

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, November 2, 1960.

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

## QUESTIONS.

## BAROSSA CANNERY.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—A letter that I have received from Remark states:—

I wish to draw your attention to a letter dated May 5, 1960, which I received from the late Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) in reply to a letter from me in which I had asked him to inquire into the matter of the Barossa Cannery which in 1956 accepted fruit from the primary producers but failed to make full payment for same. I believe they went into liquidation. They owe me £355 15s. 6d. . . . As the abovementioned sum means a considerable loss to me, and as I have heard a rumour that the State Bank, a creditor of Barossa Cannery, had received payment for their advance, I shall be grateful if you will make inquiries and let me know if the producer is to be considered.

Can the Premier give any information about the Barossa Cannery, and can he say whether the State Bank has been fully compensated?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I believe that an official receiver is now in charge of affairs on behalf of the creditors. The State Bank has not received repayment.

## TELEVISION SALES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—My question, addressed to the Minister of Education (representing the Attorney-General), concerns the sale of television sets, and in particular what can be regarded only as an extreme sales gimmick, if not a racket. The *News* of October 19 contained the following advertisement:—

T.V. Free! 150 T.V. sets to be supplied and installed free! This is a genuine offer! If you have 20 friends in your social circle—then you can qualify for this amazing free T.V. gift. 150 lucky families will receive a brand new recently superseded set. Included will be:—Free outside antenna! Free installation! Free same-day service!

I have received complaints from people who answered that advertisement. They were then sent a letter from the firm concerned, of which the following is an extract:—

Dear Sir/Madam,

Find enclosed an application form for a free television receiver, the following are the governing conditions for the allocation of these receivers. We will place a television receiver in your home without any charges whatsoever, it will be kept insured and maintained free of charge. You will be required to invite your friends into your home and inform them of our

free of interest and no deposit terms. If you are prepared to do this, please fill in the enclosed application form and return to us within three (3) days.

Then everybody was required to attend a meeting subsequently "for the allocation of these receivers". One of the persons who has complained to me went into the firm concerned and telephoned several times, and was assured there was no catch in it. On the faith of that, this person attended the meeting, and at the beginning of the meeting, at which more than 100 people were present, they were handed a sheaf of literature, which I have here. This is a quotation from the literature given out at that meeting:—

An account will be opened in your name for what amount, and every sale that is made your account will be credited with 10 per cent of the purchases that are sold. In a case where a sale is not made within the first month, the set must be returned or it can be retained in the home on a hire of £2 per week, if a sale is made the second month your account will be credited with the sale plus the hire money that has been paid into the company. Hire payments will not be refunded.

In other words, when those people who had answered the advertisement attended the meeting they found that, unless they sold 10 television sets themselves, they would not receive their free set. That may have its humorous side for those of us who are not taken in by such gimmicks, but I know from complaints that I have received that this scheme caused considerable distress to some people in Adelaide. I do not know whether it is a legal or illegal scheme; but it is certainly immoral. If I refer all these papers to the Minister will he hand them to his colleague for examination by the Crown Law Office?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to do so. I have heard somewhat similar complaints myself. I do not know whether the scheme is illegal, immoral or ingenious, but I will consult my colleague, the Attorney-General.

Mr. BYWATERS—From time to time various complaints have been raised in this House on the activities of certain persons regarding the sale of television sets. We have heard another example today. There have been many since the advent of television. Apparently the prices charged are excessive to allow for the gimmicks to be offered. Will the Premier ask the Prices Commissioner to investigate the profit margin on television sets to see whether this article need be placed under price control?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I will ask Mr. Murphy to investigate this matter.

## UNIFORMITY OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

Mr. LOVEDAY—In my question of May 3 last concerning uniformity of school books, I asked whether serious thought had been given by the Minister to obtaining some degree of uniformity in books needed at primary schools and, if not, whether he would consider the matter. In his reply the Minister of Education said:—

The Director has now reported to me as follows. It is understood that by standardization of textbooks Mr. Loveday means that all girls and boys studying the same subject in the same grade or standard in all schools throughout Australia should be uniform.

I wish to point out that that was not the meaning of my question. I said "some degree of uniformity". Would the answer I got be the same if my question had been understood correctly? I did not ask for complete uniformity; I said "some degree of uniformity" because I regarded complete uniformity as impracticable.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to refer the matter to the Director of Education again. The Director did have the benefit of the *Hansard* report of the statement by the honourable member and the perhaps doubtful benefit of a lengthy discussion with me on the matter. I thought the position was clear but, in view of the then forthcoming meeting of the Directors of Education, the Director undertook to have that matter listed for discussion, and the reply I gave the honourable member was the outcome of that. I shall be pleased to bring the honourable member's corrected statement before the Director, have a further discussion with him, and bring down a further reply.

## SCHOOL OF ARTS.

Mr. COUMBE—At the moment the South Australian School of Arts is accommodated in the old Exhibition Building, the condition of which has caused much concern to those attending the school and to art lovers generally. I understand that this building is to be demolished shortly to provide for extensions to the University. Some time ago it was mooted that this school could be moved with advantage to Kelvin Building when it was vacated by the Electricity Trust. Since then I have heard a suggestion that a new school may be erected on vacant land held by the department in Stanley Street, North Adelaide, which was earmarked for other educational purposes. Can the Minister of Education indicate whether the School of Arts is to be situated in a substantial building to be erected in Stanley Street, North

Adelaide, and whether such a project will be referred to the Public Works Standing Committee soon?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—What the honourable member has stated is substantially correct. Involved in the transfer of portion of the Exhibition Building to the University, it was necessary to decide on the removal of the Adelaide technical high school, the School of Arts and the Technical Correspondence School. It was decided to have a new Adelaide technical high school built on five or six acres of land at Glenside, near Parkside. The Premier, a year or so ago, suggested to me that it might be possible to use Kelvin Building, with certain modifications, for the School of Arts and that the Technical Correspondence School could be included therein. The Director of Education, the Superintendent of Technical Schools and some other officers inspected the building, as did officers of the Public Buildings Department. Much detailed planning and estimation took place, but it was found, on detailed examination, that the cost of transforming Kelvin Building into a School of Arts and Technical Correspondence School would be greater than the cost of building an entirely new school. Secondly, we were informed that, in any event, the Electricity Trust would not be able to give vacant possession in time for the move to be made. As the Government had an acre of land at Stanley Street, North Adelaide, it was considered that that would be ideal for the purpose, and it was ultimately decided that the School of Arts and the Technical Correspondence School should be built on that land. Preliminary plans and specifications and bills of quantity are being drawn up at present in anticipation of an early submission to the Public Works Standing Committee.

## SITTINGS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier indicate whether the House is likely to sit in the evenings of next week or on any evening during the remainder of this session?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—At present the Government has not decided on the best action to take. Honourable members know that a most comprehensive and massive Bill, completely consolidating and amending the Road Traffic Act, is yet to be introduced. The answer to the question will depend on whether members feel that they can proceed with the Bill or whether they want it stood over. I hope that the Bill will be proceeded with.

It makes some important amendments to the Act, but its main importance is that it will provide the South Australian motorist, for the first time, with one document that sets out clearly and precisely (and it has been drawn up by Sir Edgar Bean who has devoted months of hard work to it) what his duties are under the Road Traffic Act. I believe it would be desirable to deal with the Bill this session even if members subsequently want some slight amendments which, no doubt, they would even if we now devoted much time to it. I hope the Bill will be introduced next week. It is in print and as soon as certain corrections are made to the settled Bill it will be available. If members feel that they can deal with it I think it will involve some night sittings. It is principally a consolidation, but there are amendments.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Will you have it ready for us on Tuesday?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I think the Bill will be in the House on Tuesday, or Wednesday at the latest. It has been before Cabinet, which has approved its introduction. We are now waiting on Sir Edgar Bean to settle the Bill and to make a few small amendments that arise from the printing. To all intents and purposes it is finished and will be available next week. It is a big Bill, but nevertheless I believe it will be of great importance to the motoring public.

#### CAMPBELL PARK SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. NANKIVELL—I believe that because of the most unsatisfactory water scheme originally provided for Messrs K. and B. Winter and Mr. Fred Carruthers under the Campbell Park soldier settlers' scheme, consideration has been given to providing them with an improved service before the coming summer. Can the Minister of Repatriation say whether that is so and what stage has been reached in implementing this new scheme?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—Much time and consideration has been devoted to this project to assist these three settlers. When the amended joint scheme approved by the Commonwealth Government was discussed with the settlers by an officer of the department in recent weeks certain modifications were proposed. These would result in a separate service for each settler, which I understand is what the settlers really require. Details of the revised scheme have now been worked out. This should be more satisfactory than the pre-

vious proposal, but, as an additional expenditure is involved, Commonwealth approval is being sought.

#### TEACHERS' REMOTE ALLOWANCES.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Has the Minister of Education been able to have allowances for teachers in remote areas re-investigated, as he promised earlier this session, and can he say when a definite reply can be expected?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I can give the honourable member a positive reply to the first part of his question: the matter is being investigated. The Director of Education has submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Public Service Commissioner based, if I remember correctly, on a lengthy report and recommendations from the Secretary of the Education Department. This is at present being examined by either the Public Service Commissioner or some of his investigating officers, but I cannot give any assurance on when finality will be reached. However, I will refer the honourable member's question to the Public Service Commissioner because I, like the honourable member, am anxious to arrive at some finality, as this matter is important to the public and to the teaching service in those remote areas.

#### HOUSING FINANCE.

Mr. QUIRKE—In this morning's *Advertiser*, under the heading of "Urgent Housing Problem", were extracts from the Housing Trust's annual report tabled in Parliament yesterday. Although I have not read the report I am concerned about an extract in the press, which stated:—

The report describes as an "ironical feature" of present economic arrangements the fact that finance is readily obtainable for every article that goes into a house, while more young couples are finding it difficult or impossible to obtain the mortgage accommodation necessary to buy a house, even when they can pay adequate deposits.

Can the Premier comment on that statement, which I do not think needs amplification?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD—I have not seen the Housing Trust report and am not conversant with its contents. The State Government and instrumentalities of the State will spend about £22,000,000 in one form or another on housing this year; this is a heavy contribution by the State. The principal problem is that tremendous pressure is being put on the sale of all the supplementary goods which go into a house and which, incidentally, carry a high rate of interest. Housing loans have always been considered as loans on which a low rate should be paid and consequently

they are not attracting the outside support being given to hire-purchase finance which, in some instances, pays as high as 10 per cent flat. Hire-purchase is being encouraged and supported by interest rates which I think are excessive and damaging the rest of the economy of Australia, including housing. I will examine the report and give the honourable member a more considered reply.

#### RIVER LEVELS.

Mr. KING—Has the Minister of Irrigation a report on expected river levels and the effect they may have on roads in my area?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—The Minister of Works reports that peak flows from the tributaries have now reached the main stream and that a more accurate forecast of levels in South Australia is possible. The Engineer-in-Chief now estimates that the Murray will reach a peak of 22ft. 9in. at Renmark on or about November 30. The Commissioner of Highways has advised the Minister of Roads that the Paringa causeway will be kept open for traffic. However, it is likely that the Berri-Loxton road and the Kingston-Cobdogla road will be closed for short periods.

#### FLINDERS STREET PRACTISING SCHOOL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Education a reply to a question I asked yesterday relating to the Flinders Street practising school, particularly in relation to children living north of Angas Street?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have obtained a more detailed report from the Director of Education, which states:—

Yesterday, Mr. Frank Walsh, M.P., asked if you had further information about the proposed closing of the Flinders Street school and, after you had fully replied to him, asked the further question "Under the Minister's proposal students living in the city will have to travel by bus to the Rose Park school. Will the Minister obtain a report from the Director on how many children will be affected by this query. Could the proposed zoning be reviewed?" It appears that Mr. Frank Walsh has misunderstood your reply. You were careful to say "those who live north of Angas Street could be enrolled at Rose Park and those who live south of Angas Street could be enrolled at Gilles Street." There was no suggestion in your statement or in my submission that enrolment at either school was obligatory and no suggestion of zoning. In point of fact I know from my own observation that a number of children living in the city square mile east of Hutt Street do in fact walk across Victoria Park Racecourse now to attend the Rose Park school. The suggestion

made in my submission for the enrolment of children now at Flinders Street was based on a desire to suggest the most convenient schools for the children to attend.

At present there are 125 children attending the Flinders Street school whose homes are north of Angas Street. Many of these could easily catch a bus near the intersection of Rundle Street and East Terrace. The bus, which goes from here to Tusmore, does in fact pass beside the Rose Park school and children on the bus would be set down practically at the school entrance. The fare would be 3d. each way. From the same intersection of Rundle Street and East Terrace buses go to Marryatville up Kensington Road and to Linden Park. The nearest stop on Kensington Road is about 200 yds. from the Rose Park school. The nearest stop on the Linden Park bus on Victoria Avenue is about the same distance from the school. The fares are identical in any case. At the same time there is no question of zoning for these primary schools and if children choose to walk the longer distance to Gilles Street there would be no objection.

#### LANGUAGE LESSONS.

Mr. CUMBE—It was reported in today's *Advertiser* that the Minister of Education had circularized certain primary schools with a view to introducing the teaching of French and an Asian language to selected students in grades III and IV. As this appears to be a new departure in relation to these age groups, can the Minister say what the new procedure will be and give the reason for introducing these courses in primary schools?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It was incorrect to say that I had circularized certain schools. Not only did I not circularize the schools but I knew nothing of the circular until a reporter from the *News* telephoned me a couple of days ago to ask me about it. The Deputy Director of Education (Mr. Griggs), who was in my office at the time, knew nothing about it, nor did Mr. Combe, my secretary. I inquired further and obtained a copy of the circular, let the reporter from the *News* have it, and later when the *Advertiser* and the Australian Broadcasting Commission asked for it I let them have a copy as well. There is nothing novel in my not being aware of the position, because the control of courses of study (particularly the subjects for study) is vested under the Education Act in the Director of Education and not the Minister. I found on investigation that it was a circular letter from the Acting Superintendent of Primary Schools to certain selected heads of schools, and that it was merely exploratory as to whether there would be a sufficient number of specialist teachers interested in teaching French as a modern

language, and perhaps an Asiatic language, to be spoken in grades III and IV. The advisability of embarking on this new venture with children in those grades is a little beyond my comprehension, but no doubt it will all come out when the replies to the questionnaire are received by the Acting Superintendent (Mr. Fitzgerald). That is as far as the matter has gone, as far as I am aware, and it may not go very much further.

#### ISLINGTON WORKSHOPS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Lands, in the absence of the Minister of Works, a reply to my recent question concerning the Islington railway workshops?

The Hon. Sir CECIL HINCKS—I have a reply, which states:—

My colleague, the Minister of Railways, advises me that it has not been the practice to tender for work for the Commonwealth or other State Governments, although the railways do work for other South Australian Government departments and private firms when they experience difficulty in having their requirements met elsewhere. Although there may be some reduction in rolling stock construction in the future, approval of the standardization of the Peterborough division would require a heavy programme of construction, and the Commissioner feels it would be undesirable to commit his department to outside work at present. In the meantime, his department's heavy maintenance programme will continue and will provide employment for his staff for many years to come. However, should there be a substantial reduction in the total of his Loan and maintenance programmes, which is not envisaged at the moment, consideration could be given to tendering for any rolling stock which may be required by other railways.

#### PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 26. Page 1549.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition)—I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this Bill, which was introduced by the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse). I was prepared to speak last week, but missed the opportunity through having been called away to take a telephone call. The Prices Act is a very weak Act in that there are so many provisions for delegations and exemptions that it is not subject to proper control by Parliament. Members on this side of the House feel very strongly, and have always done so, that once a matter is placed on the Statute Book the law in that form should be carried out. Provision should be made in

the various Acts for the easy and more detailed operation of the Act so that the Governor could make regulations for any of the purposes set out in the particular Act, but this does not apply under the Prices Act. Sections 34 to 42 of the Prices Act dealing with land transactions are subject to the same criticism because, even though section 34 lays down the procedure for land transactions, section 35 immediately proceeds by exemption, either generally or with Ministerial approval, to remove land sales from control. The very fact that land transactions received special mention, and were not left to the general price orders, to my mind means that these transactions were considered to be more important. For that reason I consider that the existing provisions regarding land sales should be retained in the present Act. Section 35 (2) provides the loophole for the present Government. It states:—

The Minister may, either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as are specified in the order, by order published in the *Gazette* exempt from the application of any provision of this Act any person or class of persons or any transaction or class of transactions or any land or class of land.

The present Government in 1949 saw fit to issue such an exemption order. Nevertheless, by section 45 the Governor still has power to revoke this order and, seeing that I consider the order made in 1949 should not have been made, and was made without any reference to, or consideration by, Parliament, I am completely opposed to the deletion of section 34, but I should be happy to agree as a basis of compromise to the deletion of section 35.

Earlier this year I drew attention to the colossal increase in land values in the metropolitan area since 1945. Some 15 years ago land within 5 miles of the General Post Office could be bought at about £70 to £100 a block. That same land today fetches from £1,000 to £1,500 a block. Among other things this increase has been due to the relaxation of price control by the present Government, and the supply of additional services by the councils and the Government, as well as the acquisition of land by speculators. Instead of seeking to relax controls on land sales the Government should consider introducing a capital gains tax on vacant land in order to recoup itself additional expenses caused by these land speculators forcing the councils and the Government to provide extended services. I understand that even though sufficient subdivisions were made last year to be adequate for the requirements for

the next ten years, it is still very difficult for legitimate homeseekers to obtain a block at a reasonable price.

The deterrent to land speculators could be achieved by the Government and the councils co-operating in their methods of rating. The Government should not grant any concessions for vacant land as regards water and sewer rating as they do at present. Once the water and sewer services pass a subdivided block it should be rated at the same value as adjacent occupied properties. Local councils and corporations could use the same basis for their rating purposes. The effects of this would be two-fold: the Government and the councils would obtain additional revenue to meet the cost of supplying additional and extended services, and speculators would be seriously deterred from acquiring land for the sole object of capital gain if they knew that every year they would have to bear their full share of expenses caused to the councils and the Government. Even though members opposite consider that sections 34 to 42 of the Act are a dead letter, I say that the provisions in the Act are correct, and that the policy of the present Government in the administration of the Act is incorrect. For the reasons given earlier, I oppose the Bill.

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla)—I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. I did not have the privilege of listening to the member for Mitcham when he explained the Bill but I notice that the sole object of his Bill is to repeal sections 34 to 42 of the principal Act. Those sections are wide so far as control over land purchases is concerned: in fact, they could be called "all-embracing." It is significant that this amending Bill should be introduced at this stage when it would appear that more control than previously should be exercised over land sales. I cannot help wondering whether that is the reason for its introduction. After all, there has been strong criticism recently from some members of the Government about land speculation, the subdivision of land being far beyond the requirements of the State, and the consequences thereof.

Mr. Clark—Even from the Premier himself.

Mr. LOVEDAY—Yes. It is high time that powers were exercised. I shall oppose this Bill. The honourable member for Mitcham said:—

"This order shall come into force on September 22, 1949." Since that date, for over 11 years, these sections have been a dead letter. Members may ask, then, what is the point of repealing them.

He went on to say that this power should not remain in the hands of the Government because it was too strong a power to remain there, and that it should be for Parliament to decide. If it has been a dead letter for 11 years, he need not fear that those powers will be exercised unwisely. His own argument rebounds on itself in that regard. So far from its being a dead letter today, now is the time when these provisions are more necessary than ever and should be exercised to put a stop to some ill effects of land speculation as it is proceeding today. The member for Mitcham said:—

Land transactions are not the same as those involving goods and services.

That is perfectly true. In fact, they are far more important in many respects so far as the State is concerned than transactions involving ordinary goods and services. The amount of unearned increment being derived from land speculation today is staggering and is having a tremendous effect on the great inflation from which we are suffering. It would be interesting to see what proportion of that inflation is due to the land speculation that is going on and has been going on for some years. The extra expenses associated with local government works are another serious factor, and at a time when all councils are struggling to make ends meet and finding it impossible out of their ordinary rates to supply the services they should be supplying for their ratepayers. I strongly oppose this Bill. This is a most inopportune time to suggest that these provisions be removed. It may be because of the present state of land transactions that this Bill now comes before us.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I oppose the Bill. The honourable member for Mitcham was very snide in the way he introduced it. I will quote what he said and then refer to the Act itself. In introducing his Bill, he said:—

Its sole object, as members will see from clause 3, is to repeal sections 34 to 42 inclusive of the principal Act. These are headed "Land Transactions" and confer the most sweeping powers on the Prices Minister to control all sorts of land transactions. Members will see that this power is contained in section 34. Subsection (1) thereof is as follows:—

Except as provided by this Act a person shall not without the consent in writing of the Minister—

- (a) purchase any land;
- (b) take an option for the purchase of any land;
- (c) take any lease of land;
- (d) take a transfer of assignment of any lease of land; or
- (e) otherwise acquire any land.

I propose that this section be repealed.

He would have this House believe that the Minister had all those powers under the principal Act: that he could control the purchase of any land, an option for the purchase of any land, the lease or transfer of assignment of any lease of land, or the acquisition of any land otherwise. He said the Minister had all these powers and that he was merely repealing them, but that is not true. The Prices Act does not do all the honourable member says it does. The Minister has the powers mentioned by the member, for one specific purpose that is mentioned in section 37 (2):—

The Minister shall not refuse to grant his consent to any land transaction or give his consent subject to any condition except for the purpose of giving effect to a policy of preventing or limiting increases in prices of land.

Whereas the member for Mitcham would have this House believe that the Minister had all these wide powers over transactions in land that he thought the Minister should not have, the Act simply says he has those powers only in so far as he gives effect to a policy of preventing or limiting increases in prices of land. That is all; that is the only power he has. I believe in a policy of price control.

When there was a referendum to the people of this country in about 1948, the Premier told the people of South Australia, "My Government can and will control prices." In 1948 he introduced the Prices Act. This series of sections 34 to 42, has not been implemented since they were in the original Act of 1948. We are being asked to whittle away the power of the Minister where the price of land is concerned. I have said here more than once that the landowners are the real people that this Government represents. It does not represent all sections of the community. The landowners are the people who were given a handout by this Government last session, its excuse for giving them a rebate on succession duties being these exorbitant and inflated land values. The Government has the power under this Act to control inflated land values.

Recently, both the Housing Trust and the Premier made attacks upon inflated land values. In fact, the Premier said that the Housing Trust was not going to purchase land for five years in order to try to bring down land values. The Government has the power, in accordance with the Act. By agreeing to this Bill (for I understand that the Government will accept it) the Government, which promised the people in about 1948 that it

could and would control prices in South Australia, is now going back on the promise it then made to the people.

Mr. Loveday—It was only putting up a front!

Mr. LAWN—Of course it was! Many articles are not controlled now, but they should be.

Mr. Quirke—How effective are these sections now?

Mr. LAWN—As the member for Mitcham pointed out, they are not effective and they haven't been during the 11 years they have been in the Act. The Government has not implemented them. However, it could if it wanted to, and, on the Premier's own statements, surely this is the time to do so! The Premier and the Housing Trust have both attacked the inflated land values. In last night's *News* under the heading "Land 'still being cut up fast'", the following appears:—

There has been no indication of any tapering off in subdivisional activity following recent Government warnings, the South Australian Town Planner, Mr. S. B. Hart, said today. In the first nine months of this year applications involving more than 42,000 allotments were received by the Government. About 8,000 homes are built in South Australia each year and the Government has warned that subdivisional activity is out-pacing home-building needs.

The Town Planner referred to the warnings that I mentioned as having been issued by the Premier, and he said that they have not been heeded. The Government has the obvious remedy: it could implement these sections that we are now asked to remove from the Act. Once they are deleted the Government will have no control over the price of land.

Mr. Loveday—It does not want to be embarrassed by having to implement these sections.

Mr. LAWN—I agree. The Government represents landowners, as is evident from its legislation. The gerrymandered electoral system is a clear example. It gives the country people a two to one representation in this House. The Government prevents country workers from going to the Arbitration Court for awards. It denies country pensioners the right to travel at concession fares on country trains, while it allows that privilege to metropolitan pensioners. It gives country landowners special rebates on succession duties. All of its legislation is in the interests of a certain section of country people—the landowner.

The only reason advanced by the member for Mitcham for the repeal of these sections is that the Government has never exercised

the powers conferred by them. That is no reason to delete them, particularly as the same reason applied earlier this session as well as last session. On every occasion the Government has introduced legislation to extend the operations of the Prices Act for a further 12 months these sections have remained. Frequently meat and clothing have been decontrolled and subsequently re-controlled. If these sections are deleted the Government will not have power to act as it should. The member for Mitcham put up a weak case and was labouring under pressure.

Mr. Loveday—He pretends these sections are dangerous.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, when they are not.

Mr. Loveday—They have never been used.

Mr. LAWN—He admits that and claims that they have caused no harm. They could have caused harm because they were not implemented. He sets himself up as an expert on price control, or decontrol.

Mr. Loveday—Not an expert.

Mr. LAWN—We all know what "expert" means: "X" is the mathematician's figure for anything and "spurt" is the drip of water from a tap under pressure. The honourable member was obviously under pressure. I ask the House to vote against the Bill. If the Government really believes in price control it should not agree to the Bill but should retain the provisions and implement them now. If it does not think that the time is ripe to implement them, it should retain the right to implement them when it feels it should.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra)—I recognize that price control should be abolished if possible. Over the years I have accepted the Premier's view that the time is not ripe in respect of many commodities. These sections relate to an article that has lent itself to rapacity on the part of land investors, and yet we are being asked to delete them from the Act. Many people agree with my opinion that the extraordinary increase in the price of land has had a tremendously detrimental effect on South Australia's economy. There is no doubt about that in relation to the prices received for primary commodities. Where such prices are on the downgrade the greater the fall the greater the loss is apparent when one considers the interest repayable on land for which high prices were paid. Put that against the cost of production and people are not getting sufficient to meet that cost. That applies to housing, too. I know of a block and a half of vacant land in an Adelaide suburb

which was required for a specific purpose and for which £5,500 was paid. I know of another piece of land with a frontage of about 20 to 24 feet that was purchased for £2,400. Although these sections of the Act have never been used, and the member for Mitcham until now has been content to rest on the Premier's statement that things were all right, why should we repeal them? Land prices have rocketed. I am not giving a specific reason for their retention. I could give a good reason for keeping these sections in the legislation, but what is the reason for removing them? Is it because it can be seen that in the immediate future there will be further astronomical increases in the price of land for building purposes and that these sections may be implemented? Even if they have not been used, why take them out? They are in the legislation as a safeguard, and the Premier says it is necessary to maintain price control.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Do you agree that land is in a different category from other commodities?

Mr. QUIRKE—I agree that it is entirely different from butter, eggs, cheese, potatoes and such things. I also agree that it is an important adjunct to a house, as houses must be set down somewhere—unlike Mohammed's coffin, perched between earth and heaven. The price of land even for schools is high enough and there is no reason why it should go higher. I was disturbed to learn that it was necessary to pay £63,000 for 20 acres of land adjacent to the abattoirs for constructing a school. Although the abattoirs did not want to lose 20 acres of land, there was plenty of land there. Perhaps next year or the year after we would have to pay £100,000 for this land.

Mr. Clark—It would be necessary to pay more, that is certain.

Mr. QUIRKE—Certainly, and where is the need for it?

Mr. Millhouse—Are you suggesting that these sections should be invoked?

Mr. QUIRKE—The honourable member has not given any reason why they should be removed from the legislation. There may be a good reason for taking them out, but that reason may be detrimental to the people of this country as it may affect the price of land on which houses will be built. If the sections have done no harm and have not been detrimental to anyone they should remain as a statutory safeguard that can be used if the necessity arises. If they were removed it



would be difficult to put them back if the Government desired to do that.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Do you envisage their being used for agricultural land?

Mr. QUIRKE—I do not think they could be, although there should be some measure of control over the ridiculous prices paid for agricultural land. These prices are certainly satisfactory for the seller but it is stupid for a purchaser to pay £50 or £60 an acre for agricultural land and expect to get an adequate return from it. No primary producer in this House believes that is possible. I know that fools cannot be protected from their folly, but they can be prevented from having a detrimental impact on the economy of the State. I am deeply concerned about these things. No safeguards were suggested by the member for Mitcham. In asking the Premier a question today I said that the annual report of the Housing Trust referred to the difficulty people experienced in obtaining houses even when they had adequate deposits, and I asked the Premier what he intended to do about the matter. I do not know that anything is intended, but is it not a problem? If people have to pay higher prices for houses because of increased prices of land, it will be necessary to grant them increased incomes. This will affect the ever-increasing spiral of inflation against which no action is being taken. If part of the spiral is the result of the appreciation of land values to a level above their economic value as productive areas, there should be some stamping down in the interests of the whole economic structure of the State. That is something that should be handled in its entirety and not by nibbling at a few strategic points around the circumference of the whole problem.

I may be a little suspicious about what could happen if these sections were removed. Although they have not been used, if they were taken out it would be difficult to have them put back. I am not one who believes in regimenting the people or in rabid socialism, but I do believe in the security of the people as a whole. At present there are forces that are white-anting the whole of the economic life of Australia. One of the greatest nests of these particular termites is the people who are constantly inflating land values. Because of the insufficiency of supply, a value higher than the real value is being placed on land.

These sections are not doing any harm; they could be doing some good, as they could be used as a measure of control. The Premier has said it is necessary to maintain price control, so why should it be removed from land,

which is one of the greatest fundamental factors in the increase of prices? I am prepared to accept what the Premier has said about prices, and I will apply that to all prices. He did not attempt to remove these sections although he has now acquiesced because of what someone else has said. As these sections have done no harm, and may possibly do some good, why take them out?

Mr. CUMBE (Torrens)—I support the Bill, which sets out to remove certain sections from the Prices Act which, as far as I can see, have done no good whatever in controlling the price of land. They have never been effectively implemented; in fact, by an order of September 22, 1949, they were exempted. They have been ineffective, and any law that is ineffective and doing no good should be taken from the Statute Book as soon as possible.

Mr. Quirke—That argument is nonsensical. These sections have never been proclaimed or given a chance to become effective.

Mr. CUMBE—They have not been used since 1949 and are doing no good in controlling the price of land. They are completely ineffective and should be removed.

Mr. Quirke—Why should they be removed?

Mr. CUMBE—Because they are doing no good whatever.

Mr. Quirke—You would repeal 50 per cent of the Statutes of South Australia; that is where you stand. For the rest of your political life you would be rubbing out things that were not being used.

Mr. CUMBE—The honourable member has been in this House longer than I and is conversant with more Acts than I. However, I am dealing with a measure introduced here and pointing out that these sections are ineffective.

Mr. Loveday—How do you know they are ineffective? They have never been tried.

Mr. CUMBE—If we have a bad tooth we take it out straight away.

Mr. Clark—We make certain that it is bad first.

Mr. CUMBE—Quite so. However, as these sections are not being used, it is no use leaving them in. Arguments have been put forward to the effect that they could be used to control the price of land now and in the future. I agree with the member for Burra about the danger and ill effect of high land prices, but even if proclaimed and used these sections would be completely ineffective in controlling those prices. Buyer resistance is the only thing that will control the increasing price of land, and

this is beginning to come about. In the last two years there has been a spectacular increase in land value and I, like other members, am wholly against this. I feel it is a bad thing for the future of our community, but I heartily disagree that this can be controlled by implementing these sections. The thing that will lower prices is buyer resistance, which is taking place now. Subdivision far in excess of requirements for possibly 10 years has taken place, but before long people will not be buying blocks in subdivisions at the fancy prices now prevailing.

Mr. Quirke—You will slip off that rail soon.

Mr. CUMBE—I can see that the honourable member is comfortable. I support the member for Mitcham who, in introducing this measure, said that these sections were unnecessary and that as they were not being used no harm would be done if they were removed from the legislation. I support the Bill.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—The member for Burra said that the power given by these sections was vested in the Minister controlling prices and should be retained by him. If ever there was a time when that power should be exercised it is now and it is the realization by some people that this power may be invoked that has resulted in the action to remove these sections.

Mr. Millhouse—I have never heard you or any other member of your Party suggest these sections should be used.

Mr. RICHES—I am now suggesting that they should be used. The member for Torrens spoke of toothache, but nobody shoots the dentist immediately he has been cured of toothache. The patient likes to know the dentist is available in case the toothache recurs. It is a good thing for the State that that power is given under the Act and that it is vested in the Premier even if it has not been exercised for 11 years. However, I believe circumstances now exist when it should be used in the interests of the State. The increased activity in South Australia of land dealers from other States has boosted land prices beyond the real value of land and at the cost of the people because the cost of land has to be reckoned in the cost of production from the land. A new land tax assessment has been made and the people will have to pay higher taxes. A statement in this morning's *Advertiser* states that land tax valuations throughout the State have been increased because of the unprecedented boom in land values. That has not been brought about because land has become more productive or because the products from the land, whether in the city or the country, are more valuable,

but merely because of excessive prices that land dealers are in a position to demand. The dealers are the only people who could be controlled under this legislation and the power to do so should be retained. We have no evidence that it is a power that would be used indiscriminately and the fact that the Governor has not exercised it by proclamation for 11 years is an eloquent demonstration to this House that it would not be used inadvisedly or unless it were in the interests of the State. I am surprised that the Government has accepted the measure and I doubt very much whether it would have accepted it if the Premier had been in the House.

Mr. Millhouse—Don't you believe it!

Mr. RICHES—I know the Premier was consulted by telephone and gave his approval for the acceptance of it, but I doubt whether his judgment would have been so far off the beam, as it obviously is, if he had been in the House and had given full consideration to the implications because the Bill runs directly counter to statements he has made in this House during the year. The Premier has stated, over the air and in this House, that the Housing Trust would have to withdraw from the purchase of additional land because of the inflated prices being asked for land. The Housing Trust is still looking for land and there are places where the Government should be buying more land but is not buying it because of the price inflation that has occurred. In some cases the work of the Housing Trust, which is the buying authority for its own houses, for education requirements and for other Government purposes, has been virtually stopped because of inflation. Buyer resistance, which the Premier stated would be exercised by the Housing Trust, has not had the effect of reducing prices and a situation has arisen where further control may be necessary.

It has been said that price control is not needed where competition exists, but that principle does not apply to land sales. There is no competition when sites are required for public purposes and land is not a commodity that can be imported from other places. People are not competing for it and there is much more justification for the retention of this power than there is for the retention of some others powers held by the Government. However, the power could be in better hands. It could be in the hands of a Labor Government instead of in the hands of the Party on the Government benches.

Mr. Millhouse—Heaven help us if it were.

Mr. RICHES—The affairs of the State would be better controlled, the interests of the people would be looked after and the power would be rendered effective if in different hands. However, I am speaking of a year or two ahead. This is a necessary power and the Bill does not give us any comfort because the move to have these sections repealed is obviously in support of interests that wish to take advantage of the present situation.

Mr. KING (Chaffey)—I support the Bill introduced by the member for Mitcham because it is good policy to remove something that was put on the Statute Book to deal with a situation that arose at a specific time, particularly when close examination proves it to be practically unworkable. This legislation dates back to 1949 and it was quite obvious that it was embodied in the Act because the National Security Regulations could not be sustained under the defence powers of the Commonwealth. Anybody who then had experience of land sales control realized the impossibility of policing the existing legislation or of even trying to administer it. We are trying to close the gate after the horse has been stolen.

A large element of speculation exists on land values but if dealers are to succeed the seller must find a buyer and buyers have been adequately warned that the number of houses being built each year is far less than the number of blocks being offered for sale. When thinking of the administrative side of this business members should realize what is involved in the thousands of transactions that occur each day. Who is in a position to value the land or place ceiling values on land under various conditions? The question of value does not arise until a person wishes to sell or someone wishes to buy and that is the position in which we find ourselves. There is much merit in what has been said in this House during the debate, but we are only tackling this problem piecemeal.

Mr. Lawn—You are not getting rid of it by getting rid of parts of the Act.

Mr. KING—The legislation is unworkable and I do not know how it can be made to operate. We are overlooking the administrative side of the business. Members on the other side are trying to support a principle under which all land values should be pegged.

Mr. Lawn—The Premier said that the Government would and could control land prices.

Mr. KING—The honourable member is entitled to his view, but I am talking about land prices and any Labor member should

realize that if he has a block of land he would not be prepared to sell it for the price he paid for it.

Mr. Loveday—People have to live somewhere and have to pay the price somewhere else.

Mr. KING—Yes, and that is the same thing. If a person does not have a house and requires a block of land the same principle applies. There are few people who would not make a smart pound if they could get it. I support the member for Mitcham because this represents an attempt to remove legislation which is anomalous and almost impossible to administer. I support it in the interests of administration and in the interests of the people of the State.

Mr. CLARK (Gawler)—When legislation is introduced I wish to know the reasons for it. Members have heard the member for Mitcham and one or two other speakers supporting the Bill, but none of them has managed to give any reasons why these provisions should be expunged from the Act. They have given some excuses that have not been reasons.

Mr. Millhouse—The honourable member says that because he has not read my speech.

Mr. CLARK—I speak mainly in the hope of offering some guidance to the member for Mitcham. I listened most attentively to the honourable member's speech although it bored me slightly, and I read his speech again this afternoon. Possibly, if the honourable member closes the debate, he may advance some reason for the Bill, but I do not believe he will because the reasons that have activated him and certain other members of his Party are reasons that they would not be anxious to offer. If I owned an overcoat I would not burn it or throw it away simply because I had no use for it in a particularly dry winter, but I would keep it in case I needed it next winter. Apparently that question does not come into this. I am puzzled when I see the support accorded the honourable member. He was told by the Minister, who was leading the House at the time, that the Government was offering no objection to his proposal. Two of his colleagues supported him this afternoon, although not very strongly. I suppose they thought it was their duty to do so. I absolve the member for Mitcham, who has always been opposed to price control, but the two colleagues referred to normally support the Premier in his claim that it is necessary to maintain price control at this juncture. One wonders how much sincerity there is in this, and

whether the possible pattern of Government procedure in regard to future price control will be for Mr. Millhouse, as he has done this year, to introduce a Bill next year to delete sections 22 to 33 and make himself a hero to certain people.

Mr. Millhouse—You are giving me some valuable advice.

Mr. CLARK—I am not giving the honourable member ideas that he did not already possess. Generally, he is not slow in picking up ideas, although sometimes I think they are not good ones. It makes one wonder how much real sincerity there is behind those gentlemen supporting the Premier. I was reminded of it this afternoon when the Minister of Agriculture mentioned the question of agricultural land. My thoughts went back a few years when I represented the Roseworthy Agricultural College and because of my association with football I got to know many of those studying at this fine institution. Every year some of these young men, who had obtained the highest possible diplomas at the college, came to see me. Because of inflated land prices and their shortage of funds to start on the land, they did not know what to do with their ability. For years we have been losing some of our best potential farmers for that reason. In the Western Australian Agriculture Department more than half the staff are South Australians. Undoubtedly, our loss is Western Australia's gain, but we should not do things that make it more difficult for these young men to be established here. I oppose the Bill.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (11).—Messrs. Brookman, Coumbe, Hall, Harding, Sir Cecil Hincks, Messrs. Jenkins, King, Millhouse (teller), Nankivell, Nicholson and Pattinson.

Noes (9).—Messrs. Bywaters, Clark, Corcoran, Hughes, Lawn, Loveday, Quirke, Riches and Frank Walsh (teller).

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Bockelberg, Dunnage, Heaslip, Laucke, Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford, Mr. Shannon and Mrs. Steele. Noes—Messrs. Dunstan, Hutchens, Jennings, McKee, Ralston, Ryan, Tapping and Fred Walsh.

Majority of 2 for the Ayes.

Second reading thus carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Repeal of sections 34 to 42 of principal Act—Land transactions.'

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition)—Members on this side and Mr. Quirke have already indicated that they favour the retention of the present law. Once it is removed the Government will substitute nothing in its place. I should like to know the purpose of removing these sections. Suspicion is created in the minds of some members as to what will occur next session. Today, if anyone wants to purchase household goods, he can get the finance somewhere, but he cannot get money to build a house. The more provisions we delete from the Act the more difficulties we can expect. I consider that the Government has made a retrograde step in supporting the honourable member's Bill, as this support will enable speculators to continue their practices. Also, the Government may want to increase the present maximum loan for house building from £3,500 to £4,000. The more these things are taken away, and the more publicity that is given to the matter, with the assistance of the Government, the more land speculation and profiteering will take place. I forecast that this Bill will be added publicity and that it will give further inducement to speculators. The result will be that the Housing Trust will have to reduce its building activities, fewer houses will be provided, and further opportunities to buy on time-payment will be provided because the Government will be giving a further inducement to the profiteers.

Mr. RICHES—The Opposition must voice its protest against this clause. I do so most strongly because I believe Parliament is making a mistake. The Committee, if it passes this clause, will be giving the green light to land speculators and those who profit from an increase in land prices. I am amazed at the Government's attitude; I cannot understand it, and I think the Government owes Parliament an explanation, because no explanation has been given on this matter. The Premier, as the Minister in charge of housing, has apparently indicated that he is prepared to accept the Bill. The Housing Trust's report released to us only this morning draws attention to the increase in land prices in the metropolitan area and the effect that will have on the house-building programme and on the people who wish to purchase homes. This action on the part of the Premier in accepting this Bill in principle runs counter to everything he has told Parliament this session.

Mr. Lawn—So it does.

Mr. RICHES—An explanation should be given. Departments under the control of the

Premier have drawn attention in their reports to the fact that this speculation in land is causing embarrassment to everyone who wants to encourage the building of houses. A responsible newspaper in its leading article this afternoon points out that this action will mean fewer houses. In the situation we are facing today we cannot sit down and allow this to happen, and we cannot vote for a clause that will give the green light to those who are bringing this situation about. We would be letting those people know that the sky was the limit, that there was no control whatever, and that Parliament was unconcerned about land speculation and the rising land prices. I cannot think that is what Parliament wishes, and I hope the Committee will not assent to that impression by allowing this clause to pass without any Government explanation. I think under the circumstances we can be justified in thinking that pressure is being brought to bear somewhere. This power of control over land prices has not been exercised for the past 11 years, yet suddenly there is a fear on the part of someone that it may be exercised and therefore its removal from the Statute Book has been requested, and that is sufficient reason in itself for the ordinary cautious member to insist that it be retained until some case is brought forward to show why it should be withdrawn. The Government should explain its reversal in glibly accepting this measure. I ask that progress be reported.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture)—In spite of the doubts raised by the member for Stuart, I remind him that my colleague, the Minister of Lands, spoke on this Bill and stated the Government's attitude, namely, that the Government accepted it. I am not now speaking for the Government, but exercising my rights as a member. The Government has clearly stated its attitude, and the Minister's comments should be enough to satisfy some of the doubts and queries raised by the honourable member, who keeps saying that he wonders whether the Minister in charge of prices understands what it is about. The honourable member has been here many years and should know from experience that when a Minister states the Government's attitude on a Bill it is not the result of some trick or because the leader of the Government has not been fully aware of the position.

I remember when land sales were controlled. Since those controls were discontinued the price of land has risen, in the same way as many

other commodities have risen in price during the last 11 years. However, I point out that it has risen much more in some districts than in others, and that it has actually fallen in other districts. It is difficult to prove the value of land in any place at any given time because it can be tested only by a sale, and it varies from day to day through all sorts of comparatively small factors. For instance, it depends on whether or not certain people attend the sale, on how much money there is about at the time, and what opportunities there are for investment. Land values have varied tremendously throughout the State. No-one wants to see unduly high prices for land, nor do we want to see farming land under a set-up where returns make it unpayable because of the price paid for the land. It would be most injudicious to apply any sort of control to that land. Land is an asset, and is not the same as any commodity. When land sales control was discontinued I do not recall any Opposition protest, and I can clearly remember that there was little debate or argument on the matter.

Mr. Riches—It was probably done by proclamation.

Mr. Millhouse—I am certain that not once since then has the Government been asked to reimpose it.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I have not done any research on the matter, but I do not remember its being raised by the Opposition in the meantime. The value of land has been referred to many times, but I cannot recall any debate suggesting the reimposition of land control. When introducing the legislation again and again the Premier has given explanations for doing so. I remind members that I am speaking now not for the Government, but as a private member.

Mr. Lawn—Do you say you are speaking now as a private member?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—When the Premier introduces this legislation he always explains that the test applied to determine the de-control of a commodity is whether the commodity is available and whether there is competition for it. No-one can say that land is not available, and no-one can say that there is not competition amongst land vendors. Every day we see advertisements for building blocks, farms and other land, and it is obvious that there are many more blocks ready to be built on than are being built on. That means there is healthy competition amongst the sellers of those blocks, and no-one can say that land is not freely

available or that there is any lack of competition.

One of the main reasons for keeping price control in existence is to deal with cartels. We know that various countries have different laws that attempt to deal with cartels—that type of business where the manufacturers of a commodity meet together and arrange to sell under some form of agreement which cannot be broken from outside. I do not know which of those laws are effective, but I do not know of any of them being more effective than the type of legislative control we in this State have to deal with the cartel type of trading. Such a cartel cannot possibly exist in land. I do not think any member could doubt that there is competition in the sale of land in the way the Premier means when he refers to competition, or that land is available in the way the Premier means when he says a commodity should be available. That is my attitude towards this Bill, and the Government has already stated its attitude. I strongly support the clause and the Bill.

Mr. LAWN—The remarks of the Minister of Agriculture are surprising. Like the member for Stuart, I say Parliament is entitled to an explanation from the Government on its reversal of attitude. I thought the Minister would give members an explanation, but he tried to be clever by telling us that the Minister of Lands had already spoken on the Bill; however, that was not so. The Minister of Lands announced the Government's attitude.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Is that not speaking?

Mr. LAWN—No. The Minister of Lands said that the Government had considered the Bill, had no objection to it, and was prepared to accept it in its present form. That indicated to members generally that the Government accepted the Bill, but the Minister of Lands did not speak on it. Earlier this session members were asked by the Treasurer to pass the first Bill amending the Prices Act. That was a Government measure, and the Treasurer told us he wanted present price control to continue for another year.

Mr. Bywaters—That measure covered the sections proposed to be repealed.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. Members want to know why the Government has changed its attitude on price control. They adopted the Treasurer's suggestion because they thought it was necessary for the legislation to continue for another year. I suggest to the Minister in charge of the House that progress be reported

so that the Treasurer's views can be obtained on the matter. The Minister of Agriculture spoke on this clause.

Mr. Millhouse—He did it very well.

Mr. LAWN—He said, "I am speaking as a member and not for the Government." Up to that stage I thought he was speaking for the Government. We know that Government members are leaderless without the Master, and because he is now in the Frome district they are like a lot of sheep wandering around the Frome district.

Mr. Millhouse—That is not humorous.

Mr. Hall—You do not believe that.

Mr. LAWN—It is true, and Mr. Millhouse knows that it is true that without their Leader Government members are lost. The Minister of Agriculture said that land prices had risen in the last 11 years, and that it was difficult to assess the value of land. We know that land and other prices have increased. No doubt that was visualized in 1948. It could be argued that it is difficult to assess the value of a hunk of mutton, a pound of butter or a pound of tea. It is just as difficult as assessing the value of a piece of land. The Minister of Agriculture said that much depended on what money was available and what other alternatives were available to invest money. That applies to all commodities. It was said that it would be injudicious to apply control to land prices. If that is so, why did the Government put it in the legislation in 1948? It is obvious that there is insincerity on the part of Government members when they put up such argument in order to justify the repeal of the sections. They have taken 11 years to find out that it is injudicious to apply control to land prices.

Mr. King—It has taken you a long time to wake up.

Mr. LAWN—I have always thought that land prices should be controlled. I do not think the Act has gone far enough in price control, but I do want to retain what is in the Act. I remind the member for Chaffey that the Master said in a referendum campaign, "My Government will and can control prices." Since that time the Government has continued the prices legislation, which includes the sections proposed to be repealed. Since we passed the first amending Bill this session in regard to price control the Treasurer has criticized land speculation, and in an attempt to prevent any inflationary move as a result of it the Housing Trust does not intend to purchase any more land for five years. Now we have

this Bill introduced. If Opposition members had business listed for today it would not have been dealt with because a fortnight ago we were told that last Wednesday would be the last day for the consideration of private members' business.

Mr. Millhouse—You were not ready to go on with this Bill.

Mr. LAWN—I will not be sidetracked. A fortnight ago the Treasurer said that last Wednesday would be the last day for the consideration of private members' business and in accordance with the Treasurer's wishes the Opposition concluded its business. Then Mr. Millhouse sprung this Bill on us. He says that I was not ready to debate it.

Mr. Millhouse—You moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. I did not want the Bill to be rushed through without receiving proper consideration. If I remember rightly, copies of the Bill were not available to members when the honourable member introduced it.

Mr. Millhouse—Yes.

Mr. LAWN—No. The copies were distributed whilst the member was speaking.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—I remind the honourable member that we are discussing clause 3.

Mr. LAWN—Sir, I have to answer the honourable member's statement. While he was speaking I was handed a copy of the Bill. I moved that the debate on it be adjourned. Obviously the view I took last week was justified. I suggest that progress be reported now in order that we might hear the Treasurer's comments. We should know where the Government is going in this matter. A few weeks ago we were asked to agree again to the sections which the honourable member now wishes repealed, and we agreed. I would like to know why they are now no longer needed. If the two Ministers present do not tell us why, they are treating Parliament with contempt. We know that members opposite are silly—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—Order! I remind the honourable member again that we are discussing clause 3.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. Members are entitled to know where the Government is going in this matter. We are asked to repeal the sections without any explanation being given for the change in the Government's attitude.

Mr. LOVEDAY—I heartily agree that we are entitled to an explanation in this matter. Possibly the strongest reason that can be

advanced for our asking for an explanation is that we were asked to agree without any reservation to the prices legislation again this year, but now we are asked to agree to the repeal of some sections that were earlier this session thought necessary. We have had no explanation of what is to be done regarding land prices if these sections are repealed. The arguments of the Minister of Agriculture on agricultural and other land were plausible; he may have believed them but they hold little water. He said that the attitude of the Premier in his capacity as Prices Minister was that commodities should be available freely and there should be healthy competition. I think the Minister also said that land was different from other commodities. Of course it is. The Premier's argument about the ordinary consumable commodity is valid: it should be available and there should be healthy competition, but the great distinction between ordinary commodities and land is that land is a fixed quantity. Pursuing this argument, the Minister said there was no possibility of a cartel in land, no possibility of cornering land. The object of a cartel is to corner a commodity, or at least restrict its production so as to keep the price at an artificial level. We cannot liken the ownership of land precisely to the operation of a cartel, but there is a similarity because land is a fixed quantity. People holding it know that they can get a good price for it if there is an increase in population. An increasing population means an increasing pressure on land itself and an increasing demand for it. This in turn means an increase in the price of land. That is fundamental.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—The honourable member is not suggesting that that is his idea of a cartel?

Mr. LOVEDAY—One cannot draw an analogy between a cartel and the position of persons owning land, but there is a similarity as regards quantity, because the asset in this case is a fixed quantity. A cartel does not like competition. One cannot increase the quantity of land by any action. While there is an increasing population, the people owning the land know that by holding it they can eventually get an increased price for it.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Does the honourable member know that one can buy a building block in five minutes anywhere within 14 miles of Adelaide?

Mr. LOVEDAY—There are a few minor exceptions, of course, to what I have just said. The Minister said there were a few

places where the value of land had decreased. Of course, that is true. If a town decays or agricultural land is found to be not suitable for its original purpose, then the price can drop; but those are minor exceptions compared with the general position with an increasing population.

The Minister was trying to paint a picture of decreases as well as increases. That is not true. There are a few minor decreases but over the whole field the increases are terrific. He tried to tell us that there was some similarity between land and the ordinary commodities about which the Premier was speaking as Prices Minister, but the similarity is not there. That has been proved by the great demand for land around this city where subdivisions have been taking place. One of today's papers draws attention to the ironical position of the Housing Trust with its housing programme and the demand of young people for land to build houses. Australia has a steadily increasing population because of the steady stream of migrants coming here plus its own natural increases. Those two factors in themselves necessarily keep up land values and will tend to increase them. To be removing these sections from the Prices Act now seems the height of folly. We are entitled to an explanation from the Government of its attitude towards inflated land values in South Australia, for it affects everybody, especially people wishing to get houses and farms. The Minister must know, too, that there are far more people wanting to get farms than there are farms available at reasonable prices. The member for Burra (Mr. Quirke) pointed out the impossibility of getting agricultural land today at reasonable prices. This is just as serious as the position of young people wanting to get married and set up their own homes on their own land. It is one of the most important things in this State today and is one of the greatest factors contributing to our present inflationary situation. I hope we shall hear from one of the Ministers that this matter can be adjourned so that we may have a proper explanation before continuing the debate.

Mr. BYWATERS—I join with the members for Stuart (Mr. Riches), Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) and Whyalla (Mr. Loveday) in expressing amazement at the Government's action in not being specific in its reasons for accepting this Bill out of hand. The Minister of Agriculture on this occasion spoke as the member for Alexandra because he spoke as a private member rather than as a Minister.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—I merely said that the Government's stand had already been given officially by the Minister.

Mr. BYWATERS—That is true. The honourable member said that and then went on to say that he spoke his own private thoughts.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—I said I was speaking on a private member's Bill. Will the honourable member answer a question?

Mr. BYWATERS—Yes, if I can.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Would the honourable member impose land sales controls on the Murray swamps?

Mr. BYWATERS—I do not think there has been cause to.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Why should you worry about this clause in this Bill?

Mr. BYWATERS—The provisions dealt with by this clause have been in the Act for many years and have been considered necessary to the Act by the Government. This year a Bill was brought down to allow the Act to continue for another 12 months, and at the time there was no move by the Government to have it amended by repealing these sections. The member for Mitcham said that last year he asked for an instruction from the House to be allowed to move as in this Bill. He was not given permission at the time because he debated the Bill before he asked for the instruction; that jeopardized his chances of getting our support—he had already spoken. Had he not explained it at that time, we should have given him an instruction, but he had already explained his case. Now we find that he did not ask for an instruction, and he stated in his second reading speech that he felt he would not have had the opportunity. Whether he would have had it would have rested entirely with the Government because the Opposition would have allowed him to give his speech on that occasion. On that occasion the Bill went through with no suggestion by the Government of any amendment, yet here without any explanation the Minister of Lands says that the Government has considered this Bill, has no objection to it, and is prepared to accept it in its present form; yet, 12 months ago when the member for Mitcham asked for an instruction to present this amendment to the Act, the Premier would have opposed it. Now he would have opposed it again but through no fault of his own, as he is unavoidably absent from the Chamber, he is not able to say anything on the matter. It would have been interesting to hear him. I was going to move that progress be reported but I understand that



somebody else wants to speak. As the Government, realizing that this is a private member's Bill, has no intention of moving that progress be reported, I suggest that a private member do so.

Mr. RICHES—The member for Mitcham said that last year he sought the permission of this House to move for an instruction and that we on this side then opposed him. I thought then that it seemed a strange attitude for me to take because I have always voted in favour of members being given the right to introduce a subject. I find that on the occasion of the Prices Act being dealt with last year the member for Mitcham, well knowing that he had no chance of getting an instruction, incurred the displeasure of the Premier.

Mr. Millhouse—You made common cause with him.

Mr. RICHES—I did.

Mr. Millhouse—As you so often do.

Mr. RICHES—The Premier rose in his place on points of order repeatedly because the member for Mitcham, instead of moving that he be given an instruction, went on and completed his speech before the House. I had this to say:—

I want to explain my attitude on the vote I intend to give on this motion. It has been my practice ever since I have been here never to refuse a member the right to move for an instruction to a Committee to discuss a clause.

Mr. Millhouse—I can hear the honourable member saying it now!

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—The honourable member must confine himself to clause 3.

Mr. RICHES—The motion for an instruction, as the member for Mitcham said last year, was the content of clause 3 of this Bill.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—The honourable member must confine himself to clause 3.

Mr. RICHES—The object of the clause is to repeal sections 34 to 42. I went on to explain that I was convinced there had been an abuse of privilege allowed on that day and that the vote I cast then was rather against the argument that the member for Mitcham had adduced in favour of his contention than against the instruction to the House. At this stage, I ask for your ruling, Sir, as to whether this clause is properly before the Committee. The member for Adelaide has pointed out that the House has already dealt with this subject this year; it is already in another Bill. These provisions have been continued in the Act in its entirety this year.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—My ruling is that it is quite in order.

Mr. RICHES—You have not heard my point of order yet! I quite understand that I am out of order before I raise my point of order, nevertheless I insist on raising my point of order, which is based on Standing Order 199 which states:—

A resolution, or other vote of the House, may be read and rescinded; but no such resolution or other vote may be rescinded during the same Session, except with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole House. My point is that any vote taken on this matter would require an absolute majority of the whole House. This subject matter has been debated and voted on earlier this session, but we are now being asked to reverse that earlier vote. I submit that this Bill has the effect of rescinding an earlier decision. I have no doubt that we reaffirmed these very sections and voted on them in the earlier Bill. This Bill, if carried, will have the effect of rescinding that decision and therefore it will be necessary to have an absolute majority. Because of that, I suggest that we can do no other than to adjourn this matter.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—Is the honourable member raising a point of order or asking that progress be reported?

Mr. RICHES—I ask your ruling as to whether an absolute majority is necessary.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—I inform the honourable member that that is not applicable in this instance.

Mr. RICHES—Can we be told why? Parliament voted on this issue earlier this session.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—The House has voted on the Prices Bill and it was passed by both Houses. It was a different question altogether.

Mr. RICHES—This Bill would have the effect of rescinding the measure that we voted for earlier.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—Under section 49 of the Acts Interpretation Act any Act may be altered, amended, or repealed in the session of Parliament in which it was passed.

Mr. Lawn—Standing Orders might just as well be thrown away.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—Order!

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Minister of Lands, as Acting Leader of the House, indicated that the Government supported the repeal of sections 34 to 42 of the Prices Act. The Minister of Agriculture this afternoon conveyed

the impression that he was not speaking as a Cabinet Minister but was exercising his right to speak as a private member.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—I was discussing private members' business.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In fairness to the Minister he gave the impression that he was not speaking as Minister in charge of prices or as Minister in charge of housing.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—Quite so.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—That being so, I suggest that the Minister of Lands defer consideration of Order of the Day No. 2 relating to private members' business until information is obtained from the Minister in charge of housing and prices, particularly on the Housing Trust's intentions regarding land purchases. I move—

*That progress be reported.*

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (9).—Messrs. Bywaters, Clark, Corcoran, Hughes, Lawn, Loveday, Quirke, Riches and Frank Walsh (teller).

Noes (10).—Messrs. Brookman, Coumbe, Hall, Nicholson and Harding, Sir Cecil Hincks, Messrs. King, Millhouse (teller), Nankivell and Pattinson.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Dunstan, Jennings, McKee, Ralston, Ryan, Tapping and Fred Walsh. Noes—Messrs. Bockelberg, Heaslip, Laucke and Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford, Mr. Shannon and Mrs. Steele.

Majority of 1 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. HALL—It is obvious that no member would support inflation, although members opposite misguidedly believe that these sections, which it is proposed to repeal, could combat inflation, whereas I think they are completely ineffective, as was demonstrated by the member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) who, in reply to an interjection, said he did not think the Murray swamp areas in his electorate should be controlled.

Mr. Bywaters—I did not say that. I said there was no need for it.

Mr. HALL—The honourable member reiterates that there is no need for control of the swamp areas. To any country person there is obviously a balance between agricultural land prices.

Mr. Bywaters—If the reclaimed swamps went from £20,000 to £50,000 there would be need for control.

Mr. HALL—Why should the swamps not need control, yet other broad acres need it? I am sure that the return from the capital

investment would be much the same. A big factor is the cost of developing virgin country. Plenty of people, better economists than I, maintain that it is cheaper to purchase high-priced developed land than to buy land in the South-East at a nominal charge and develop it. I am not saying that it is, but there are two schools of thought which are pretty well balanced. The high cost of land is to a great extent balanced by the cost of developing new land, and it should be obvious that we cannot do anything here to bring down the cost of new land very much. If we bring down the cost of developed land by legislation we will restrict the development of new land. I am sure the arguments of members opposite are directed at building blocks. I think they are too costly, but members opposite put forward the socialist cure of restriction.

Mr. Riches—What is your cure?

Mr. HALL—If a greater network of public transport were put into the area south of the Gawler River there would be enough blocks to serve this State until the end of the century.

Mr. Clark—Most of it would not have water.

Mr. HALL—That is up to Parliament. There are ways other than restriction by which the cost of land can be brought down. From previous experience we know that land control was most ineffective because purchasers paid extra money on the side.

Mr. Clark—Don't you think that if transport were made available the price of blocks would immediately increase?

Mr. HALL—Certainly not. I realize that the land may be worth £250 to £300 an acre now as agricultural land, which would mean that it is worth about £100 for each building block, and that it would be dearer when subdivided. We want a large-scale approach to this matter instead of a restrictive measure that does not work. Previous land control, under which money was paid on the side, was a blot on the community.

Mr. Clark—Did you support the continuation of price control this year?

Mr. HALL—That has nothing to do with this Bill. I do not support the retention of these sections.

Mr. Clark—Why?

Mr. HALL—Because they do not work. I can name many instances where, if these sections were implemented, extra money would be paid on the side. I do not like instigating these things through legislation. If the sections are repealed and it becomes necessary to have them reinserted, that can be done. I support the clause.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It would be desirable to dispose of improvements rather than land provided by the Crown for soldier settlement. If that were done we would not be in our present difficulties.

Mr. King—Would you resume this land?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It seems that that would be impossible. I move—

To strike out "Sections 34 to 42 inclusive" and to insert "Section 35".

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—I rule the amendment out of order, as an amendment which is an equivalent to a negative of the Bill or which would reverse the principle of the Bill as agreed to on the second reading is not admissible. The question before the Committee is that clause 3, as printed, be accepted.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Then, in an attempt to retain section 34, I oppose the clause.

Mr. RICHES—Would I be in order in moving under Standing Order 194 that the question be divided as a complicated question so that the sections proposed to be repealed would be dealt with *seriatim*?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—There is nothing complicated in the clause.

Mr. RICHES—The Committee is asked to repeal sections 34 to 42 inclusive and I suggest that that is a complicated question capable of being divided and it is within the powers of this Committee to have that question divided and the sections dealt with *seriatim*. I ask that this question be divided under Standing Order 194.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jenkins)—I rule that it is not a complicated question.

Mr. RICHES—When the Prices Bill was before the House 12 months ago the subject matter now contained in clause 3 was discussed in a motion that a direction be given to the Committee of the Whole House to do the very thing the Committee is being asked to do now and all members opposite supported the Premier and objected to that procedure being adopted. The member for Mitcham then pointed out that the operation of these sections had been suspended by proclamation many years ago. All the argument adduced today in favour of the repeal of these sections was adduced then. It was true that the power was retained by the Premier and the House, on that occasion, believed that he should still retain that power and every member opposite, with the exception of the member for Mitcham, supported that contention by voting that the power was necessary

and desirable and that the Premier should retain it.

What has happened in 12 months to make members opposite change their minds? Earlier in this session another amending Bill was introduced and these sections were again re-enacted. The Premier who was in charge of the Prices Department, having heard the argument of the member for Mitcham last year, having expressed his opposition to it then and having refused, when introducing the Bill earlier this session, to give effect to the representations made by the member for Mitcham, still adopted the same attitude and every member opposite voted for that Bill and again supported the Premier. What has happened between those two events to change the minds of members opposite? They either voted blindly on those two occasions without an opinion of their own or something else has happened to change their conviction.

We read of the astronomical rise in land values, and the possibility of land agents, many of them from other States, making huge profits from the land boom may have given impetus to the move to take this power from the Premier. This is a desirable power in the hands of a Government and it should remain with the Government. The member for Gouger claims it has not worked and of course it has not, because a proclamation was issued 11 years ago suspending the operation of those sections. I suspect that many people who objected to pegging land prices were responsible for the proclamation and those people are now anxious for the repeal of these provisions. Such a repeal would give the green light to those desiring big profits from the land boom. The State generally should know of the changed attitude of the Government, of the fact that members opposite have completely reversed their decision of 12 months ago and that they have completely reversed the view adopted by the Minister when he introduced the first Prices Bill earlier this session.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman—If the honourable member's argument is valid it would mean that any amendment and argument on that amendment would be a reversal of form.

Mr. RICHES—This is not an amending Bill. It is a direct negation of what is in the Act. I read last year's debate and there was a motion for an instruction to consider the repeal of exactly the same sections but the House objected to it. That motion was negated in spite of the advocacy of the member for Mitcham, and the change in the

attitude of members opposite has taken place since the introduction of the first Prices Bill earlier this year. Members have been told that there were difficulties in 1949, but that is as true now as it was then.

Mr. Clark—Do you think an organization on North Terrace has had any influence on the matter?

Mr. RICHES—I do not know, but the reasons I have given indicate why I am voicing the strongest possible protest. Land prices are causing much concern in the metropolitan area and wherever house building is proceeding.

Mr. King—Why didn't you ask for that power to be used?

Mr. RICHES—We did draw attention to it, but the Government must stand responsible for the administration of the law. The honourable member cannot imply that members on this side have not been concerned with the prices of land. When the legislation was re-enacted the honourable member voted for it, but now he has changed his mind and supports the repeal of some sections he previously supported. There should be some explanation. I voice the strongest protest. The overall economic effect is far-reaching. Unless the Government has power to control the prices of land when necessary, it can affect everyone who rents a house. The Housing Trust has already implied that. It can also affect everyone who pays land tax and where corporation rates are based on land tax values. All these matters are relevant to any move that would give the green light to further land speculation.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I have been rather surprised at the heat that this rather innocuous measure has generated, and even more surprised at some of the remarks of honourable members opposite. Mr. Riches made the point that members on this side had changed their minds since last year. Then I moved for an instruction, and if members would take the trouble to read what I said in my second reading explanation of this Bill last week they would see that I explained that. I realized as a result of my failure to get an instruction last year that instructions were out of favour. I made the mistake then of moving for an instruction instead of bringing in a separate Bill, as I have done this year. There is no question of members on this side having changed their minds. They were against me on the question of an instruction and not on the substance of this measure. It is utter nonsense to say anything else.

Members opposite have said that in my second reading explanation I did not give reasons for the introduction of the Bill. We are now going over again the same ground that members opposite covered in the second reading, because this clause is the only operative clause in the Bill. In my speech on the second reading I clearly set out my reasons for introducing the Bill. I said that the sections in question had been a dead letter for 11 years. They had not been used, but they contained the widest powers, which a Government could use if it were so minded. I said it was a bad thing to have those powers in the Act because they could at some future time be abused. When I hear the member for Adelaide, the Leader of the Opposition, and other members opposite saying that we should keep these powers and enforce them, then I am doubly determined in my effort. There are sufficient powers in these sections to wreck our economy in a month, if the Government were so minded to use them. They are a thoroughly socialistic code for the control of all land transactions, if exercised.

It appears from the speeches of Mr. Lawn and the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon that a Labor Government would in effect exercise these powers if it had the chance. I warn all members that these powers would give a Labor Government sufficient authority to impose thoroughgoing Socialism in this State. That is a bad and dangerous power, and that is why I introduced the Bill. There has been no pressure on me from anyone to introduce it, and I certainly have not put any pressure on the Government to support me, because it is ridiculous to suggest that I would be in a position in any case to put pressure on the Government. I believe it is a bad thing to have such wide powers left in an Act. The attitude of members opposite indicates to me that I was fully justified, because they would use these powers if they had half a chance to strangle the economy of the State, as they well could do.

These sections were suspended from operation in 1949, and not once since I have been a member have I heard any member of the Opposition suggest that they should be invoked, although during that time we have seen a pretty steep rise in prices. I suggest that the Opposition has forgotten that the sections were even there. If they were doing their homework they would have known, but it is rather late in the day when it is suggested that we should get rid of antique relics in this legislation that they

should come along and suggest that they were very valuable. Why did not they suggest this earlier? We have heard them prate on the rise in prices of land and other things. Why did they not suggest revoking a proclamation of 1949? I have not had an opportunity to go through the relevant speeches in *Hansard* since 1949, but while Mr. Riches was speaking I looked at what he had said in the prices debate in that year to see whether protestations he now makes about these sections were made by him or any other member in 1949. He charges members on this side with having changed their minds, but what about himself? I have before me a copy of the speech he made on November 9, 1949, I believe about six weeks after the issue of a proclamation suspending the operation of these sections. It was a short speech. Apparently brevity is a gift that he has lost since 1949. There is not one word in his speech about land transactions: he spent the whole time speaking about the price of sugar.

I looked through the *Hansard* index and could find nothing on the subject except a question asked by my predecessor, the late Mr. Dunks, on September 7, 1949, regarding the decontrol of land sales. I cannot cover the years 1950 to 1955 because I was not here, but since that time not one member opposite has ever suggested that these sections should be invoked again. If they are genuine in their protestations now, why have they not suggested in the past that these sections be used? The answer is obvious: they have forgotten they were there, and they are now trying to make political capital out of this Bill which I have introduced solely to clean up the Act because the powers are no longer needed.

I believe that if powers to control land prices are ever needed again they should be introduced in a separate Act of Parliament which can properly be debated in this Chamber and in the other place. That is why I have introduced this Bill, and I suggest that it ill-becomes members of the Opposition to get up, as they have for about three hours this afternoon, and oppose it. They have never even suggested, in their efforts to help the Government in the administration of this State, that these sections should be used. The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) said my Party represented only the landholders in South Australia. That, Sir, is just not true. I was very surprised that he could say, at a time when the Labor Party is apparently angling for the vote of landholders and landowners in the country, that these sections should be kept on the Statute Book so that people who own land can have the prices

at which they sell that land controlled. It was an extraordinary thing for the member for Adelaide to say at this present juncture, yet that is what he said this afternoon and that is what the Opposition has said. It has tried to make a mountain out of what is a very innocent little molehill. I suggest that the opposition to the measure has been totally ill-founded. There is no sinister motive behind the Bill; it is simply that I do not believe—and my belief has been reinforced by the debate this afternoon—that we should leave these powers in the Act when they could possibly be abused at some future time.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Opposition was suspicious that there was a nigger in the woodpile somewhere, and it has now become obvious what that nigger is. The member for Mitcham has said, in effect, that it is not safe to leave these powers in the Act for fear of what may happen in 1962.

Mr. Millhouse—Nonsense!

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Those are the honourable member's own words. He said that it was not safe to leave these sections for any Government to use, and 1962 is the earliest my Party can expect to form a Government.

Mr. Lawn—His was an admission that the Government is on the way out.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The member for Mitcham referred to brevity, and I assure him that I shall be brief. He is obviously fearful that in March, 1962, a Labor Government will be elected to the Treasury benches. I was prepared to go part of the way with a view to helping the honourable member, and I am still prepared to compromise with him regarding section 35, but I cannot agree to the repeal of section 34. The decision of the Chair has been that we cannot compromise in that way, and therefore all I can say is that I shall vote against the whole clause. It is obvious that the member for Mitcham is not willing to leave the sections on the Statute Book because he is fearful of a change of Government in 1962.

Mr. LAWN—At last we have forced the member for Mitcham to give the Committee some explanation. When he introduced the Bill all he said was that these powers had not been used by the Government for 11 years. Opposition members have been attempting all the afternoon to get some explanation from the Government on its reversal of attitude, because it has already passed a Bill this year which embodied the very sections mentioned in this Bill. We have been demanding some explanation from the Minister as to why the Government accepted this Bill. One Minister said

earlier, "The Government has considered this Bill, has no objection to it, and is prepared to accept it in its present form." Another Minister spoke today, but as a private member and not as a Cabinet Minister on behalf of the Government, and the member for Mitcham was therefore forced to get up and try to defend his Bill, because he knows that tomorrow morning, if it does its duty, the press will tell the people that the House of Assembly on Wednesday afternoon passed a Bill without any reason for doing so. That is the truth. It will tell the people that the House passed a Bill repealing the very provisions the Premier had asked this House earlier this session to pass, and which we agreed to do. The only reason advanced by the member for Mitcham was that the powers had not been used.

Mr. Bywaters—The Premier has been silent.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. Admittedly the press could also tell the people that the Premier was away from the House. However, the fact is that the Opposition asked on numerous occasions, and eventually moved, that progress be reported to enable this matter to be debated when the Prices Minister was present, and the Government voted that out by a majority of one. We have been attempting all the afternoon to get some reason why this Bill was introduced. The member for Mitcham was forced to attempt to give the press something to publish tomorrow to the people as to the reasons for the Bill's introduction. It is obvious now that he is acting on instructions from the Liberal Club building on North Terrace to carry out the resolution passed at the Liberal and Country League's annual convention this year opposing all price control. At the time of that convention the Premier had a Prices Bill before Parliament, and that was permitted to go through, yet the member for Mitcham is now beginning to white-ant price control in South Australia. He is no doubt acting in conjunction with the Government, for the Government has admitted it is accepting this Bill. This year apparently we are to see sections 34 to 42 repealed; there will be very little left next year, and by 1962 no price control will remain.

Mr. Millhouse said that Opposition members had charged Government members with having changed their minds since last year. I said that and I say also that they have changed their minds this year, but that is no reason why the Bill should be passed. Mr. Millhouse cannot say that Opposition members are unjust in making this criticism. He has consistently

opposed this prices legislation. I think he has spoken on every Prices Bill that has been introduced, and on one occasion I think he divided the House but he had only one colleague in his opposition to the measure.

Mr. Millhouse said that these sections have been a dead letter for 11 years, and that was the only reason he gave for the repeal of the sections. Then he criticized the present Leader of the Opposition and me and said that we wanted to keep the powers in the Act until 1962. I do not know whether that is the Treasurer's view. It is strange that we should be criticized for wanting to retain them in the legislation. For many years the Treasurer has wanted them in. When Mr. Millhouse criticizes Opposition members he also criticizes the Treasurer, as well as Government members who, since 1950, have supported the retention of the sections. I hope they will be in the legislation until 1962.

Mr. Millhouse said that the sections could be used to wreck the economy of the State. That statement seemed to strengthen the honourable member, and he began to believe what he was saying, for he then said that they could be used to strangle our economy in a month. At the Treasurer's request the sections have been in the legislation since 1948 and I do not think it can be said that they have been used to wreck or strangle our economy. No-one would suggest that it will happen in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, it could be suggested that they could save our economy if properly used by the Government.

Mr. Millhouse also referred to the possibility of the sections being used by a Labor Government to introduce Socialism in 1962. Earlier the member for Gouger mentioned Socialism, but he did not continue with his argument on that matter because he could not do so. Obviously Mr. Millhouse is unhappy about the Playford Government's position in 1962 and is not sure that the Government will be in office again after the 1962 elections. The members for Mitcham and Gouger criticized Opposition members for supporting the retention of these sections. Apparently Mr. Millhouse has a short memory, for ever since I have been a member I have felt that the powers should be retained, and I think the late Leader of the Opposition also suggested to the Government that land prices should be controlled. It was wrong to say that Opposition members did not know that the sections were still in the Act. Earlier Mr. Millhouse accused me of not wanting to proceed with the debate on this Bill last week. I did not know just

how far the Bill went, because copies of it were circulated only whilst Mr. Millhouse was explaining it. That is why I asked for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. Millhouse also said that in 1949 the member for Stuart spoke about land prices six weeks after the matter had been dealt with in Parliament. Obviously Mr. Riches gave the Government an opportunity to show whether it was necessary to control land prices. Clothing was decontrolled at the time I became a member, and I have not criticized the Government for that. Mr. Millhouse could have criticized me for not criticizing the Government six weeks after clothing control was lifted. I gave the Government a fair go and possibly that is what the member for Stuart did in 1949. I am reminded by the member for Murray that last session the member for Semaphore referred to control of land prices, which shows again that Mr. Millhouse's statement was wrong. The same argument applies to him in reverse. These sections have been in the Act since 1948. Why has he not moved previously that they be deleted? Why wait until 1960? The member for Burra (Mr. Quirke) said this afternoon that he was suspicious, but I am more than suspicious, having heard the member for Mitcham just now. He is following the direction of the Liberal Party convention held at the Liberal Party Club on North Terrace in September; he wants to get in and take those controls out before a Labor Government is elected in 1962.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ROAD TRAFFIC BOARD BILL.

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

#### TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### HAWKERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

#### POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Police Offences Act, 1953-1959. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I move—

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

Its object is to prohibit the sale and consumption of methylated spirits. Clause 3 inserts a new section in the Police Offences Act consisting of six subsections. The new subsection (1) will make it an offence to drink methylated spirits or any liquid containing methylated spirits, the penalty being the same as that already provided for drinking in public places. Subsections (2) and (3) reproduce subsections (2) and (3) respectively of section 9 of the principal Act relating to drinking in public places. Subsection (4) prohibits a person from supplying methylated spirits if he knows or has reason to suspect that the spirits are intended for drinking purposes. Subsection (5) prohibits the sale or supply of methylated spirits at any time between 6 p.m. on a Saturday and 9 a.m. on the following Monday or at any time on a public holiday. There is, however, a proviso that a chemist may supply methylated spirits if he reasonably believes that it is intended for external medicinal use. Subsection (6) will define what is meant by methylated spirits.

From time to time requests have been made for the introduction of legislation to control the consumption of methylated spirits and in particular by aborigines. It is for this reason that this Bill is introduced and I believe that it is unnecessary for me to speak at length on the evils of the practice of drinking methylated spirits. The subsection that may need some explanation is subsection (5), placing an absolute ban on sales during week-ends and public holidays. Apparently some chemists have considerable trouble with persons seeking small quantities of methylated spirits after normal hotel trading hours under circumstances which make it quite apparent that it is required for drinking purposes. To leave it to a chemist to refuse on the grounds that he has some suspicion that the liquid is required for drinking purposes is unsatisfactory, and the clause will enable him to refuse and to state that the law prohibits him from supplying it at all. I believe that chemists will welcome a provision along the suggested lines as it will enable them the more easily to dispose of irate customers who tend to become argumentative.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.49 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, November 3, at 2 p.m.