

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, August 24, 1961.

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

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House of Assembly to make provision by Bill for the appropriation of such amounts of the revenue and other money of the State as were required for the following purposes:

- (a) The repayment with interest of the sum of £27,000,000 to be borrowed for the purposes mentioned in the Loan Estimates for the financial year 1961-62, and of any other sums to be borrowed pursuant to the Public Purposes Loan Bill, 1961;
- (b) To make payment from the Loan Fund of repaid Loan money and surplus revenue for purposes mentioned in the Loan Estimates for the financial year 1961-62;
- (c) Any other purposes mentioned in the Public Purposes Loan Bill, 1961.

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING FINANCE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Last night the Treasurer said he would be able to give further information today about the allocation of moneys over and above those provided in the Loan Estimates for housing. Has he that information?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes, I asked the Under Treasurer to prepare a statement setting out in general terms the provision of moneys made available for housing in this State over a period of years. He has prepared a list giving the figures for the last three years and the proposed amounts for this year to give members an opportunity to compare them. Sometimes a person who gets an advance from a building society to build a house purchases it from the Housing Trust, so to that extent there may be some interchange between the amounts, but from the point of view of volume the figures are prepared on a strictly comparable basis. The list is as follows:

1. South Australian Housing Trust expenditure on construction:				
	1958-59.	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62 (Proposed)
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure upon the erection of dwellings, including land, roads, drainage, etc. (but excluding shops, factories, etc.)	10,360,000	10,700,000	11,380,000	11,560,000
2. Advances made for purchase or erection of houses:				
	1958-59.	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62 (Proposed)
	£	£	£	£
Savings Bank of South Australia	3,810,000	5,000,000	4,930,000	5,170,000
South Australian Superannuation Fund	1,090,000	1,260,000	1,230,000	1,250,000
State Bank	3,130,000	5,020,000	4,950,000	4,950,000
Housing Trust	1,410,000	930,000	680,000	750,000
Home Builders' Fund through Building Societies	280,000	430,000	430,000	400,000
	£9,720,000	£12,640,000	£12,220,000	£12,520,000
3. Guarantees under the Homes Act:				
	1958-59.	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62 (Proposed)
	£	£	£	£
	350,000	970,000	820,000	820,000
4. Aggregates of the foregoing figures (which include some measure of duplication).				
	1958-59.	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62 (Proposed)
	£	£	£	£
	20,430,000	24,310,000	24,420,000	24,900,000

As I pointed out, there would be some slight measure of duplication in respect of the guarantees under the Homes Act. Also, in 1959-60 there was a bad lag and supplementary money was made available towards the end of the year. Honourable members will see that the £24,900,000 proposed for 1961-62 is about £500,000 more than last year.

Mr. RYAN: Last night, during the Loan Estimates debate, the Treasurer said that there was no waiting time at present for advances for homes from the Commonwealth Savings Bank. He also said:

The Commonwealth Savings Bank does not now require a person to have a banking account. Some time ago a person had to have a banking account with a credit balance of at least £300 for one year before he could apply for a housing advance, but that condition does not apply now.

Has the Treasurer information that the bank does not have, because late yesterday afternoon the conditions that the Treasurer said did not apply still applied. Can the Treasurer clarify the statement he made last night?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The statement I made last night was based on an answer I heard to a question asked in the Commonwealth Parliament about the qualifications of a person applying for a housing advance. The information about the waiting time was obtained from the Under Treasurer who checked that with the bank yesterday morning.

HACKNEY BRIDGE.

Mr. COUMBE: My question relates to Hackney Bridge, which crosses the River Torrens at Hackney and Walkerville. There is a rather dangerous bottleneck approach to this bridge as one comes from the Walkerville side and proceeds south. Will the Minister of Agriculture take this matter up with his colleague, the Minister of Roads, to see whether the Highways Department can draw up plans to overcome this bottleneck in co-operation with the various councils? Is this matter the responsibility of the Highways Department, the Adelaide City Council, or the Walkerville Corporation, or is it a joint responsibility?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will see that the Minister of Local Government receives that question.

HOUSING TRUST POLICY.

Mr. TAPPING: My question refers to tenants living in Housing Trust houses. I think that all honourable members have recently been approached by tenants at the

moment unemployed, some only temporarily but others indefinitely. I understand that the board of the trust meets every Monday to consider problems concerned with the arrears of rent and in some cases notice to quit is given. That is the policy of the Housing Trust. As the present employment position is somewhat doubtful, will the Premier take this matter up with the General Manager of the Housing Trust to find out whether its policy will, in special circumstances, be to grant such a tenant more weeks of grace in order to give him time to find employment and then, when he does so, to give him a chance to pick up the arrears gradually?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: One obligation of anybody occupying a trust house is to pay his rent promptly. The honourable member realizes that the trust is not a profit-making organization but is out to provide houses as cheaply as possible, and, if some tenants do not pay their rent promptly, others will obviously have to pay more ultimately; so it is the obligation of every tenant of a trust house to pay his rent promptly. I know that if, on account of illness, unemployment or some such reason, a tenant cannot pay his rent, the trust views the problem from his point of view and there have been cases where the trust has taken benign action to help a person in temporary difficulty. The answer is that anyone so affected should make direct representations to the trust, which will consider his case on its merits.

MARKING OF ROADS.

Mr. HEASLIP: My question relates to the lines painted on roads. All members are familiar with the single and double lines, but there is a new type of line which, so far as I know, is not provided for in the Act—the two lines about four feet apart down the middle of certain streets. Until recently, this type of marking came up North Terrace as far as Morphett Street bridge and it has now been extended to the railway station. I have received information that motorists who have crossed the lines have been told that they will be prosecuted if they do it again. Can the Premier say what is the significance of these lines? Do they comply with the Act? Is it an offence for a motorist to cross them?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The matter is specifically dealt with in the Road Traffic Bill before the House. There is some doubt in the present Act about the significance of the lines and the amending legislation will clarify the position.

NANGWARRY LIVING COSTS.

Mr. HARDING: Yesterday, during the Loan Estimates, mention was made of a sewerage scheme for Nangwarry and an improved water supply for the town. It is also known that a new shopping centre has been established at Nangwarry and that a new post office will be erected. Can the Minister of Forests indicate the costs of living of Nangwarry residents?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I can supply answers to the questions the honourable member informed me this morning he would ask. The questions and answers are:

1. Q. What is the average rental per week?
A. Approximately 37s. per week.
2. Q. What charge is made for water?
A. 2s. per week.
3. Q. What charge is made for electric light and power?
A. E.T.S.A., Mount Gambier metered tariff.
4. Q. Is any charge made for council rates or the equivalent?
A. No.
5. Q. Are tenants compelled to spend any money towards maintenance of houses?
A. No.
6. Q. When sewerage is completed, what additional charges will be borne by the tenant?
A. The rate is not yet fixed but if the rate charged by Engineering and Water Supply Department for country sewerage schemes is adopted, it will mean an increase of approximately 1s. per week. The present charge for sanitation is 2s. 3d. per week.

TRANSFER OF PRISONERS.

Mr. LOVEDAY: Has the Premier a reply to my recent question regarding the transporting of prisoners in remote areas?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I have received the following reply from the Commissioner of Police:

Cages are fitted to Holden vehicles only and are used for the conveyance of prisoners at Adelaide, Berri, Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Renmark and Whyalla where they are confined mainly to good roads. The addition of a cage raises the centre of gravity of the vehicle and it is therefore more easily overturned on uneven surfaces.

Land Rovers used in outback areas have a reserve fuel tank installed in the rear compartment and are required to travel over rough tracks. In view of the foregoing it has been considered extremely unwise to fit cages to these vehicles where prisoners would be locked in the cage which would also contain the reserve fuel tank. There are only nine cage cars used by the police (in the towns mentioned

above); at the other 173 stations the security of prisoners is effected, if necessary, by the use of handcuffs.

WHEAT EXPORTS.

Mr. HALL: Last season we were fortunate to clear the Australian wheat crop through good sales overseas, but this may not always be the case and we may have to trade on a competitive market. It would be advantageous to present our product in the best possible light and it would be presented much better to buyers if the sample were clean and free of all impurities. Does the Minister of Agriculture know of any discussions in the Agricultural Council on this matter and whether the Wheat Board has considered it?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I have had many discussions about the inspection of grain for export, which is carried out by the Government Produce Department. The inspection is of a high standard and much attention is paid to the subject. The best thing would be for me to get a full report from the General Manager of the Produce Department. I will give it to the honourable member as soon as it is available.

LAND TAX ASSESSMENTS.

Mr. TAPPING: My question relates to land tax assessments, and I hasten to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that it does not concern the amendments on members' files. Because of the steep increase in assessments this year, hundreds of people lodged objections to the amount determined by the Commissioner of Land Tax. In many instances, to my knowledge, the objections were dismissed. Those who appealed were informed that under section 52 (4) of the Land Tax Act the Board of Review "shall give a decision and may either confirm the value assigned to the land in the assessment or reduce or increase that value". The notice concluded with the following words:

If you request that the decision be referred to a valuation board for review, it will be necessary to lodge a deposit of ten shillings as provided by section 52 (1).

Will the Treasurer consider deleting the provision for a 10s. deposit because, if a person lodges an objection, the assessment may be increased, and it is unfair that if this is done the deposit shall be lost entirely?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The board does not sit for nothing; these appeals are costly. The sum which is, I believe, provided under the original Act, is a moderate cost for the appeal and, I believe, is refunded if the appeal is successful.

COTTAGE HOMES.

Mr. LAUCKE: Will the Premier say whether there is any set priority for allocating cottage homes provided by the Housing Trust in country towns for persons of limited means?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The trust takes into account several factors. I will get a list of the matters considered in making the allocation for the honourable member.

TAILEM BEND WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. BYWATERS: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the dual control of the water supply at Tailem Bend?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I examined the docket and found that much progress had been made in the investigation but that much more was involved than at first appeared to be involved. Because of the larger area of the town to be served as a result of development in the area, when re-organization takes place it is intended that the areas developed shall be included in the scheme. Also, many small mains laid previously by the Railways Department are inadequate and must in turn be replaced. It is necessary to have a scheme bigger than might hitherto have appeared necessary and to start right back at the pumping station and increase its size, with all the consequent provisions, including chlorination of the supply. I assure the honourable member that progress is being made, the staff is working on the design, and the investigation will be carried on until a scheme can be brought to me for consideration.

GAWLER SEWERAGE.

Mr. CLARK: Has the Minister of Works a reply to a question I asked on August 10 about the possibility of a sewerage scheme for Gawler?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The sewerage of Gawler was referred to the Public Works Committee some years ago, but the committee's inquiry was adjourned pending the adoption of the Bolivar sewage treatment works and the construction of the Elizabeth trunk sewers. Now that these are approved, the scheme for Gawler has been resuscitated and the proposals will be ready for resubmission to the Public Works Committee within a few months.

SOLOMONTOWN BEACH WALL.

Mr. RICHES: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the Solomontown beach wall?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: It is intended to seek approval for this expenditure in this year's Budget, and the General Manager of the Harbors Board has informed me that, if approval is given, he can physically fit this into his programme and do the work in about March next year.

FOOTHILLS WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Some people desire to build houses on high levels in and around the metropolitan area, and the Engineering and Water Supply Department has permitted some emergency water supplies on condition that the necessary pipeline is provided by those house builders. The department's position is becoming further aggravated because those people sometimes take water from their supply to a friend who wants to build on an even higher level. Can the Premier say whether it is practicable for the Government to evolve a plan whereby information could be provided to councils such as those of Burnside, Mitcham and Marion about where tanks are to be erected and indicate to people the level they must keep under if they desire a water supply?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Leader's request is one which, I consider, the Minister of Works would not be able to accede to. The Minister has been able to give an emergency supply to some places, but that supply is not rated or guaranteed. People have been able to connect up at some places in the foothills and obtain emergency supplies, but those areas are actually outside the water district. If the Minister excluded those from a map there would immediately be the statement that the map was not accurate, and if he included them he would automatically make himself liable to supply them with water in the future. What we have done—we have given as much publicity as we can to the move and I hope it can be publicized even more—is to set aside an officer whose special duty it is to advise people desiring to buy blocks anywhere outside the water district whether they have a reasonable opportunity of being serviced. That officer is willing to give individual advice to anyone who may be contemplating purchasing a block or building along the western slopes of the Adelaide hills. Although it is not practicable to supply the map the Leader appears to suggest, the information is available and repeated warnings have been given.

Mr. Frank Walsh: A few more warnings would not do any harm.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: If it were possible to do it, I should agree with the Leader. The Government is actively taking up a case where an advertisement issued by a land agent had stated that water was available when no water was available and there was no prospect of its being available. The Government is considering whether to proceed against that land agent for misrepresentation, in the interests of warning land agents that they are not to sell land under false representations to unsuspecting purchasers.

EYRE PENINSULA WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. BOCKELBERG: Earlier in the session I asked the Minister of Works a question about the water supplies on Eyre Peninsula. Since that time beneficial rains have been received. Can the Minister indicate the latest water position at the Tod River reservoir and at Kimba?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: In the last 10 days or so the position at the Tod has improved somewhat. From memory, the Tod is now holding about 800,000,000 gallons, which is about one-third of its capacity. As I announced earlier, steps are being taken to bring into operation the first part of the Lincoln Basin Scheme so as to ensure that the load on the Uley-Wanilla scheme and the Tod River is within limits for the coming summer. The position there is safeguarded and has improved by reason of some intakes into the Tod. Speaking from memory again, the position at Kimba is that the reservoir and the tanks already there are storing in all 7,000,000 gallons, which is a good storage at this time of the year and one which, I am sure, would ensure an adequate supply to the town of Kimba during the coming summer. In the meantime, the programme for the additional storage tanks at Kimba is well in hand, and it may be possible to store more of the reservoir water in one of the tanks which I hope may be completed in time to take water towards the end of the summer.

ADELAIDE PARK LANDS ALTERATION BILL

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to place under the care, control, and management of the Corporation of the City of Adelaide certain lands situated within the boundaries of the City of Adelaide. Read a first time.

APPRAISERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is a fairly simple Bill designed to remove an anomaly from the Appraisers Act. That Act requires all appraisers to be licensed but by section 4 exempts persons "duly licensed according to law to act as auctioneers". The Auctioneers Act provides, among other things, that an auctioneer's clerk duly licensed under that Act may act as an auctioneer, and the result is that not only are auctioneers exempted from being licensed under the Appraisers Act but also their clerks, who become licensed or registered without any particular formalities. Moreover, a clerk's licence may be transferred to any clerk upon payment of a small fee.

While, if valuations are done by clerks in the name and on behalf of the principal auctioneer, the latter accepts full responsibility, it is the view of the Government that it was not the intention of the legislation that clerks should be entitled to make valuations in their own right or in their own name. The present Bill by clause 3 makes it clear that only persons licensed as auctioneers are to be exempt from the requirements of the Appraisers Act.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is a simple Bill containing only one substantive clause which amends the principal Act by inserting therein a new section to enable the Treasurer to execute a further guarantee to the Commonwealth Trading Bank for a repayment of an amount not exceeding £500,000, being the whole or any part of the loan to be made by that bank to South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited upon terms and conditions similar to those covering the guarantee already made by the Treasurer in pursuance of the principal Act. Honourable members will recall that some five years ago the Commonwealth Trading Bank made a loan of £1,000,000 to the company on the security of a floating charge over the company's assets supported by a guarantee for £500,000 given by the State Government pursuant to the principal Act. By the end of this year it is expected that the company will

have purchased and built silos with a total storage capacity of just over 17,000,000 bushels at a total cost of £3,500,000. To complete the planned storage capacity of 30,000,000 bushels, over 12,500,000 bushels of storage capacity will be required.

The company is repaying £88,000 per annum in reduction of the original loan; and further silo construction depends upon tolls and charges in respect of wheat received, and its income from this source is in turn influenced by seasonal deliveries. To enable the company to proceed with its programme for silo construction, it recently sought the assistance of the Government in an approach to the Commonwealth Trading Bank for a further loan of £1,000,000. Following representations by the Government, the Commonwealth Trading Bank recently agreed to make the additional amount available to the company on the condition that the State Government should provide a guarantee for £500,000 as before. The object of the present Bill is to enable this to be done.

I believe that honourable members need not be informed of the importance of the grant of assistance in this matter. All are aware of the fact that this affects one of our principal industries. Apart from increases in the cost of cornsacks (the use of which, incidentally, in the absence of adequate bulk handling facilities, involves an annual loss of something like £1,500,000 in overseas balances), the availability of adequate silo storage would facilitate rail handling, prevent risk of loss and deterioration of grain, ease the strain on shipping and assist in the proper treatment of bulk grain. The loan which is sought by the company is, moreover, designed only to accelerate the programme and indeed it is expected that repayment would be made in full within a period of five years. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its principal object is to make some concessions concerning land tax payable on land used for primary production. The Bill will also reduce the present rates of land tax on all land exceeding £5,000 in value. In addition, the Bill abolishes the absentee land tax and provides that no tax is to be payable when the amount of the tax would be less than £1

(instead of 5s. as at present). The first and most important of the amendments is effected by clause 7 which introduces a new section into the principal Act, section 12c. The new section provides that the Governor may by proclamation declare any area in the State to be a defined rural area. Any taxpayer liable to pay tax on any land within a defined rural area may then apply to the Commissioner for a declaration that his land be declared rural land. If the Commissioner is satisfied that the land is land used for primary production, he can make a declaration accordingly and the taxpayer is then to be charged with land tax assessed on the basis of the unimproved value of the land considered as land used for primary production. The object of this special provision is to give a measure of relief to genuine primary producers who are using their land as land for primary production, where the land is situated in an area which, owing to subdivisional or other commercial activities, has increased considerably in value.

Honourable members will appreciate that it is, to say the least of it, unfair for a primary producer who has perhaps been farming on his land for a number of years and who intends to continue to do so, to find himself suddenly faced with a great increase in his land tax merely because the general area in which his land is situated happens to have increased in value as subdivided land. The new provision will enable such a *bona fide* primary producer, who does not desire to sell or use property for subdivisional or other commercial purposes, to continue to pay a rate of tax based fairly and squarely upon its real value to him as primary producing land.

In making this available however, it has been necessary to provide for safeguards. Accordingly subsection (3) of the new section provides that a declaration will remain in force only until the next quinquennial assessment by the Commissioner, after which the primary producer must, if he desires to continue to enjoy the concession, apply for a renewal of the declaration, satisfying the Commissioner, as before, that the land is still being used for primary producing purposes. Further, subsection (4) empowers the Commissioner to revoke a declaration or a renewal of a declaration at any time if he is satisfied that the land is no longer used for primary production.

Subsection (6) provides that, where the Commissioner revokes a declaration, or refuses to renew a declaration, or the taxpayer's land is transferred or conveyed to any other person, or the taxpayer has not applied for a renewal,

the land tax at the higher rates normally applicable to land in the area immediately becomes payable in respect of the immediately preceding five years. This subsection will thus operate to protect the genuine case and to prevent a taxpayer from taking advantage of the concession over a long period and then deciding to take advantage of enhanced prices by disposing of his land or using it for purposes other than those for which the concession has been granted. Of course, if the land declared ceases to be within a defined rural area because the Governor has revoked his proclamation in respect of that area the provision for back payment does not apply, because it is not the fault of the taxpayer that he cannot apply for a renewal. I believe that these provisions provide adequate safeguards against any abuses in connection with the concessions.

The other concession relating to land used for primary production is provided by clause 4 which amends section 11 of the principal Act to provide for a statutory exemption of £2,500 progressively reducing to nil at £6,250. Thus subsection (2) of the amended section 11 provides that where the unimproved value of all the taxpayer's land—that is, not only farm lands, but also other lands—is £2,500 or less, the statutory exemption will be the value of the farm land. Where the value of all land of the taxpayer is between £2,500 and £6,250 and all the land is land used for primary production the statutory exemption is £2,500 less two-thirds of the amount by which the unimproved value exceeds £2,500. It will be seen that this formula results in the disappearance of the exemption at a total value of £6,250. This is provided by subsection (3). Where, however, only part of the taxpayer's land is land used for primary production there is a proportionate reduction for tax purposes based on the ratio of the unimproved value of the farm lands to the unimproved value of all the lands. This is provided by subsection (4). These provisions, of course, have no relation whatever to the special provisions as to basis of assessment provided for in the new section 12c, with which I have already dealt, but are additional and apply to all farm lands whether they are declared or not.

The general concession is provided by clause 5 which will reduce the present rates of tax by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound for values of all land between £5,000 and £80,000. Clause 6 makes a consequential reduction in regard to partially exempt land provided for in the principal Act.

The absentee land tax is abolished by clauses 3 (a) and (e), 5 (1) (3) and (4) (a), 6 (2), 9, 10, and 11. The Government has decided to abolish this tax because it appears somewhat anachronistic to be imposing such a tax when the investment of overseas capital in the State is being actively encouraged. In any event the amount paid does not justify the cost of administration and collection—the estimate for the current financial year would be only £315—and under modern conditions of travel it is practically impossible to police the provisions of the Act. The last amendment, which is effected by clause 8, is to raise the minimum tax from 5s. to £1.

Clause 12 provides for the application of the amendments to the current financial year; subclause (2) is a necessary machinery clause to enable applications for declaration of rural land to be made by October 31 next. I mention also clause 3 which defines land used for primary production along lines similar to those adopted in the Succession Duties Act Amendment Act of 1959.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CITY OF ENFIELD LOAN) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

By the Local Government (City of Enfield Loan) Act, 1953, the Municipal Council of the City of Enfield was empowered to borrow £250,000 for certain drainage works. Early in this year the council asked the Government whether it would consider the introduction of an amendment to the special Act to authorize the council to borrow a further £250,000, if, of course, the Savings Bank were willing to make an advance. The council pointed out that works already completed provide for the disposal of storm waters through the land east of the main north railway and that a similar project was envisaged for the western area. The scheme would provide drainage for Croydon Park, Ferryden Park, Woodville Gardens, Mansfield Park, Angle Park and Wingfield. The council felt that it was a permanent work which ought to be done and this Bill is accordingly now being introduced. The Savings Bank has, I understand, been approached and is agreeable to making the further advance.

The Bill merely substitutes the amount of £500,000 for £250,000 in the long title and enabling section of the principal Act, the provisions of which are of a continuing nature and will apply in respect of the new as to the old loan. As this is a hybrid Bill it will require reference to a Select Committee in accordance with the Joint Standing Orders.

Mr. JENNINGS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ARTIFICIAL BREEDING BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to establish a board (to be known as the Artificial Breeding Board) to establish, maintain and operate artificial insemination centres and to promote the use of artificial insemination in the breeding of stock. The Bill is introduced following the report of a Special Advisory Committee appointed in April of last year by the Government to consider future policy on artificial breeding in the State. That committee, under the chairmanship of the chief of the division of animal industry of the Department of Agriculture, consisted of four producers and breeders, a veterinary surgeon, the chief inspector of stock and chief dairy adviser of the department and in addition a veterinary officer of the department as a co-opted member. The names of members of the committee may be of interest to members. The chairman was Mr. M. R. Irving; members were the Hon. G. O'H. Giles, M.L.C., and Messrs. I. R. Elliott, T. E. Downer and J. S. Adams, producers and breeders of stock. Also on the committee were S. L. Niederer, a veterinary surgeon in private practice; Messrs. W. S. Smith (Inspector of Stock) and A. G. Itzerott (Chief Dairy Adviser), both from the Department of Agriculture, and Mr. C. G. Durney, minute secretary. The committee examined material from all States and some overseas countries, invited and received submissions from interested persons and organizations, and placed a full report to the Government in November last. In brief, the committee unanimously recommended the establishment of an artificial breeding service, the authority to consist of a board representative of producers, businesses and veterinary interests.

I shall now make some comments about artificial breeding of livestock which, although not in the original report, may be of interest to members, especially as this Bill is the first

measure of this nature to be introduced in this State. The practice of artificial breeding of animals is not by any means new; the first recorded case was when an Italian scientist in 1780 artificially inseminated a bitch. In 1919 a Russian scientist started work on the artificial breeding of stock, and the Russians, I believe, have developed this to a high degree, not only for large stock, but, according to their own claims, to a widespread degree in sheep.

In the 1930's the development really took hold in many countries, notably the United States and Denmark. The latter is a dairying country. Dairying countries are the most interested in this subject, as artificial breeding is more easily and usefully applied to dairy cattle than to other kinds of stock, although it can be applied to most types of animals, and certainly to horses, sheep, and farm livestock generally. Normally, with natural matings, a bull could probably account for about 30 to 50 cows a year, whereas, with artificial breeding under properly controlled conditions, this could be increased to an enormous extent. Although it may not be practically possible, it is theoretically possible that there could be at least 100 conceptions from one ejaculation if the techniques were properly carried out, although in practice the figure would not be nearly as high as this. The present standard of techniques would not enable anywhere near as many conceptions as that. When it is considered that a bull would normally serve probably five cows a week, one can imagine the tremendous number of conceptions that could take place from a properly organized technique of artificial breeding.

Artificial breeding of livestock in South Australia within the next year will probably involve about 10 per cent of the total number of cows. The present sources of semen are all from interstate. We have had some difficulty in getting semen because sometimes the supply does not come when it is wanted, and we are setting up a semen collection centre at Northfield, where the Agriculture Department is to start an experimental farm. A semen collection centre is now being constructed which will house in the first instance six, seven or eight bulls, all of dairying breeds, and which will supply semen for the programme we have, probably supplemented by semen from interstate. The breeds that will be represented in this collection centre will be according to the expected demand; roughly speaking, there will be the number of bulls of any breed that we expect the demand to call for. After collection, semen is deep-frozen and diluted with

egg yolk or milk, which makes it considerably more durable under deep-frozen conditions.

Mr. Casey: How long will it keep?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Theoretically it can be kept for a long time—certainly for generations of livestock. From my limited knowledge I do not believe that deep-frozen semen has a short life; I think it can be used years afterwards. However, for practical purposes, the normal supply at present available would all be used quickly. Deep freezing of semen appears to present no problems, although it has been noticed that semen from certain individual animals cannot retain its viability under deep-frozen conditions; however, that is a comparatively minor problem. The semen that is collected, diluted and deep-frozen is inseminated into the cows in various groups throughout the State. The rate of conception is about 60 per hundred services. Under present conditions, the Agriculture Department is running the artificial breeding service.

In all, 9,000 cows are being inseminated annually, and within a short time 15,000 will be inseminated annually at four centres. Those centres, as at present constituted, will be Mount Barker, Myponga, Murray Bridge, and Eight Mile Creek. The cost of the service is £2 10s. a cow for up to three services. It is considered that 60 per cent of the cows will take the first time. When necessary, there are second and third inseminations in that cost of £2 10s. It means that there will be more than 90 per cent conceptions from the three inseminations. In the case of the other 10 per cent, services would only be granted again after examination by a veterinary surgeon, because obviously those cows would be lacking in some respects and would require some veterinary attention, or they may not be capable of being fertilized at all.

As I said before, the cost of this service is £2 10s., but actually it is estimated that under natural mating conditions the cost of impregnating a cow on a dairy farm would be about £3 10s. The advantages are not merely in the cheapness of the service. Not having to keep a bull, particularly on a small farm, makes room for one other head of producing stock, and it is cheaper in the sense that there are no heavy yards to be maintained as is necessary with dairy bulls. The other factor the dairy farmers consider important is that of safety. As is well known, dairy bulls are somewhat treacherous, and every year we seem to have tragedies in our dairying

areas because somebody is gored. This service will be a considerable help in making dairy farms safer for the farmer.

I shall not burden the House with a detailed account of the committee's report, but would mention that there has been an insistent demand for some years for the widespread adoption of artificial breeding throughout the State. A pilot unit was started in 1958 in the centre based on Adelaide. In 1959 centres were established in the districts of Mount Barker, Myponga and Eight Mile Creek, and with further expansion during the past year a total of some 9,000 cows were artificially bred; and, indeed, so great has been the demand that the Government recently approved of a further extension. In its report the committee estimates that a State-wide artificial breeding service would within 10 years expect to face a demand of the order of some 50,000 cows. The advantages of artificial insemination over natural breeding are, briefly stated, a reduction of infertility problems, improved control of diseases, a wider availability of better sires, a reduction in the number of bulls kept on farms, and, in general, better husbandry practices.

The committee therefore recommended that some permanent form of organization should be established. It considered a wholly departmental service, a partial departmental service, a co-operative authority, semi-Government instrumentalities and other forms of organization. Taking full account of the structure and practice of the dairy industry in this State, it came to the unanimous conclusion that the most practical organization would be an artificial breeding board along the lines of the proposals in this Bill which, as I have said, will establish an authority that will take over the experimental service hitherto conducted by the Department of Agriculture with the land, livestock, structures and facilities which the Government has been establishing at Northfield. With regard to finance, the committee estimated that within two years of commencing operations the proposed board's annual income should approximate £80,000 and should exceed £120,000 within five years. The committee therefore reported that the proposed authority would require financial assistance to cover capital costs and running expenses for a period of up to five years, within which it should become self supporting. I believe that the principle of the Bill will be supported by all members of this House, since the establishment

of the proposed authority will make a great contribution to one of the State's important primary industries.

I come now to the main provisions of the Bill. Clauses 4 to 12 inclusive provide for the establishment of the board which will consist of a chairman and four other members. One of the members must be a veterinary surgeon holding the qualifications set out in section 17 (1) (a) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and at least two of the other four are to be persons whose business is the raising of stock. The qualifications of the veterinary surgeon member are that he be the holder of a degree or diploma in veterinary surgery of the Royal College in Great Britain or any university in Australia or New Zealand. The chairman and members will hold office for four years but will be eligible for reappointment.

Clauses 8, 9 and 10 deal with casual vacancies, quorum, and the validity of acts of the board. Clause 12 deals with meetings of the board. Clause 11 provides for remuneration of the board, which, however, together with all costs of administration of the Act, are by clause 16 to be paid out of revenue received. Clauses 13, 14 and 15 provide for appointment of a director and staff with provision for superannuation. Clause 17 provides that the board is not to be a department of the Government or to represent the Crown, nor are the chairman, members or employees of the board to be subject to the Public Service Act.

Clause 18 empowers the Treasurer to make advances not exceeding in the total £150,000 during the first five financial years of the board's existence to enable it to meet initial expenditures. As I have said, it is anticipated that the board will become a going concern within about five years of its commencement, but it is obvious that to enable it to operate during that period it will need Government assistance. Clauses 19, 20 and 21 provide for accounts and an annual report, while clause 22 empowers the Governor, a Minister or other public authority to permit the board to use land, buildings or plant or equipment. Clause 23 provides that the Public Supply and Tender Act shall not apply to purchases by the board. The duties and functions of the board are set out in clause 24. Clause 25 applies the Stock Diseases Act to the board and its operations, and clause 26 empowers the making of regulations.

This Bill does not establish an outright monopoly, and there is nothing to prevent other persons or organizations setting up artificial breeding services within the State provided

they comply with the provisions of the Stock Diseases Act. So there is not an absolute monopoly in this board set up here. On the other hand, with the facilities available the board should be able to provide a competitive artificial breeding service that will be economic to the dairy farmers.

The other point that should be emphasized is that, whilst dairy cattle is the main live-stock considered at present, there is no reason why in later years artificial breeding should not be spread to beef animals or other types of farm livestock. I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Mr. FRANK WALSH obtained the adjournment of the debate.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 23. Page 555.)

Woods and Forests, £1,200,000.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): Has the Treasurer the information I requested last night?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): The answers to the honourable Leader's questions are, I think, along these lines. The softwood timbers grown in the South-East are particularly suitable for certain purposes but, as our timber is at present being milled from trees not very old or mature, we have some difficulty in getting the timbers accepted for other, particularly structural, purposes. The specifications for many lending houses do not include (and we have not been able to get them to include) *pinus radiata* as a structural timber in the matter of money being advanced for a programme of work. So it is a matter of not saying "This is a good structural timber" but of getting the public to understand the qualities of the timber.

The second disability is that much of the timber we are now using is young as regards maturity in softwood timber. Many imported trees being used as structural timber are 80 or even 100 years old, but here we are milling for various purposes many trees under 30 years of age, so it is not at present possible to get *pinus radiata* accepted as a structural timber for many uses. The Housing Trust, which has always been a supporter of South Australian materials, has not been able to use *pinus radiata* where it has to rely on selling a house and getting an advance of money. Each year henceforth we shall have an increasing use for our timber. We have had the timber

accepted in its fullest sense as flooring timber and for making cases and boxes for packing; we have had it accepted now by the Railways Department for sleepers, in the fullest sense, without any qualification at all. Creosoted timber is being accepted by the Railways Commissioner as a first class product.

Mr. Quirke: That would be older timber?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: No, not particularly old, but for creosoting the wood must be soft as penetration is not possible without a soft wood.

Mr. Quirke: I was speaking of sleepers.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: For sleepers the wood is entirely satisfactory and the Railways Commissioner is expanding his use of it. It is saving the importation of timber from overseas and particularly timber from Western Australia, although it is not yet entirely taking its place as we have not been able to supply all the timber required. Creosoted timber is now being accepted completely for fencing posts. It is becoming a real boon to the primary producer for this wood has a long life. The chemical process toughens it and it is very fire-resistant.

Mr. Harding: It can be driven into the ground?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes, except in stony soil. In ordinary circumstances it can be driven into the ground. It is being increasingly accepted. The honourable Leader will see from what I have said that the Government is exploiting fully these timbers. As regards employment, the Government is anxious to avoid any retrenchments of the staff employed there. We gave a general direction that we wanted the planting increased to 6,000 acres a year. We achieved 6,000 acres this year though there was at one time a doubt whether we would reach 6,000 acres this year. When I explained this previously, I said it was intended to plant 5,000 acres. That is a conservative estimate. We have taken advantage of the dull conditions to reconstruct our saw mills at Mount Burr and have used our own labour for that. That reconstruction is now completed but we are arranging for the surplus staff now available at Mount Burr to be taken up on our planting operations to boost to the full the 6,000 acres we intend to plant this year. I assure members that the Government has done its utmost to protect its employees from the unemployment position, and I do not think any employees have been dismissed.

Mr. RALSTON: The Government has done its best to retain staff during this difficult

period for the timber industry, but what has happened is that the Government has not replaced the employees who have voluntarily left the department's services. The total number of employees has been reduced. The Treasurer said that no employees have been dismissed, but I think a few have been dismissed recently since the planting season closed. The quantity of timber expected to be taken in log form from the State forests will increase from 190,000,000 super feet to 200,000,000 super feet, of which 106,000,000 super feet will be processed at departmental mills and 94,000,000 super feet at private mills. I believe that that estimate is wishful thinking. In a question on August 15 I quoted letters I had received from the South Australian Sawmillers' Association stating that unless something urgent were done with the Tariff Board there would be large-scale dismissals, and I referred to the need for the Government to make submissions to the Tariff Board. The Treasurer replied:

It has never been the policy of the Government to make representations to the Tariff Board in relation to inquiries held on applications by an industry for tariff protection. That is obviously a matter between the Commonwealth authority controlling the tariff protection of the country and the industry concerned.

It is possibly the Government's policy when a private industry is making submissions and the Government is not directly interested, but on this occasion the Government, as the biggest producer of radiata pine in Australia, is a directly interested party. It is time its policy was changed. It should have initiated the representations to the Tariff Board and not remained on the sidelines while the private millers accepted the burden of approaching the board. Most private millers draw their requirements from the State forests. It is folly for the Government not to participate in representations designed to protect our South-East forests. I have an official report on the sales of radiata pine for the 22 weeks ended June 30, 1961 (which is the working period from the Christmas break to the end of the financial year) compared with the same period last year. In Victoria the sales were 56.8 per cent of the previous year; in South Australia, where the Government has the support of the Housing Trust, the sales were 80.6 per cent of the previous year; and in New South Wales, where private millers pioneered the sale of radiata pine, the sales were 34.3 per cent of the previous year. It shows that the total sales of the Radiata Pine Association of Australia during that six

months compared with the previous six months were only 68.1 per cent. We have lost practically one-third of our sales in that period. Anyone with any sense of business responsibility would say that it was time we did something about it. Is it not time that the Government started to play its hand and did something to protect this most important industry? In view of the continued falling off in the use of this timber in Australia, does the Minister think that the estimate of an increase to 200,000,000 super feet, 10,000,000 more than last year, is fair and just? I should say that sales will be down by at least one-third and possibly more unless the Government changes its policy of non-intervention in a matter that so seriously concerns the people of South Australia. Has the Government real confidence that that quantity of timber will be milled and if it is not, what effect will it have on the returns to State revenue, compared with the returns of previous years? Can the Treasurer say what will be the position unless there is a quick change in Government policy toward a rapid recovery of sales?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works): The honourable member has been at some pains to inform himself of the recent position of the timber market in respect of radiata products and quoted certain figures, which show that the activity in the industries which absorb timbers has been maintained at a much higher level in South Australia than in the other States. The Estimates have been prepared and I think the honourable member will accept that they must be on a norm. He asked what would happen if we did not reach the norm. That is a thing the Treasurer has constantly to face. He cannot make a forecast that is not subject to alteration by conditions that develop. In the light of circumstances, I think the Estimates as produced are reasonable. As the Minister of Forests has now returned to the Chamber, perhaps he would like to say something on the matter.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Forests): The Woods and Forests Department not only helped private forestry interests to prepare their case for an increased tariff on imported timber, but actually gave evidence on the question of an import quota for timber. It felt that as we import such a large proportion of the timber used, we would not get a higher tariff and this view was borne out by the Tariff Board itself and I think it showed that the department judged the position correctly.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Earlier today I tried to ascertain what would be the Government's policy in relation to the use of this timber for scantling purposes for brick veneer houses. The reply was that for structural usage the timber was not as old as imported oregon. The Treasurer was not in a position to tell me whether an approach would be made for the use of timber of desired dimensions, as apply to oregon. It would perhaps be necessary to use 4in. x 2in. *pinus* in roofing to equal 4in. x 1½in. oregon, but, even so, we would be utilizing our own products. I hope that the Minister will be able to organize the milling of this timber in the way I have suggested.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I recognize that the Leader has a knowledge of building; therefore, his comments will be closely considered by the Forestry Board. Flooring and case timbers are our biggest lines, generally speaking. For some years case timber has had considerable competition from cardboard cartons in the fruit industry, and the board has been active in meeting that competition. Its sales manager has travelled widely, has installed systems in packing sheds for the various companies using timber, and has arranged visits to the South-East of executives of packing sheds to show them its virtues. That is good salesmanship, but it does not overcome the fact that there is serious competition. Flooring, one of the biggest lines produced by the department, until recently was selling well, but it has suffered from the slackening in demand in the building industry in the last few months. Weatherboards are produced in considerable quantities, but this line has also been affected by the slackening in the building industry.

The Woods and Forests Department has never produced scantling timber in any quantity, but in recent years has paid more attention to it, particularly in regard to producing it at a later date. Until recently there has not been an urgent need to sell forest products; however, the department has been preparing for the time when it may want to produce scantlings. Radiata pine scantlings provide many problems which can be overcome but which nevertheless must be faced. To this end the chairman of the Forestry Board and, I think, two officers of the department (certainly the milling superintendent) visited New Zealand some months ago largely to study the treatment of radiata scantling timber there. Since that trip there has been an increased emphasis in the department

on the use of scantling timber. It would be comparatively easy to produce small quantities of scantling timber—as, indeed, small private mills can do easily—but producing it on a large scale requires great organization to ensure that it is produced economically and, above all, that the quality is tip-top. If it is not, it is better not to produce it, and it is to that end that the Forestry Board and the department are working. Hardwood scantlings, which in the past have had a willing market, naturally have a big start over radiata pine, but the department believes that radiata, properly milled, dried and treated, will produce good quality scantlings, and it is working to do that now. Any comments made by the Leader and any other member are studied by the department to see if some instructive suggestions that perhaps have not been brought to its attention can be gleaned from them.

Mr. RALSTON: I am pleased to know that the department is attempting to provide for future markets. The Treasurer said that the age of timber had a big bearing on the results when it was offered for sale. That was true in the past, but it is generally agreed that the proper milling age of radiata pine as grown in the South-East is about 40 years, and we have reached that cycle of milling. Much of the timber that is being clear felled and milled is 40 years of age. Although some people doubt its quality for structural purposes, it was used for all the subflooring of the Cross Road bowling alley, in this building 20,000 feet was used, and the variation from absolute true could not be more than one four-hundredth of an inch. No other timber in the world remains at comparative trueness better than *pinus radiata* under these conditions. The timber came from private milling interests in the South-East. The statement that *pinus radiata* is not suitable for structural purposes does not hold good, for it has been used in the State Bank building at Mount Gambier and in the Cross Road bowling alley, where it must be true under all conditions. The growth of timber in any country is dependent upon climatic conditions. The timber trade believes that *pinus radiata* will produce as much super feet of growth in Australia in 40 years as it will in a Sandinavian country in 80 years. This information came to me from the previous manager of Cellulose who established Apcel. He is well versed in timber knowledge.

The Minister said that the Woods and Forests Department had asked for the reimposition of a timber quota that the Menzies Government

had taken off last November, but had made no representations to the Tariff Board for an emergency tariff. I do not know why that should be so, unless it was Government policy. Cellulose, Australian Paper Mills and other Australian pulp firms made representations to the board for an emergency tariff and were successful. The Government has a large shareholding in Cellulose and it was happy for that company to make the representations to the board, but in connection with its timber it will not make representations. I do not know why the Government should act in this way. In connection with the timber it could have acted the same as Cellulose and other paper pulp industries.

Mr. Hall: Do you believe in forcing people to use *pinus radiata*?

Mr. RALSTON: Doesn't the honourable member realize that his constituents are, as taxpayers, as greatly interested in *pinus radiata* as are people who live in Mount Gambier. I am fighting for people in his electorate just as much as for people in mine. In this matter I am glad to have the support of the member for Victoria. Can the Minister say whether, following on representations to the Tariff Board, protection has been given to our *pinus radiata* industry?

Line passed.

Railways, £2,600,000.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I hope I will be given answers to my queries about ways and works, ballasting, and rolling stock, particularly sleeping vans. In earlier remarks about these vans I said that employees in the carriage shop at Islington workshops had indicated that it was most unlikely that caboose car frames would be used in the construction of sleeping vans. I understand that it is now intended to use the under-frames of coaches known as side loaders. Because of the diesel equipment used in passenger services the tradesmen have suggested that suburban cars be used. They do not want to alter the plan of the sleeping vans. I understand that the overall length was to be about 30ft., and that there would have been an enclosed workshop area at one end measuring 17ft. x 5ft. Now it is intended to have an open space of 8ft. at either end, but I do not know how that would make a good workshop. The tradesmen estimate that they could save about £3,000 for a van. Has the Minister been able to obtain that information? I believe that the two 900 horsepower diesel electric locomotives have been purchased at a cost of £180,000 for the West

Coast railway system. Last night I asked what sums could be put on these Loan Estimates in an effort to relieve the unemployment position. Two projects could be considered and the first is how much extra could be used for houses? This was the subject under discussion last night when I sought a postponement of discussion on a line, but I shall not again argue the housing question. The other important matter on which I seek the Minister's assistance refers to the two diesel locomotives to be used on the West Coast railway system. Are these locomotives to operate between Wandana and Thevenard?

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: Yes.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I am surprised that no mention is made in the Loan Estimates of extra money to be provided for essential repair work on the existing track on the West Coast. If provision were made for that work, employment could be given to some men who are out of work and who may desire to go to the West Coast on that project. I have a *Weekly Notice* which prescribes speed limits between Wandana and Thevenard for steam trains of 15 miles an hour and even, in some places, of 10 miles an hour. The maximum speed in one section for diesel rail cars is 30 miles an hour. All the information contained in this *Weekly Notice* indicates the condition of the track. In some places the speed limit is as low as five miles an hour for both steam and diesel locomotives and, if the diesel locomotives are geared, I suggest that they will not be able to operate out of first gear. They certainly could not be used at their normal speeds with resulting normal efficiency on this track.

I link up this question with other matters that I asked the Government to consider. These Estimates should have provided funds for the improvement of this line. This *Weekly Notice* is dated August 14, 1961, and I doubt whether much improvement has since been made to the line. Thevenard and Port Lincoln are each mentioned and speeds are restricted on either side of Port Lincoln to a limit of five miles an hour. The line from Port Lincoln to Duck Ponds is subject to a limit of 10 miles an hour. This notice represents an instruction to drivers of the locomotives who usually change from steam to diesel operation as required. The condition of the track obviously causes these reduced speeds, but so little mention is made of reconditioning the track which is so bad that instructions must be issued to the drivers to ensure that the vehicles will not be run off the rails.

Can the Minister indicate whether any money will be provided to rectify this position under "Way and Works"? Can he also indicate the purpose behind taking men normally employed in a gang to renovate railway men's accommodation and placing them in another area to erect a camp? No effort has been made to provide for the camp that was to be established for this type of work. I should be pleased to know if the Minister of Works has the information I sought about the sleeping vans to be made at Islington and the state of the railway tracks in the Port Lincoln division, and whether he can tell me anything about the way and works gang that was engaged on the West Coast system.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Obviously, I am unable to go into the technical details of several matters raised by the Leader. As far as I can interpret the position, the sleeping vans are simply to provide additional and improved accommodation for workmen. I have no technical information on the subject, but I am sure the Railways Commissioner would be pleased to have the Leader's comments. Regarding the diesel locomotives for Eyre Peninsula, I did have an informal discussion with the Commissioner some time ago and I understand that, because of the expected increase in gypsum traffic resulting from the improvements effected to the gypsum company's plant in the Thevenard division (in which, incidentally the Harbors Board has completed and is operating a bulk handling system satisfactorily, and that system is also able to take wheat) such reconditioning and improvement of the line as is necessary to accommodate those trains will have to be done in that area. Regarding the intimate details of the movement of men from one point to another and the establishment of camps and so on, I am obviously unable to answer the Leader.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I spoke on these matters a week last Tuesday, when I said:

It is proposed to use 23 underframes from what is known as the 900 class coaches . . . I would be pleased to know the estimated cost of these because I believe 10 will be commenced this year and the tradesmen estimate that they could save £3,000 per van.

I pointed out that an amount of £80,000 was placed on the Estimates for the construction of 10 workmen's sleeping vans to give better accommodation. Seeing that I voiced those views over a week ago, surely I am entitled to some information on these matters. It is not

for me to say whether the Railways Commissioner should have reported to the Minister of Railways what his plans were, or whether the Minister knew anything about these matters. Does the Commissioner merely say: "I am going to do this; I want £80,000 for this, so you as Minister of Railways take it up with Cabinet"? Surely I am entitled to some consideration in this matter. I did not mention these matters for fun; I did so because I wanted information. A deputation of workmen from the Islington workshops waited on me and pointed out that they believed they could save at least £3,000 on each unit and do a better job. That is in black and white in *Hansard*. Is the Commissioner going to say that my proposition is not worthy of consideration?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I apologize to the Leader. I could not find information on these things amongst the Treasurer's papers, but I have now found in his bag a report from the Commissioner which I think contains the information the Leader requires. The report states:

The programme for the provision of workmen's sleeping vans includes the reconditioning and re-equipment of 30 existing vans, and the provision of 45 new van bodies which will be mounted on existing underframes obtained from surplus rolling stock. Of these 45 new van bodies, 15 will be fitted with workshop space and will be mounted on the underframes of retired end loading suburban cars. The remaining 30 van bodies, which would be without workshops, will be mounted on underframes of retired caboose and "900" class cars which are shorter in length than the underframes of end loading suburban cars. These bodies will be of steel construction. The £80,000 included in the 1961-62 Loan Estimates provides for the construction, mounting and fitting of 10 new van bodies as well as the Loan proportion of the expenditure involved in reconditioning and re-equipping five existing sleeping vans. This expenditure presents the first part of the total programme. It appears that the saving of £3,000 per van suggested by the Leader refers to a proposal to use the existing suburban end loading car bodies rather than build new ones.

I am advised by the Chief Mechanical Engineer that these existing bodies are not suitable for the purpose and that considerable work would be involved in placing them in good order after stripping and repositioning the windows, partitions, etc., to suit the van layout. I am satisfied that the proposals I have approved are more satisfactory than those suggested by the Leader.

Dealing with track maintenance in the Port Lincoln division, the report continues:

Provision in the Loan Estimates for work on the tracks on the Port Lincoln division was made under the heading "New Works—annual

provisions", and it is anticipated that the Loan expenditure on relaying and ballasting will amount to £50,000 during 1961-62. The greater part of the rehabilitation work is provided for under extraordinary maintenance and is included in the working estimates. An expenditure of £145,000 during the current financial year is contemplated. The policy of relaying the tracks on the Port Lincoln division will be pursued within the limits of the resources available year by year.

Mr. RICHES: An item on page 6 states:

Way and Works—Ballasting, relaying, buildings, platforms and stockyards, station yards, signalling and safety devices, main lines, bridges and culverts, drainage etc.—£543,000.

Is that where provision should be made for the removal of the railway lines from Ellen Street in Port Pirie? If so, can the Minister of Works say whether provision has been made in that sum for that work; if not, can the Minister comment on the reason for its omission?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Obviously, £543,000 would not be sufficient to do the work suggested in addition to the work mentioned in that item, but it could well include an amount for the commencement of that work during this financial year. That is all I can say for the moment. However, I will try to ascertain how much, if any, of this £543,000 is for that purpose and, if there is none, what other provision is to be made.

Mr. TAPPING: Referring to the amount of nearly £2,000,000 on page 6, I commend the railways and congratulate the staff generally for the way in which it has expedited the service between Adelaide and Outer Harbour. Only this week I timed the journey from the city to Port Adelaide at 20 minutes, which is about nine minutes faster than under the old system. If I may suggest how railway revenue could be increased, I shall say, first, that fares are too high in South Australia. It may be said that wages and overheads generally have increased but, as our railway service is often used to only 25 per cent capacity, if fares were reduced patronage would increase and provide a better financial return. If the Railways Department advertised its improved services, it would do better than previously. Years ago the department had excursion fares on Wednesdays and at week-ends. That practice could be reintroduced to produce greater revenue, for more women would use the railways to travel to and from town for shopping. The Railways Commissioner should consider this suggestion with a view to securing greater patronage.

Nearly £1,000,000 is to be spent on 23 diesel-electric locomotives. We must try to get a reasonable return for such expenditure. The Railways Commissioner tends to dispense with the services of men at stations along the various lines. For instance, at Peterhead no-one is on duty so the patron is obliged to buy his ticket on the train. That dispenses with labour and reduces costs but, even so, the fares are exorbitant. Then many workers without cars travel to and from work in the cars of other workers. The Railways Commissioner could regain much traffic by reducing fares. If this were done at week-ends with excursions, more people would travel to Victor Harbour and similar places, thus boosting railway revenue.

Mr. RICHES: Can the Minister give me any information about the Government's programme for the provision of diesel railcars? There is a line for improvements to diesel railcars, but no line for any increase in number for country services. The Minister of Works will remember that the honourable member for Port Pirie (Mr. McKee), speaking on behalf of some members on this side, has referred to the service operating between Adelaide and Port Pirie, complaining that the department cannot cater for the reasonable requirements of the northern areas because it has not sufficient diesel railcars at its disposal. Frequently passengers, who expect to travel in a modern railcar, are obliged to travel in old rolling stock. This has been the subject of complaints from the Port Pirie council, the member for the district, and other parties. There is no provision for additional diesel railcars in these Estimates. Has the Minister any knowledge of the department's programme in this regard?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: As far as can be assessed no substantial programme has been planned for additional diesel railcars. The Railways Commissioner has reported generally on the diesel equipment in his department and if he had any comment to make about new diesel railcars he would have mentioned it. I will make inquiries for the honourable member.

Mr. RYAN: The Railways Department apparently does not regard the Port Pirie service as a connecting link with the east-west system. In hot weather it is one of the worst services in Australia. Last year the member for Burnside complained about it and, as a result, the department authorized the trains to stop at Bowmans for refreshment purposes. However, that was no improvement. I have

had to travel to Port Pirie to connect with the east-west service when the temperature has been 105 degrees. I have changed to the modern air-conditioned carriage on the east-west train where the temperature has been 72 degrees. The situation is worse for passengers when they have to leave an air-conditioned carriage to enter a carriage that has been standing at the station in the heat for a long time and in which the temperature can be 115 degrees. If the Railways Commissioner could hear the comments of the passengers forced to travel under such conditions he would try to overcome that criticism. People should be encouraged to use our railway services. During the summer they lose patronage because people will not travel in such poor conditions.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: An amount of £180,000 is provided for two diesel-electric locomotives for the narrow gauge. Can the Minister of works inform me whether these will be used on that section of line from Thevenard? I should be pleased to know what is intended with the construction of workmen's sleeping vans. If I understood the Minister's reply, some of the cars mentioned by the tradesmen employed at Islington will be converted. This position will need clarification, because I do not want there to be any misunderstandings. I understood that it was intended to improve the Port Lincoln division. During the Governor's Speech we heard of the bountiful harvest on the West Coast, and members have referred to the wonderful work performed by the railway employees in transporting that crop. Could further money be allocated to this division to enable necessary repairs to be made and thus to employ men? This would ease the unemployment position. The Tasmanian Premier has suggested that the money being expended on unemployment relief could be used in providing employment. Men prefer to work for their living.

There are two ways to meet the position and one would be to repair the track. I have already suggested to the Government how additional money could be raised for certain works, but my suggestion did not meet with favour. I am not in a position at this stage to move a vote of no-confidence in the Government by moving for a reduction in any line on the Estimates. An attempt should be made to put the Eyre Peninsula railway tracks in reasonable condition. I believe that men could be induced to go over there to work if they were provided with proper camping facilities or with emergency housing that included reasonable conditions. I know that

the Minister of Railways appreciates the position. Some of the money provided on the Estimates will probably not be used for eight or 10 years, and that money could be made available for this work on Eyre Peninsula which is of vital importance.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I appreciate that the condition of the railway tracks on Eyre Peninsula is sub-standard. I know the line very well as I have travelled over it for many years. I also know that there are more than 500 miles of line on Eyre Peninsula, and before big diesel engines could be used on some sections a tremendous expenditure would be involved to rehabilitate the tracks to the required standard. Keen as I am to see the service improved, I am also aware that this year the system handled expeditiously and satisfactorily a greater tonnage in six months than ever before. I have already paid a compliment to those who operate the service, as I know they have been careful and have delivered their loads and kept the freight moving under conditions which I fully realize are not always favourable. It is not possible to do a job of that magnitude in a short time, but in his minute to me the Railways Commissioner said that he was carrying out the programme to the maximum extent possible, and from my discussions with him privately I believe that to be so.

Line passed.

Harbors Board, £1,700,000.

Mr. RYAN: A sum of £30,000 has been placed on the Estimates for a wharf for the plaster company. Normally, when an amount is appropriated to create work I would be one of the first to agree. Will the Minister of Marine consider suspending the expenditure of this money and not commence the work? I am pleased that some members of the Public Works Standing Committee are present to hear my comments. I believe that the amount has been placed on the Estimates by the Harbors Board for an ulterior motive—to try to get members of that committee to change their opinion on a recommendation that may be unacceptable to the board. In my Address in Reply speech I mentioned that for about 30 years the board had been the interfering body and unfortunately its views have been accepted by the Government in deciding where certain outlets and bridges should be provided on the Port River.

In 1956 the Public Works Standing Committee recommended that the Jervois Bridge should be replaced with a new fixed type

bridge; yet we find that in 1958, after the recommendation had been referred back to the committee, the Harbors Board renewed a lease on part of its property with Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd. for a further 21 years, to expire in August, 1979. This sum of £30,000 is proposed to be spent on the reconstruction of an old, dilapidated wharf, one of the oldest in Port Adelaide. What a farcical position the Government would be in and especially the Harbors Board, if the committee brought down a recommendation along the lines recently suggested for filling in the basin between the existing Jervois and railway bridges. The board would have spent £30,000 on the wharf, without there being any water to get ships up to it. If the Public Works Committee recommended that the Jervois bridge should be replaced with a stationary bridge, a crane would be necessary to lift the plaster to the company's works. In view of the Harbors Board attitude over many years and its interference with recommendations by committees, I think it has asked that this amount be provided so that it will get its own way by having a concrete case to put before the Public Works Committee. The board does not care whom it treads on, and it wants an opening bridge on this site. The proposal to fill in the basin is a good one. I have been told that 30 acres would be reclaimed and that the value of the land would be between £12,000 and £15,000 an acre.

The so-called experts of the Harbors Board have said that keeping this portion of the Port River open as a sea lane is essential, but I have never heard such a ridiculous statement. It is used only by the *Kopoola* for transporting plaster to the plaster company and by the *Southern Endeavour*, and both these operations could be shifted elsewhere. The Harbors Board used underhand methods to reconstruct the cable company wharf, which is used by the *Southern Endeavour*, in order to indicate the absolute necessity for having an opening bridge there. I mention this in the hope that the Minister will see the wisdom of deferring any authorization for commencing this project at least until a decision is given by the Public Works Committee. I do not want the committee to be put in the position of having to accede to the board's request merely because this £30,000 expenditure has been authorized.

Mr. Quirke: That would not top the committee.

Mr. RYAN: Perhaps not, but it would be a terrific bludgeon for the board to use. This matter has been considered by the Public Works Committee for many years. People in the district and those who understand the position hope that the committee will soon decide on this important matter. They do not want obstacles placed in the way of a decision, but if this work were done it would be an obstacle. This wharf has been falling down ever since I have known it, yet, when good proposals are put before the committee to overcome a problem that has existed for many years, the Harbors Board suddenly wants to erect a new wharf for one company only. Even though this expenditure may be approved, I ask that this work will not be commenced until it can be seen that it will be useful.

Mr. TAPPING: An amount of £450,000 is provided for the purchase of a new bucket dredger. Will the Minister say whether a contract has been signed to procure this dredger, whether it is being bought overseas and, if it has not been contracted for, whether it will be possible to have most of the component parts obtained in South Australia to alleviate unemployment?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Marine): A contract has been signed for building this dredger and in the process of the investigation great care was taken by the Harbors Board to protect the position the honourable member outlined. I cannot, from memory, give a breakdown of the various costs of items that will be fabricated in the Port River area as against the total, but the principle broadly is that all the assembly will be done in the Port River by our own people, and much of the fabrication will be done by workmen employed in this State. The contract has been let to a Queensland company but, as a result of negotiation, much of the actual work will be done by South Australian labour. I am not sure what progress is expected in this financial year, but I can obtain that information for the honourable member and provide it in reply to a question if he wishes to raise the matter later.

Mr. QUIRKE: The member for Port Adelaide mentioned the Public Works Committee. He has a point about the proposed reconstruction of the plaster company wharf, and as a member of the Public Works Committee I say that the rebuilding has evidently been approved for some time whereas the filling in of the basin is a comparatively new project of which the board was probably not aware when it

proposed this rebuilding. I think the board can be absolved from any accusation of ulterior motive.

Mr. TAPPING: In connection with the allocation of £60,000 for land acquisition, can the Minister of Marine tell me where the land has been acquired, and what formula is used in acquiring land, compulsorily or otherwise? For Harbors Board purposes land was acquired in the Osborne area, and I supported the move, but I am concerned about the formula that was used in the acquisition. On the land the Housing Trust has provided excellent houses, which has helped the district to progress considerably. In those earlier days hundreds of people told me that they objected to the system adopted by the board in acquiring the land. I understand that Sutton Limited, estate agents in Adelaide, negotiated for the board. On many occasions I asked the board whether some of the prices offered by Sutton Limited (like £50 for an Osborne block) could be increased, and in most instances the board agreed to a better price.

Let me refer to a case in the Port Adelaide court. An Osborne man had three or four allotments compulsorily acquired. The Harbors Board offered £1,000 for them, but he thought that was insufficient. Under legislation the board took the case to court and the magistrate said that the £1,000 was a fair price, so the matter was settled that way, but when he received his land tax assessment he discovered that the department had valued the land at £2,500. Can the Minister give me the formula I desire?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Land acquisition is always a matter that causes heartburn. I am always reluctant to sign a document serving notice on an owner. Few people like to part with their land unless they receive a very attractive price for it. In the pursuit of Government activities it is necessary to acquire land, and the Act under which the Harbors Board operates in land acquisition was framed to protect both parties as much as possible. The final determination is always made by the court.

I am aware of the case mentioned by the honourable member. The court gave a judgment which settled the matter because there was no higher authority to which either party could appeal. Land tax assessments are quinquennial assessments and in the five years land values can increase steeply. That man exercised his full right and had the case dealt with by the highest authority possible. He had to

accept the court's judgment. That is the practice adopted, so far as I am aware, and by and large it operates with reasonable satisfaction to both parties.

Mr. RYAN: I do not retract my statement about the plaster company wharf. In 1956 the Public Works Committee recommended that a fixed bridge replace the present Jervois Bridge. In 1958 the plaster company, which was on Harbors Board land, was given an extended lease for 21 years. I do not quibble about the extension and I accept the statement that the Public Works Committee is now considering the reclamation of the Port River between Jervois Bridge and the railway bridge following on a recent suggestion. The 1956 recommendation was not accepted because the Harbors Board interfered. The mistake that is now admitted was not admitted in 1930 because the Harbors Board, with ulterior motives, influenced the Government to alter a decision because the board had entered into an agreement with the Adelaide Steamship Company, which has now practically disappeared from the shipping map. Why does the Harbors Board want the work done six years after the Public Works Committee recommended a type of bridge that would not have meant expenditure on the wharf? The board knows that if the same recommendation came back within the next six or 12 months the proposed expenditure of public money would be a waste. The board knows that the matter of reclamation is under consideration, so I have not brought forward a new proposal. The Public Works Committee's recommendation that was not accepted by the Government could once again be a recommendation from the committee.

For about 10 years the Harbors Board has been continually approached about providing at least some of the amenities sought for waterfront employees. The position there is vastly different because the Harbors Board is only an intermediary and someone else is the employer.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: The member knows that matter is in hand right now.

Mr. RYAN: The Minister knows, too, that numerous representatives of the Government have agreed to a certain standard of amenities when they have gone to other States but they will not agree to the same standard in South Australia. This matter has been under con-

sideration for years in South Australia and we have the ridiculous position of a tribunal here saying that it is willing to provide minimum standard amenities. The Harbors Board agrees with that statement but the tribunal, although it said that this standard would be awarded if that could be done, also stated that amenities could not be awarded. This work on the plaster company wharf will ultimately prove to be unnecessary and therefore the money provided for it will not be needed.

Mr. CUMBE: I assure the member for Port Adelaide that members of the Public Works Committee are aware of the position he has outlined and that the committee's decision will not in any way be influenced merely because money has been placed on the Estimates, nor will the committee be influenced by ulterior motives. I have great respect for the Harbors Board officers and I refute the suggestion that they are activated by ulterior motives. The Harbors Board is faced with the possibility of having to do this wharf work and it knows that a report of the Public Works Committee is likely to be presented this financial year for an opening bridge or a tunnel, but a line must be placed on the Loan Estimates or the work cannot be undertaken if it is found to be necessary. If the committee recommends that the land be filled in the line will still be all right.

Mr. Ryan: Even if the work takes two years!

Mr. CUMBE: If an opening bridge were recommended the water would have to be used to enable vessels to proceed while the work was being undertaken. The Harbors Board must put the money on the line if the work is to be started, otherwise it cannot be undertaken at all.

Mr. RYAN: Does the £69,000 for sundry works include, in this financial year, the provision for the commencement of the construction of amenities that the board has agreed should be placed on the Port Adelaide waterfront?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.27 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 29, at 2 p.m.