appeared in the Jamestown district. Now, the Noogoora Burr has appeared there despite all the work done, and it is only a matter of time before it will spread throughout the north. The Minister says he knows of only a few cases of Noogoora Burr and assures us that they are being taken care of. Unfortunately, I know that sheep infested with it are still roaming the northern areas. I gave a case today of 2,600 sheep that were sold in Peterborough on September 3, and 700 of those sheep are still in the district. I have given the department the names concerned;

it has them all and knows where the people are, but that is not the only way the burr is being spread. When it was announced in the Peterborough sale yards that these sheep were to be sold and were subject to being shorn because they were infested with Noogoora Burr, the people who had never seen the burr immediately started to pluck from the sheep the burr that was there. Some put it in their pockets, some in match-boxes; they took it into the streets and to their homes. They exhibited it and ultimately it was thrown away, so it is there ready to grow in those areas. Noogoora Burr is still not under control. What will happen next year and in subsequent years? What will the Government do to try to prevent a repetition of this year's happenings? Section 31 of the Weeds Act states:—

Any person who brings into the State from any place outside the State, or brings into any part of the State from some other part of the State, any proclaimed weed or portion of any proclaimed weed or the seed of any proclaimed weed, either for propagation or as packing material or for any other purpose whatsoever shall be guilty of an offence.

Will the Minister use that section in an endeavour to stop what has already happened this year from happening again next year?

Line passed.

Agricultural College Department, £128,288; Produce Department, £266,967—passed.

Fisheries and Game Department, £31,407.

Mr. JENKINS—An amount of £1,500 is provided for research work, purchase of instruments and equipment and sundries. Do the instruments include echo-sounding devices?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—That amount is to meet the cost of the equipment that the new wild life section will be using. It does not refer to fishing.

Mr. LAUCKE—The South Australian Fly Fishers' Association is to receive a grant of £995. Is that for the purpose of stocking streams with trout?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—This grant is given as a recognition of the work the association does in stocking streams and encouraging this sport. South Australia is badly served for fresh water fishing, apart from the River Murray. Trout fishing is only possible in a few streams and the trout are not plentiful as in the eastern States. The association comprises people who are particularly interested in the sport and who put much time into stocking the streams to the benefit of the community. I do not think that people would come to South Australia for trout fishing

but the activities of the association may help visitors to secure some recreation. The association has a metropolitan hatchery and it also utilizes some areas of our fresh water streams as nurseries for the young trout. Its success has been limited because there is a high mortality of young trout, particularly in flood times. I do not know the reasons for the scarcity of fish in our streams, but some streams have been stocked many times and although large trout are occasionally caught the fishing is not particularly good. The association does so much voluntary work that this grant is well-merited.

Mr. RALSTON—The angling club at Mount Gambier has been stocking the lakes for some years at its own expense and has achieved remarkable results; so much so that visitors come from other States to fish. Could that club apply for financial assistance, particularly as its members devote much time and money to stocking the lakes?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—It is competent for that club to approach me. However, it is working under much better conditions than the Fly Fishers' Association. It has achieved better success in the Mount Gambier lakes where conditions are better for trout. The Fly Fishers' Association has proved that for every pound it receives from the Government as a grant it has spent many pounds in time, travelling and voluntary work. It had such an uphill battle that it sought Government assistance to enable it to keep going. The Mount Gambier club is so much better off that it probably would not qualify.

Mr. Ralston—What do you mean by "better off"?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—More successful in its efforts and, consequently, its members get more fun. I do not say that it would not get assistance; it may well merit it. If the honourable member brings along an application from the club it will be considered, but I cannot promise anything. I have tried to point out the uphill struggle of the Fly Fishers' Association and have explained why it gets a grant. This is not an automatic grant that would be given to any body re-stocking streams. I have been associated in ventures that have put trout into the streams, but we never thought of asking for a subsidy. For one reason we could not possibly have got it and, for another, it did not occur to us. If the Mount Gambier club is in difficulties we may be able to help it out, but that is all I can say.

Mr. SHANNON—The Minister said he did not know the reasons for the scarcity of fish

in our streams, but most of our streams feed into the reservoirs and obviously many of the young fish end up therein. The Engineering and Water Supply Department is reluctant to issue licences to enable people to fish in the reservoirs. It is possible to fish in the streams leading to the reservoirs but not in the reservoirs themselves. I think that more collaboration between the two departments would be advantageous. The granting of a licence to the right type of person would do no harm if fishing in reservoirs were permitted. I cannot see any difference between that and fishing in streams leading to the reservoirs. I think the position could be properly policed and that there would be no abuse.

Line passed.

Chemistry Department, £63,690—passed.

Miscellaneous, £372,897.

Mr. HEASLIP—Regarding the amount of £32,970 set aside for demonstrations and research by the Bushfire Research Committee, we are all aware of the great danger this year from bushfires because of the tremendous growth of feed. Perhaps the danger is greater this year than ever before. Can the Minister set out the result of the research work that was done last year so that people will be able to take advantage of it during the coming summer months?

Mr. JENKINS—On Sunday I travelled about 180 miles through my district and I can confirm what the member for Rocky River said about the potential bushfire danger this year. I saw very few fire breaks. Is it possible to make the general public more conscious of the danger in the summer months by making radio and television announcements with a view to people being induced to take more care when travelling in the country? We should do all we can to avoid bushfires.

Mr. LAUCKE—Last year £100 was spent on wheat crop competitions, but no amount is set down for this year. I am disappointed that the Government does not intend to promote these wheat crop competitions for they are of real value to the wheat industry. They create much interest in the production of quality wheats and clean crops. A number of agricultural bureaux maintain their competitions and consider them to be of great importance to their districts. The flour milling industry encourages the competitions by giving prizes each year. If Government officers consider that they are too busy to run these competitions at Government level, could the Government make prizes available to the various

agricultural bureaux that desire to continue their own competitions?

Mr. RICHES—Last year £36,000 was granted to the Lord Mayor's Bushfire Relief Fund. A suggestion has come to me from several sources that a permanent fund should be set up to deal with national calamities. It could be used to assist people who may be burnt out during a bushfire, or flooded out during a time of flood, or suffer irreparable damage in some other way. There is wide public support for the establishment of such a fund, to which emergency payments could be made as occasion arose. I think the present is an appropriate time to launch such a fund. The growth of feed this year presents a great potential fire hazard.

Some land owners are cutting the growth both inside and outside their fences, but it should be done generally. Despite all the precautionary measures it will be a remarkable achievement if South Australia does not have this summer some disastrous bushfires and does not have appeals made for financial assistance. Another suggestion is that there should be some form of compulsory insurance against damage to fences, etc., through bushfires. If there were such an insurance the Government would not have so many requests for financial assistance. The control officers set up under the Bush Fires Act have extraordinary powers. If they consider it necessary in the interests of the public and adjoining landowners, they may start fires to burn breaks and, although landowners could suffer heavy losses under those circumstances, no provision is made for payment of compensation. These matters should be investigated. I should like to know whether the department has considered these three suggestions or, if it has not, whether it will give thought to implementing them before the coming summer if it considers them desirable?

Mr. CORCORAN—I support the sentiments of the member for Stuart. When this country faced possible war damage, something was done. The public is getting tired of supporting appeals, as it feels that people should help themselves. I believe in compulsory insurance. We all know what Winston Churchill said about insurance, and that could apply here. None of us regrets helping people in dire distress, but provision can be made to cover them.

Mr. Shannon—They are discouraged from insuring if things are made too easy, whereas, if they are not given assistance, they can be forced to insure.

Mr. CORCORAN—That is so. I hope the Government will heed the remarks of the member for Stuart. When I was a farmer I provided insurance, which does not cost much.

Mr. BYWATERS—I appreciate the wisdom of having compulsory insurance, but, although people can insure against fire damage, insurance companies are not willing to accept flood insurance except at a high premium. I can understand that because the only people likely to insure are those in flood areas. If this fund were set up and compulsory insurance were brought in to cover all sections of the community, the premiums payable by people in flood areas would be offset.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—Bushfire relief is a long and difficult subject. I will consider all the suggestions made and discuss them with the Government, although many are not new. The trouble about bushfire relief is usually that it is required immediately, because humanity demands that something be done as soon as a fire has occurred to help people who are without clothes or homes or have no feed for their stock. As time passes, those who have insured can generally look after themselves. The way this relief should be administered is a vexed question. All I can say is that the previous fund was administered in a masterly fashion by the members of the committee. I think Sir Kingsley Paine was in charge of the reimbursements, and he did a particularly good job as evidenced by the very few criticisms I have heard. The Bushfire Research Committee has done much work since it was formed, and it has two large projects under way. One project is in the South-East, where a long, narrow type of firebreak is being cleared, and the other is at Marble Hill, where an area has been partly cleared and sown to pasture in the hope of demonstrating reasonably economic methods of protecting people in bad fire districts. I saw the pasture at Marble Hill recently and, although it is somewhat backward because of the cold and wet weather, it is well established and I think the committee will have something to show later.

Broadcasting and publicity generally have received much attention. The committee arranges for broadcasts and for press publicity. It gets a tremendous amount of free co-operation from the press and radio, and recently a demonstration at the Waite Institute was shown over television. This demonstration, which was a good one, showed how farms varied in their susceptibility to fire. Generally speaking, the committee has worked

with considerable energy and its publicity is good.

Mr. RALSTON—I agree with the Minister's views on land usage for bushfire prevention because that gives a reasonable chance of preventing bushfires and subsequent burning down of homes. The committee, which was established two years ago, had a vote of £25,000 and last year received £26,400. The actual payments for the year 1959-60 were £7,091. Misgivings have been expressed in the South-East on the committee's diligence but the Minister assures me it is diligent and has achieved good results. This year £32,970 has been proposed for various projects. Can the Minister obtain a report from the committee as to its projects and make it available to members?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I have said what the committee was doing. The sum of £32,000 is allotted for publicity, for the salaries of officers, for travelling expenses and the clearing and subsequent pasturing of the country at Marble Hill and in the South-East. If the member requires any more detail I will see what I can get, but that covers the expenditure set down.

Mr. RICHES—I refer to the Local Government (Forestry Reserves) Act. I have mentioned this matter in several previous Budget debates but nothing seems to have been done about preserving existing trees. There are valuable areas in the north which are wooded and run from the ranges to the gulf, following the water courses. Whilst that land is permitted to be grazed no regeneration of trees can take place in those creeks. Saltia Creek runs through Pichi Richi Pass and Stirling. The chairman of the district council of Kanyaka told me that those trees constitute a wind break and it would be disastrous if they were to die out. Whilst the areas are in pastoral leases or pastoral holdings and sheep are allowed to graze in that country there can be no regeneration of the trees, and as they die out there is no replacement. The suggestion is that they could be easily preserved by fencing some of them in. Is this anybody's responsibility? Is there any section of the department whose function it is to give advice or make efforts to preserve the very valuable timbers that already exist and if not will the department get a report from its experts on the desirability of these matters or a broadening of the operations of the Local Government (Forestry Reserves) Act in order to give local government power to preserve the trees already

growing as well as to establish new forest areas?

Mr. Harding—Who would control the mistletoe?

Mr. RICHES—That is a matter on which the department could get advice. The C.S.I.R.O. has conducted experiments in that regard. The late Honourable Sir George Jenkins was Minister when this was first raised and he said the C.S.I.R.O. was working on several projects and was hoping to find ways and means of controlling the mistletoe. Another idea was that if opossums could be re-introduced into the area, whilst they would not attack grown mistletoe, they would stop further outbreaks by eating the young mistletoe. Will the Minister give some thought to making this matter somebody's responsibility, whether it be at the departmental level or by discussion with local government bodies? However it is done I feel, unless some action is taken, that we are adopting a very short term policy indeed.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I will consider that very carefully.

Line passed.

#### MINISTER OF IRRIGATION.

Department of Lands (Irrigation and Drainage), £494,413—passed.

#### MINISTER OF MINES.

Mines Department, £573,750.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The employees at Radium Hill have voiced considerable concern regarding the prospect of uranium mining at the field following the completion of the contract with the Combined Development Agency in January 1962. Their concern is justified and I now quote several extracts which substantiate their views. The report in *Hansard* at page 550, on August 10, 1960, states:—

Mr. McKee—In view of the expiration in 1962 of our contract to supply America with uranium oxide, the men employed in the industry are becoming concerned regarding their future employment. Can the Premier say whether this contract is likely to be renewed? If that is not likely, can he indicate the future of the uranium industry in South Australia?

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford—The contract with the Combined Development Agency was initially entered into by the agency for uranium for defence purposes. It is common knowledge throughout the world today that the stocks of uranium for defence purposes have now been fully procured, and I do not believe that the agency is entering into any additional contracts with any authority anywhere. In those circumstances the agency is not likely to renew the contract. In fact, every indication is that it is not renewing any contract anywhere, because its purpose has been fulfilled. The second question is very speculative and at this stage I cannot reply to it.

The Auditor-General's report for the year ended June 30, 1960, at page 125, included the following:—

As the future of the project at the expiration of the agreement with the Combined Development Agency has not been determined it is not possible to assess the ultimate financial result of this undertaking. However, it is now apparent that, at the present rate of return, most of the capital cost of the undertaking will have been recovered at the time of expiry of the present agreement. Owing to the increased supply and limited demand the world price of uranium has dropped considerably in recent years. In Australia there have been no recent finds of uranium of any consequence and production is limited to a very small number of producers.

At the annual meeting of stockholders of Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd., on March 24, the chairman of directors, in referring to the position of Canada after 1962 or 1963 (and the description fits that of Radium Hill as the problem facing Canada is the same as that facing Radium Hill) said:—

The increased production of oxide in other countries, notably the U.S.A., has meant that supplies of U308 are now more than adequate for free world present day requirements. In the case of Canada, the marketing problem is a serious one as the original contracts expire in 1962 or 1963. The decision of the United States Atomic Energy Commission not to take up any of its options for the purchase of Canadian U308 after the expiry of the contracts has greatly worsened the situation. Suggestions for stretching out the original contracts have been proposed, but the decision not even to take up a proportion of the options was unexpected because the vast Canadian programme of construction and production was achieved at the express request of the United States when that country urgently needed uranium for its own defence programme. The Canadian uranium industry is thus faced with the likelihood that rather more than half its production capacity will have to be closed down if the remainder is to produce on an economic basis up to 1966.

In *Atomic Energy* for July, 1960, an article by Senator W. H. Spooner included the following:—

Power in its various manifestations—from coal, oil, water or atomic energy—is of tremendous importance to Australian development, and its provision to industry and agriculture at rates which are economic has wide ramifications. Because of this, and the vast sums of money involved the development of the various methods of producing electrical power will depend almost entirely on the economics operating in each of the four methods . . .

While the cost of power from atomic stations is not yet competitive and the development is not quite as rapid as in the early years of this method, much research and effort is being poured into this venture and there is good ground for the scientists' belief that the gap

between nuclear and conventional power costs is being reduced appreciably. However, this closing gap has to be judged against the tremendous strides being made in producing thermal, or coal-based, power and in coal production costs.

The average cost of coal to New South Wales power stations has fallen from £4 5s. 2d. a ton in 1953 to the present average of £2 10s. a ton, representing a reduction in power production costs of about 17 per cent. This is in addition to the increased technical efficiency of coal burning stations, such as the new Vale's Point station north of Sydney where each ton of coal will give 40 per cent more electricity than in some of the older stations.

Looking into the future, the Joint Coal Board has estimated that by 1970 the New South Wales coal mining industry will be supplying coal to stations based on the coal-fields at £1 10s. a ton. That, of course, is putting aside movements that may occur in general price levels. This means that the 1953 coal price would be reduced by 1970 by 75 per cent, and that is a further fact that must be added to the rise of 40 per cent in thermal efficiency. Side by side with this prospect, atomic power costs will have to compete with probable developments in oil-fired power stations and hydro-electric stations . . . No-one can foretell what the future holds but if we go on expanding at the rate of the last decade or two we have, on a rough estimate, enough hydro-electric power potential to last us for 25 years.

That is the kind of competition with which nuclear power is faced today. At present none of the atom-power stations, even those specifically designed to produce competitive electricity, can compete with our modern conventional stations . . . Uranium burning stations would involve us at present in capital costs ranging from one-and-a-half to three times that of thermal power houses, while the cost of uranium fuel roughly corresponds to that of coal. Even in the remote geographical areas of South Australia and Queensland this would mean that atomic electricity would be above the local cost of coal-based electricity.

The seventh annual report of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission, for the year ended June 30, 1959, the latest report of the commission, was presented to the Commonwealth Parliament last March. Pages 30-31 give a brief summary of the prospects of nuclear power development in Australia in the next 20 years in the following terms:—

Australia generally is well endowed with coal and has an appreciable amount of undeveloped hydro-electric potential, but these sources are very unevenly distributed through the Commonwealth, so that coal must be carried or power transmitted over great distances. In some remote areas it is more economical to burn imported oil. The cost of power generation varies considerably according to location, the size and characteristics of the system, the size and type of generating plant installed, the cost of fuel, and so on.

With power reactor development in its present state of flux, with the uncertainties over future power requirements and future conventional power costs, it is not possible to forecast with confidence the time when nuclear power will be introduced in Australia by the electricity supply authorities. However, the commission has made preliminary assessments based on the best information at present available and the following is a brief summary of the position as it appears at present. It is likely that nuclear power stations will be economic for installation first in South Australia and northern Queensland, the first units being commissioned about 1970. Between 1970 and 1980 nuclear power should also become economic in southern Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, a total of about 1,000 megawatts of plant being installed during this decade. With the development of more advanced forms of reactors, such as the fast and thermal breeders, nuclear power should be competitive in the remaining States, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia by about 1980 and most of the base load plant substantially installed should be of this type. It must be emphasized, however, that technical developments could entirely change the outlook in a comparatively short time.

I place the views of these authorities before Parliament in order to ascertain if possible what the future may hold for Radium Hill. On my recent visit to Radium Hill I found that the main problem of the people in the area was what the future held for them. Professor Oliphant always gave me the impression—and I believe he gave many others the same impression—that he desired the development of atomic power for peaceful purposes. His point was that for the development of this country and the maintenance of the migration programme it was necessary to water the inland, and he hoped that atomic power would be used for that purpose.

I believe the Government is aware of the problem concerning Radium Hill. I learned from the press that the Government had decided to send two of its senior officers overseas to investigate the potential of Radium Hill. It was forecast that whatever was put into Radium Hill would subsequently be recovered by 1962, and I do not dispute that. However, this Government has trained its employees at Radium Hill, and all members who have been to Radium Hill will agree that we can ill afford to lose those men who have been trained with money provided by the taxpayers of this State. I believe the Treasurer is aware of the concern that exists at Radium Hill. Can he indicate whether there is any hope of stockpiling the uranium oxide there for future use?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The Leader will have

heard that the Government decided some weeks ago to send the Director of Mines overseas to investigate the whole question of uranium markets, and also that it had invited the Electricity Trust to send its General Manager overseas with the Director to examine the progress that has been made in nuclear reactors. I believe the trust will accept the Government's invitation and that it will probably send not only Mr. Colyer but also another senior officer who has been assisting on this aspect of the trust's activity. Their report will not be available immediately on their return because the information gathered will take some time to collate. Fortunately, however, we are in an extremely good position in this matter. In the period that we have been operating the mine we have entered into very valuable contracts both with the American Atomic Energy Commission and the British Atomic Energy Commission, and in addition we now have some officers working with the latter body. I assure the Leader that the Government is just as anxious as he is to get some solution to the present rather difficult market position. I cannot give the Leader any further information at present. Obviously, we would not be sending our top-ranking officers overseas if we knew the answers. However, I am sure that those officers, on their return, will be in a position to advise the Government and Parliament on this particular question.

Mr. McKEE—I notice on page 103 that £79,812 was spent in the last financial year on drilling and prospecting for uranium and other minerals, and that it is proposed to spend £78,000 this year. Can the Treasurer say whether all this prospecting for uranium has been carried out in the Radium Hill area, and whether the drilling has disclosed successful prospects?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—When the contract was first taken up it just about covered the full quantity of ore that was known to exist in the mine at that time. However, the boring that has taken place at Radium Hill since that time has disclosed an additional lode; a continual boring programme has been carried out, and fresh deposits of ore have been found from time to time. The estimate for the current programme which has just been approved for further exploratory work at Radium Hill, speaking from memory, is £36,000. Boring programmes for mineral research are, of course, being carried out in other parts of the State too. The current programme for Radium Hill was approved only this week, and I think the £36,000 I have

mentioned is for boring south of the present mine shaft.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF MARINE.

Harbors Board Department, £1,521,000.

Mrs. STEELE—Through the Minister of Marine I should like to pay a tribute to the Chairman and the officers of the South Australian Harbors Board. Some months ago, when a series of visits was being arranged by the chairman, I was privileged to be one of the members to go on a visit one Friday afternoon, and for me it was an interesting visit. It was one of the occasions on which I felt it exciting to be a member of Parliament and able to see at first hand some of the works the Government is undertaking in the development of South Australia. I was most impressed with all I saw and the work already done. It is easy to visualize what will be accomplished as the Greater Port Adelaide Plan progresses. We are fortunate that men of vision, imagination and enthusiasm are pushing through such projects for the greater advancement of South Australia.

I was particularly interested at Outer Harbour to see the use being made of stone that comes from a rather controversial portion of my electorate in building the revetment at the harbour site. Recently in the House a question was asked by the member for Semaphore (Mr. Tapping) with regard to Lady Gowrie Drive and the position of the Fort Largs reserve. The Treasurer answered:—

A road reserve has been opened in front of Fort Largs, and funds have been provided by this department to the Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide to construct a road in front of the fort during 1960-61.

Then last week the member for West Torrens (Mr. Fred Walsh) asked a question about the attitude of the West Beach Reserve Trust regarding the construction of a road along the seafront. What I want to discuss for a few moments is the question of a marine drive. On September 28 an interesting article appeared in the *Advertiser* written by one of our leading journalists, with a map showing the areas where a marine drive does not at present exist and the areas where a person wanting to drive along the seafront has to take to the back roads. Yesterday afternoon I drove along this area myself from Outer Harbour right through to Kingston Park. Of course, the main areas where one has to leave the seafront and take to a back road are, firstly, Fort Glanville and, secondly, as one comes along to the part that the Greater Port Adelaide Plan envisages as a tidal

basin extending to the Grange. Between Semaphore and the Grange is an area at present belonging to the Harbors Board, which it is negotiating to hand over to the Housing Trust for development as a housing estate. Coming further south along the coast, one again has to make a detour when reaching the West Beach reserve, also when passing through Glenelg to a site opposite the Minda Home.

I am concerned about the area of land between Semaphore and the Grange, and also the area at present under the control of the West Beach Reserve Trust. If this marine drive could be developed, it would provide a great tourist attraction. It seems to me that now is the time for these big areas of land under the control of the Government, or of the trust established by the Government, to be developed with the idea of providing for a marine drive to go through these areas. The Minda Home people are not happy about a road going through the piece of land opposite the home, but I feel that adequate precautions could be taken to ensure the safety of the children who probably frequent the beach there, and that they could be under supervision when crossing the road, if such a road should be put through that particular area. I wanted to express these thoughts on the development of a marine drive and ask the Minister whether he could inform Parliament of the policy of the Harbors Board with regard to the area under its control. The Treasurer has advised the member for West Torrens that he will obtain a report from the Chairman of the West Beach Reserve Trust as soon as possible.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Marine)—Although certain ideas have been expressed by some people about the provision of a marine drive, there probably are as yet undiscovered some other ideas that may support or run counter to the opinion expressed by the journalist who wrote the article to which the honourable member referred. The facts are that the Harbors Board, although it is, in effect, on behalf of the Government still the owner of the land under discussion, has actually no further function to perform in regard to its development. The board has involved and onerous duties in the maintenance of the State's ports. Far from superseding, replacing or invading the activities of the Town Planner, the Local Government Department or other people, at that point the Harbors Board vacates the field and leaves the authorities to decide those things.



Mr. Shannon—We still have to get the report of the Town Planning Committee.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I do not know to which report the honourable member refers.

Mr. Shannon—Its developmental plan.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I do not know whether the developmental plan for the metropolitan area takes in this area—I should think it would. I point out that it has been agreed that the Harbors Board should utilize the land and the reserves of materials on the land for the purpose of levelling on LeFevre Peninsula and beneficiating the land in the Gillman area with the spoil. For building purposes on the western side of the Port River, it has been agreed that the Harbors Board, having provided also the industrial estates on the eastern side of the Port River, should hand over to another authority the further development and planning of the LeFevre Peninsula area, apart from such land as is adjacent to the Port River itself and is definitely required for harbour development purposes. The residential areas in particular should be handled by the Town Planner, so that the Harbors Board has, in effect, vacated that field and is therefore not charged with the responsibility of making a decision whether or not there shall be a marine drive. I cannot take the matter any further now, but the honourable member's remarks in regard to the drive will be duly noted by the Town Planner and the other authorities concerned. As far as the Harbors Board is concerned, I do not want to say it has no further interest in the matter; it has not lost interest, but it has no jurisdiction over that matter.

Mr. RYAN—Under "Harbors Board" there is a line for £500 for the chairman of the board and £400 each for two commissioners. The composition of the board has been referred to frequently in Parliament, and until such time as it is altered it will continue to be raised. At present there are many rumours as to the future composition of the board. Representations have been made to the Minister on this topic.

The General Manager is to retire within 12 months, so that will mean a vacancy on the board. In the past the Minister has promised to favourably consider the employees' requests for representation on the board and for the numerical strength of the board to be increased. An enormous programme confronts this Government instrumentality which, I believe, is the only body with a 50-year plan. Obviously the present board members will not see the completion of that plan. There should be

sufficient members on the board to enable a quorum to be formed at all times. With its present composition of two businessmen and the General Manager, at times it is difficult to get a quorum. With increased membership the businessmen would be able to attend to other matters and the board would be able to continue operating. The employers' organizations are also seeking representation on the board. They agree with the employees that there should be an increase in the board's personnel.

This year £3,500 is to be expended on a conference of port authorities. At previous conferences various matters have been discussed and the decisions have been commended by persons in other places. As a result I have sought information on those decisions but have been told that they are not for outside consumption. As Parliament is agreeing to the allocation of £3,500 for the forthcoming conference, will the Minister make available the decisions to members or will he table them in Parliament?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—The honourable member is under a misapprehension about a vacancy occurring as a result of the General Manager's retiring. Mr. Commissioner Meyer, who is the General Manager, was appointed for five years, and there will still be several years to run after his retirement as General Manager, so there will not be a vacancy. I think the honourable member was under a misapprehension when he said I promised that when a vacancy occurred I would request the Government to further consider increasing the numerical strength of the board. My recollection is not in accord with his. This matter was discussed in the honourable member's hearing at a deputation I received and I am not aware that I gave any such undertaking. We discussed the deputation's representations and afterwards I forwarded a considered reply which, as far as I can remember, did not involve me in any such undertaking. It is correct that employers' organizations have also sought representation on the board, but the same reply was given to them as was given to the employees' representatives.

The forthcoming conference is in the nature of discussions for the purposes of pooling ideas on harbour administration and management, but they are not, of necessity, mandatory upon the constituent members attending the conference. Resolutions carried obviously cannot bind the constituent authorities to uniform action. They merely point the way that the conference as a whole considers desirable, but it would be incongruous for a departmental

conference to agree to certain proposals without the sanction of the Governments; projects which Cabinet had not had the opportunity to discuss or consider. The findings of the conference are not mandatory, but are exploratory and advisory, and that is as far as they go. This is the first conference that has been held in my experience and I am not sure of the usual practice regarding the proceedings. I will discuss the matter with the members of our board who attend the conference to ascertain whether there is any objection (and I cannot see that there would be) to the proceedings being made available to the member if he wishes to see them.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £6,850—passed.

#### MINISTER OF RAILWAYS.

Railways Department, £14,616,500.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am interested in the rolling stock branch at the Islington workshops where we have some competent officers. In an earlier debate I said that South Australia had modern plant in its railway workshops, but that it was not being used to the fullest advantage. If the personnel now employed in the workshops are to be encouraged in their work the Government should indulge in more competitive tendering. At one time the workshops meant security of employment and good conditions were provided, but today some privileges enjoyed in, say, pre-war years are not enjoyed. Employees in other industries have caught up with the privileges that were available to railway employees, such as three weeks' annual leave, sick leave, etc.

We are told that the railway budget must be balanced, but at whose expense is it to be done? We used to have a steam train service running between Adelaide and Marino and the crew on that train comprised a driver, fireman, guard, and a collector, and the train made four trips a day. Now with diesel equipment, there is one person in charge of the train, a guard, and a collector who is usually a female. This train does eight trips a day. Are the employees being compensated for speeding up the work? If eight trips are done in the same time as four were previously, double the amount of work must be done. Are the people concerned being properly compensated? Provision has been made for a new railway line to be built to Port Stanvac from the present line to Willunga, and probably different rolling stock will be required. Loan money is to be

used for this work, which will mean large interest payments. Our Islington workshops are up to standard for the construction of rolling stock and they should be used to better advantage.

I seek more information about the writing-off this year of obsolete stocks to the extent of £55,000. What are regarded as obsolete stocks? I agree that some of the stocks should be written off, but how are they to be replaced? Are we to have a diesel rail system only in the metropolitan area or is it to be extended to the Peterborough division? If the Minister has not got this information I shall be happy to wait until tomorrow if he desires to report progress.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works)—As the Leader anticipated, I am not an expert in railway matters. I did not intend to ask that progress be reported because, if information is not available when Parliament rises, following the usual practice it can be obtained later. The Railways Commissioner has certain wide powers to decide certain things for himself and no doubt in coming to decisions he will take into account the Leader's remarks. I have no detailed information before me to answer the matters raised. There are small variations in the figures for writing off obsolete stocks. For instance, the difference between the amount proposed under the rolling stock branch and the amount spent last year is £1,864. The amount provided would not write off much, but the variation is not great. Obviously the writing down will not be the same year after year, but in the main the figure is fairly constant. I am unable to say to what particular coaches or locomotives this amount refers, but the information can and, I think, will be obtained for the honourable member.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In view of that, and because of the Commissioner's powers under the Act, is the Minister able to give an undertaking that the Treasurer, who may have to find the money to assist in this direction, will make a special request to the Minister of Railways and ascertain his views on the possibility of tendering for work to be done at the Islington workshops, possibly for the Commonwealth Government or other State Governments? I think the Government will agree that the staff is competent and should be given every opportunity to do more in the interests of the State.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I will ask my colleague to get a report on this matter from

the Railways Commissioner. This can be given to the Leader in reply to a question or at any convenient time.

Mr. QUIRKE—I am concerned about the constantly increasing debt of the Railways Department, its constantly decreasing power to earn, and the fact that, notwithstanding everything that is done in the way of writing off over the 52-year period, the debt goes on increasing at high speed. Does the Government intend to call a halt to this or can nothing be done about it? According to the first paragraph of the Auditor-General's report, the funds employed in the Railways Department at June 30, 1960, were £54,540,000, of which £53,103,000 has been the net aggregate payment from Loan funds. The increases since 1951 are extraordinary. In 1951 the net aggregate payments from the Loan Fund amounted to £37,209,000 and in 1960 had grown to £53,103,000—an increase of £15,894,000. That is climbing rapidly; the increase is over £1,000,000 a year, and sometimes over £2,000,000. The interest for 1959-60 was £2,107,000—an increase of £136,000 from the previous year, yet the railways never even return interest charges. Working expenses exceeded earnings by £2,500,000. At the last audit the actual deficit was £4,672,000 and consolidated revenue made a contribution of £4,200,000. We have a position in the railways that can be summed up in this way—a constantly increasing debt, complete failure to meet interest charges, and a contribution by the taxpayer of between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 each year with increasing freight charges and a constantly declining revenue from trade. I know the railways have to be subsidized and they are required to provide essential services for which a heavy contribution has to be made from consolidated revenue. The amount required is increased year by year because the whole capital cost and the amount that is coming from Loan funds is increasing at an alarming rate each year and therefore the interest charges are increasing. Revenue from freight charges is not getting anywhere near those figures.

Are we to look forward in 10 years' time to a debt of £100,000,000, because it could happen? It may not double in that time, but it has a tendency to increase rapidly. Where will it stop? Can we go on adding more and more to it and at the same time getting less and less in return? I am not blaming the railways because it is a victim of changing circumstances. When travelling from the north

to Adelaide we see load after load of wool being conveyed by road transport instead of by rail. Very little of that now comes by rail and often the vehicles that bring the wool down take back loading. That form of progress has caught up with the railways.

The railways are like the tramways that were taken out of Adelaide, thus immeasurably improving the city. The capacity of the streets to take traffic has been doubled. The trams ran on fixed routes, and the railways suffer from the same disability in their competition with road transport. Last year it was necessary to transport lambs to Yorke Peninsula and the Transport Control Board required them to go by rail. Each owner had to put his lambs on to trucks at the Hallett yards and in due time they were added to a freight train coming south. They were taken to the Mile End marshalling yards and were shunted around until they were placed in a train going to the peninsula, and still later they were unloaded from the trucks and taken to their destination. Those lambs could have been picked up from the farmers and taken over to the peninsula in six hours. That practice cannot continue because there will be general insurrection against such a dictatorial authority. The railways operate on fixed routes, but the trucks on the road can travel miles from the railway lines to load stock and transport them to anywhere in Australia. South Australia did not lose many sheep in the last dry period—about 1,500,000—because they were taken by road transport to New South Wales and other States. Many of those sheep would not have survived the round trip in the railways, but road transports were able to do the job in a short time and the economy of the State is indebted to the trucks. That is the sort of thing that has caught up with the railways.

Can the Minister say that there is some programme to deal with the finances of the railways and stop building up this debt which we have no possible hope of escaping? There is a statement of the public debt of South Australia in which the whole of the public debt and the various inscribed stock and bonds that make up the total are listed. Commonwealth debentures are shown in the statement and there are no less than 31 separate amounts classed as Commonwealth debentures, carrying approximate rates of interest expressed in pounds, shillings and pence ranging from 20s. to 30s. Among the 31 items are included amounts of £229,000, £250,000, £366,000, £372,000, £382,000 and £392,000. What is to

be done to arrest the undoubted financial rot taking place in the railways? How is the Commonwealth debenture raised and where does it come from at the rate of 1 per cent interest? Is there any chance of raising more money at that rate, as it is much lower than the interest on the railway debt?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—During the depression the Commonwealth Government lent a certain sum to the States to enable them to carry on when they could not pay their wages. That money was not properly funded in accordance with the Financial Agreement and ultimately it became a question that was submitted to the High Court. In consideration of the States agreeing to this money being funded at higher interest rates, the Commonwealth Government agreed that it would make available at the beginning of each year a small sum by way of debenture to enable the services of the States to be maintained, pending revenue coming in. So, Treasury bills have been provided by the Commonwealth to cover the lag in revenue. It is really only a small sum when considered against the whole of our finances, and the amount is pegged. At that time the Commonwealth Government was not responsible for unemployment relief and it lent the States money to enable them to pay their bills. It was illegally lent, because it did not conform to the Financial Agreement. The States had to pay the full interest rates and in lieu of that the Commonwealth agreed to give what is equivalent to a small overdraft to the States at the beginning of the financial year.

Mr. QUIRKE—Is there any intention of stabilizing the financial position of the railways by having a rehabilitation programme to stop the rot of the railways going into debt?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—On paper, we could make the railways pay tomorrow, but that would have no real effect upon the Budget. The position is that the Budget has to meet a certain amount of interest. We cannot escape meeting that interest. If we defaulted we would immediately have the amount deducted from our Commonwealth grants, and as those grants are very much more than our interest payments we would not be able to default. Writing off the debt of the Railways Department would transfer the debt from the department to the Treasurer; it would show on the Treasury books instead of in the department's books, so ultimately the State would be in the same financial position. The railways would show no loss, but the Treasurer would show a corresponding loss,

and both accounts would show a false position.

Mr. Quirke—In other words, we cannot do anything about it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I refer the honourable member to the Financial Agreement, which is a part of the Constitution of Australia; it was forced on the States in 1928, and although it has some advantages to the States it has many disadvantages. That agreement was approved by a referendum of all the people of Australia.

Mr. Quirke—That was one occasion when a referendum was successful, but the people made a mistake.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That referendum approved the Financial Agreement. Even if they desired—and I certainly would not desire—to default on their interest payments, the States could not do it. We saw what happened in New South Wales when Mr. Lang wished to default on his interest payments: the Commonwealth immediately took action.

Mr. Quirke—I am not suggesting that we default.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—The Commonwealth Government immediately took action to deduct the amount of interest Mr. Lang did not pay from the moneys coming to him from the Commonwealth. It would be possible to alter the Railways Department accounts by writing off its debts and thereby improving its position on paper, but there would immediately be a correspondingly inferior position in another account.

Line passed.

Transport Control Board, £22,778.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—According to the Auditor-General's report, this department had an excess of receipts over payments for the year of £58,774, which indicates that it must be doing a fairly reasonable job. A sum of £800 is provided for the salary of the chairman. I do not know whether the chairman is a full-time officer, but I know that he is an agreeable person who pays attention to all the requests he receives. I know of cases where people who are receiving the age pension and superannuation benefits receive a yearly income of more than £800. In view of this department's satisfactory financial affairs, is the Government prepared to increase the chairman's salary?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—This is a part-time position. I think the board normally meets only twice a week.

Mr. Frank Walsh—The chairman can be contacted at practically any time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—That may be so; I know he is a most conscientious person. I point out the the chairmen of most boards of this nature operating in South Australia receive less than £800 a year. As the Leader has suggested that we should pay the chairman of this board more, I will look into the matter.

Line passed.

#### MINISTER OF ROADS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Office of Minister, £7,189; Highways and Local Government Department, £501,173—passed.

Miscellaneous, £67,114.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—A sum of £46,000 is provided for subsidies to local councils towards the cost of repairing storm damage to foreshores. Much money was provided for this purpose a few years ago. These foreshores are repaired, but as soon as another high tide comes along the stone and other filling is washed away again. As the member for Burnside said tonight, we have for years provided heavy rocks and rubble to restore the breakwater at Outer Harbour. When we voted money in, I think, 1953, for the restoration of foreshore damage, I asked when we were going to consider meeting the position in a more satisfactory manner. Foreshores can be repaired, but within a few months another heavy sea comes along, together with water from the hills trying to get out to sea, and nothing much is achieved. Surely to God we have enough engineers and other experts—

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I think that is an unparliamentary remark.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I did not intend to say anything unparliamentary, Mr. Chairman. Surely we have some good engineers. When can we go out to meet the position? We have to go out for groynes. I am not an engineer but the groyne has proved its value with the Outer Harbour. Groynes below the tide mark might prevent the eventual loss of our beaches. Would not tons of solid rock consolidate itself over the years and not only restore the beach but increase the value of the beaches as places of public entertainment? This practice would probably lessen the amount of litter on the beaches. I am concerned not only with the restoration of our beaches but also with their permanent improvement.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—This provision came as a recommendation from the Engineer-in-

Chief, who had made a thorough investigation of the damage to foreshores. One pleasing thing about his investigation was that the work that the Leader mentioned earlier as being done after the previous storm stood up to the seas surprisingly well. In fact, most of this money is not to do with that work at all; it is to do with damage that occurred in other places not previously subject to any work by the Engineer-in-Chief. It would be useful to honourable members if I tabled, as I am happy to do, a copy of the Engineer-in-Chief's report on the damage done in this last heavy sea because, contrary to what has appeared in the press, it was not in respect of work for which Parliament had previously provided money. That money was well spent and little damage was done in that connection.

We have tried groynes in two or three places to see what effect they have in connection with the restoration and preservation of our beaches. So far the experiments tried have been successful but that does not mean that they would be successful in all conditions everywhere. However, the investigations into the use of groynes for the protection of beaches will be continued.

My last point is that the money proposed to be spent in these Estimates would have to be spent in any case whether or not groynes were installed. It is restoration of work which for the public convenience would be necessary. Even if groynes were established over the whole length of the beach, this work would still be necessary for restoration of some of the fixed assets established by the councils from time to time. Both angles have been examined and much work has been done by the Engineer-in-Chief and the Harbors Board in the testing of groynes. In some places further investigations will take place. I shall table the report of the Engineer-in-Chief. Honourable members will see set out categorically the work proposed, which is useful and well worthy of undertaking.

Line passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

The Estimates were adopted by the House and an Appropriation Bill for £44,432,487 was founded in Committee of Ways and Means, introduced by the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move:—

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

This Bill is for the appropriation of £62,432,487, details of which are set out in

the Estimates which have just been dealt with by the House. Clause 2 provides for the further issue of £44,432,487, being the difference between the amount authorized by Supply Act (No. 1)—£18,000,000—and the total of the appropriation required in this Bill. Clause 3 sets out the amount to be appropriated and the details of the appropriations to the various departments and functions. This clause also provides that increases of salaries or wages which become payable pursuant to any return made by a properly constituted authority may be paid, and that the amount available in the Governor's Appropriation Fund shall be increased by the amount necessary to pay the increases.

Clause 4 authorizes the Treasurer to pay moneys from time to time authorized by warrants issued by the Governor and provides that the receipts obtained from the payees shall be the discharge to the Treasurer for the moneys paid. Clause 5 authorizes the use of Loan funds or other public funds if the moneys received from the Commonwealth and the general revenue of the State are insufficient to make the payments authorized by this Bill. Clause 6 gives authority to make payments in respect of a period prior to July 1, 1960,

or at a rate in excess of the rate in force under any return made by the Public Service Board or any regulation of the South Australian Railways Commissioner. Clause 7 provides that amounts appropriated by this Bill are in addition to other amounts properly appropriated. This is the normal type of Appropriation Bill, and I commend it to members.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition)—This evening we used a fine tooth comb on many items contained in the Estimates, and earlier we referred to other matters not particularly related to them. The important provision of this Bill is clause 3, which provides that increases of salaries and wages becoming payable pursuant to any return made by a properly constituted authority may be paid. I am particularly concerned that it will not be necessary for the Treasurer to seek a further appropriation later. I support the second reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 11.48 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 12, at 2 p.m.