

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, June 13, 1963.

The SPEAKER (Hon. T. C. Stott) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PULP AND PAPER MILL (HUNDRED OF GAMBIER) INDENTURE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution: That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Pulp and Paper Mill (Hundred of Gambier) Indenture Act, 1961, and for other purposes.

I express my thanks to members opposite for enabling me to bring this matter before the House at such short notice. In the circumstances that I will explain, members will see that it is an urgent matter, and I thank them for the courtesy extended to me.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

The SPEAKER: I draw attention to the fact that this Bill is a hybrid Bill within the terms of Joint Standing Order (Private Bills) No. 2, and in the absence of any suspension of Standing Orders it should be referred, after its second reading, to a Select Committee of the House.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I appreciate that fact, Mr. Speaker, but I assure honourable members that the only question to be dealt with is an alteration of the time for one clause to come into operation. Under those circumstances, I move:

That the Standing Orders and Joint Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages without delay and without the necessity for reference to a Select Committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I bring this before the House as an urgent matter because of a cablegram I received just before 10 o'clock this morning from Mr. Frank Brown, who is a senior director of MacMillan Bloedel & Powell River Limited and who has been appointed by the board of that company to conduct negotiations with the South Australian Government regarding the establishment of the industry here. The cablegram is as follows:

Re letter 3rd instant. Plan going out to Australia to discuss matters further at your convenience late this month or early July. In meantime can the Parliament extend date for notice in clause 3 of section 2 of Harmac's contract of October 12, 1961, until December 31, 1963.

Obviously, the cable should read "clause 2, section 3"; there has been an inversion of those figures. I have discussed this matter with the company on two or three occasions and it has been the subject of some correspondence. Honourable members will remember that under the original arrangements the company had until the end of this month to say that it would not go ahead with the proposals, otherwise it would be liable to carry out the agreement in its entirety. In other words, it had until June 30 to pull out.

When it decided some time ago that it would not proceed with the agreement it ceased negotiating and testing, and important contracts with forestry companies were not concluded. In fact, when the company lost interest in this project all of the matters then proceeding were dropped; consequently, now that it is again interested, some of the essential work has not been completed. The company asked for 18 months in which to complete this work, but I said that Parliament would consider a delay of 18 months too long. I suggested that Parliament would probably be prepared to accept a proposal for an extension to January 31 to enable the company to finalize various matters before committing itself.

If this extension were not granted I fear that the company would be obliged, because it has not concluded its agreements, to give a notice in accordance with the section I have quoted, and that would mean starting afresh with the Indenture and the other proceedings before the matter could be re-opened. Under those circumstances, I believe that, in the interests of saving time and of re-opening many matters already negotiated and agreed to by Parliament, this extension of time should be granted to enable the company to complete its negotiations with other authorities, to complete its investigations, and to give a firm answer whether it desires to proceed or not.

Only one clause of the Bill has material bearing on this question. The short title has no particular significance. Clause 3, the operative clause, states:

Notwithstanding the provisions of subclause 3 of clause 2 of the indenture set out in the schedule to the principal Act, the time for the giving of notice as provided in that subclause is hereby extended to the 31st day of December, 1963.

All that Parliament is merely being asked to do is to extend the period for six months as set out in clause 2 (3).

The Parliamentary Draftsman's explanation of the Bill is that the object of it is to extend the time within which Harmac (Australia) Limited may give notice terminating the operation of the agreement between the company and the State relating to the pulp and paper mill in the South-East.

Honourable members will recall that the agreement which was made in October, 1961, was approved by Parliament under the Pulp and Paper Mill (Hundred of Gambier) Indenture Act of that year. Subclause (3) of clause 2 of the agreement provides that if the company should find it impracticable or inexpedient to construct the mill and gives notice of that fact before the 30th of the present month, both parties are discharged from their obligations under the Indenture.

There are some matters still under negotiation in connection with the proposed mill and I have been asked by the Canadian interests which are backing the venture for an extension of time within which the company may give notice that it does not intend to proceed. Honourable members will see that if the time is not extended the company is in the position of having to give notice of termination before the 30th of this month otherwise it will be bound by the provisions of the agreement. I believe that all honourable members will agree that every effort should be made to enable the company to take up the project if it can see its way to do so. The director of the Canadian interests has cabled me that he plans coming to Australia to discuss matters further late this month or early in July, and has requested that an extension of time for the giving of notice of termination be extended to December 31. The Government considers this to be a reasonable request. The Bill accordingly provides that notwithstanding the provisions of the Indenture the time for the giving of notice is extended to that date. This means that the company will have a further period of six months in which to investigate the matter fully and it is my hope that arrangements satisfactory to both parties will be made during that period. I should perhaps add that it may be that some amendments to the Indenture or to the Act will be required later. If so, they can be incorporated in an amending Bill later in the session. Although there is some inconvenience in submitting this matter at such short notice, I was pleased to receive this cablegram because it

clearly indicates that the company has a renewed and real interest in this project. I believe that, given the short increase in time that will enable it to make full investigations, the result will be fruitful for South Australia.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I support this Bill and indicate that my colleagues have agreed unanimously to the suspension of Standing Orders to enable its passage. Any development in this State which involves new industry and provides employment will be considered sympathetically by members on this side. There appears to be a renewed interest by the company, and my Party is prepared to help the Government to amend the necessary legislation in anticipation that negotiations will be carried to a successful conclusion.

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

QUESTIONS.

SULTANAS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Regulation 142 of the regulations issued under the Weights and Measures Act provides for certain goods to be sold in 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14oz. and 1 lb. packs. On February 26, from a delicatessen in Pirie Street just east of King William Street, I purchased a pack of sultanas labelled 1½oz. These packs were on display. Sultanas normally retail at 2s. 6d. a lb., but these small packs sell at 6d. There is no provision for inside wrapping in cellophane or other paper and the price charged is equal to 5s. 4d. a lb. Can the Minister of Lands say whether he has at any time since becoming Minister agreed that sultanas should be sold in small packs contrary to the regulations? Did he receive any correspondence from the Weights and Measures Branch or from any of the merchants who may be processing or selling this type of food pack and, if so, when did he give authority for the sale of this type of pack?

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE: Without referring to the docket I cannot supply the precise date an application was lodged with me. These packs have been sold in every other State of the Commonwealth, each agreeing that sultanas could be sold in 1½oz. packs pending the decision of the committee that is sitting in Melbourne to determine uniform regulations for Australia. I received an application requesting that South Australia concur in the arrangements that had been

made in other States and evidence was presented to indicate that every other State had agreed to such an arrangement. In conformity with the practice in other States and despite the existing regulations—and a similar regulation obtained in all other States—I granted permission for these packets of sultanas to be sold in South Australia until December 31, by which date the uniform standards should be available.

Concerning the price of 6d. for these packs, I think the Leader will agree that the packaging of small items causes additional cost. These sultanas are processed at export prices, which are lower than home consumption prices, and the price enables their sale with a minimum of profit. It has enabled the sale of large tonnages of sultanas in small packets. Sultanas have a nutritive value far in excess of many items, notably sweets, that children can purchase for 6d.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: We, as a Parliament, are responsible for the formulation of Acts of Parliament and regulations and, as far as I know, it is laid down that, if an amendment to a regulation is contemplated at any time, the proposed amendment shall come before Parliament. In this case the Minister of Lands assured the House, if I heard him correctly, that he had ignored the regulation. Is this the right way to proceed? I do not want to appear to be roasting anybody but, in view of the Government's responsibility to the people of this State, will the Premier examine the position as regards the selling of 1½oz. packs in the light of the present wording of the relevant regulations, which have been approved by Parliament?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The general provision with regard to regulations is, I believe, set out in the Acts Interpretation Act—that regulations come into operation as soon as they are assented to by Parliament and remain in operation until disallowed by Parliament. There is also special provision regarding local government and one or two other matters, but I think the Leader of the Opposition would appreciate that if, for instance, the railway employees worked strictly to regulation the trains would not run to time. A regulation strike is the most effective way of stopping anything. We have to meet opposition that may arise from time to time and most regulations involve certain administrative concessions.

In this case, there was an interstate conference and a request was made by one of our most important industries, which was agreed

to by all State Governments, both Labor and Liberal. The request was to provide a useful form of food in a small package which did not, at that moment, technically comply with the regulations of any State in the Commonwealth. All States had a general regulation of a minimum 2oz. pack, but all the States agreed that, pending an alteration of the regulation and the introduction of a uniform regulation, they would not take official action against this particular concern. I do not see that much violation is involved. Any honourable member or member of the public could, if he so desired, institute proceedings. I personally agree with the Minister's not instituting proceedings in this case, because the operation involved is desirable and required by one of our largest industries. As far as I can see, it is doing no-one any harm.

LEAVING HONOURS CLASSES.

Mrs. STEELE: Some weeks ago when I was in Darwin I had the pleasure of meeting some of the Northern Territory Legislative Councillors and I was asked by several of them to ascertain whether a Leaving Honours class could be established at the Darwin High School. I understand that the staffing of such classes is the responsibility of the South Australian Education Department. I inquired as to the number of students available for such a class and was informed that there would be about 40. The Governor's Speech referred to the establishment of additional Leaving Honours classes in country and metropolitan schools. As it would involve an extra year's expense to send a child south from Darwin to do the Leaving Honours year, particularly if a child was to go on to the university for tertiary education, can the Minister of Education say whether it is intended that Darwin should have a Leaving Honours class and, if not, could consideration be given to establishing such a class there?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: The matter is under consideration at present and the Director of Education will be going to Darwin in August for discussions with the Administrator and the Superintendent of Education for the Northern Territory. No doubt when he returns later that month he will report to me; and I hope it will be a favourable report.

Mr. CLARK: A few weeks ago I introduced to the Minister of Education a deputation from the Elizabeth Parents and Friends' Association and the Elizabeth High School Council seeking a decision on whether a Leaving Honours class could be established

at Elizabeth next year. Has the Minister had an opportunity to make a decision on the matter?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: Yes. As the honourable member is aware, at the beginning of this year Leaving Honours classes were established at Glossop, Nuriootpa, Henley and Seacombe High Schools, and the Whyalla Technical High School. After consultation with the Director of Education, I have approved Leaving Honours classes being established next year at Elizabeth, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Plympton High Schools, and at the Adelaide Technical High School. We are also considering the claims of Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Victor Harbour, Murray Bridge and Kadina. I do not know whether we shall be in a position to establish any of these five additional classes next year but, if not, they will be established in the following year. Definitely, the classes will be established next year at Elizabeth, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Plympton High Schools, and the Adelaide Technical High School.

TOURISM.

Mr. RYAN: Last week a historic event took place when the paddle steamer *Marion* was transferred to its last resting place at Mannum. This created much interest in South Australia and about 10,000 people went to Mannum to see the final berthing of the *Marion*. As there is much clamouring for tourism on the River Murray, will the Premier, as Minister in charge of the Tourist Bureau, investigate the possibility of providing a passenger boat on the River Murray to attract tourists from other States and overseas?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I believe the honourable member's suggestion has a sound backing. I have much knowledge of the River Murray gained over a long period, and I believe that everyone who has ever come within the scope of its charm will agree that it offers an outstanding opportunity for showing a really attractive feature of the Australian continent to tourists and visitors from overseas. I do not know whether it will be practicable to do this immediately, but I am certain that in years to come there will be several boats on the river, and they will have to be of the paddle steamer type because of the shallow draught required in some places. In older countries this type of tourist attraction has been immensely successful and profitable, and I believe it will be profitable here. I agree that it is a matter that the Tourist Bureau could investigate actively, and I will give instructions accordingly.

MOUNT GAMBIER COURTHOUSE.

Mr. BURDON: It was reported in the *Border Watch* of December 11, 1962, that the Attorney-General had forwarded to the member for Barossa a letter informing him that the Government intended to build a new courthouse at Mount Gambier on the corner of Bay Road and Margaret Street, and that it was intended that the present courthouse would be replaced by a block of Government buildings to house various Government departments. Will the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General in this Chamber, say when it is intended that this urgent work shall be carried out?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I shall be pleased to refer the question to my colleague, the Attorney-General, and to let the honourable member have a reply as soon as possible.

SEWAGE EFFLUENT.

Mr. HALL: The Minister of Works is well aware that some of us have been worried about the deterioration of the underground water supply in the Virginia area, and I know that he has given this matter his best attention. Thoughts have been expressed about charging the underground basin in that area with the treated effluent that will become available from the new Bolivar treatment plant, but the possibility of doing this depends, perhaps, on the salt content of the treated effluent. Will the Minister say whether his department will measure the salt content of this effluent at various times of the year to see if there is a variation between the summer and winter seasons? If there is a variation, it may be possible to charge the underground basin at the most favourable time of the year. As this will possibly be a programme for some future years, and not one for the present, could all this basic research be done now to save valuable time when the problem becomes acute?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: This question is most interesting, and it is also rather intricate in its technical ramifications. The department has already given some thought to this suggestion in a preliminary way—preliminary because there will not be any appreciable discharge from the Bolivar treatment works for some time. However, I know there is much interest in the use of the effluent and that the underground basin in the area around Virginia and Waterloo Corner appears to be somewhat overdrawn at the present rate of pumping from it. I think the suggestion is useful and that it would

be wise to make some research concerning not only the salinity of the effluent water from the treatment works but also the structure of the underground basin to see at what points recharging is possible, if it is possible at all. The salinity of the effluent depends upon several factors and I believe that, when giving evidence before the Public Works Committee, departmental officers suggested that the salinity would probably be about 70 grains or possibly as high as 100 grains. That is a matter of some conjecture, as experience with sewer effluents from our various treatment works shows a great variation in salinity. It is hard to understand this unless one appreciates that sewer mains are subject to the entry of ground water, and the older sewers were not constructed with the knowledge that we have at present. In some cases the effluent has a much higher salinity than in others. For instance, I think from memory that the discharge from the Port Adelaide treatment works has a much higher salinity than that from the Glenelg treatment works. The reason given to me for this is that sewers in the Port Adelaide area are mostly older and the salinity of the ground water is high. The Bolivar treatment works will be better placed in that regard. The main trunk sewer from Adelaide will be constructed in the light of modern experience, and it will be so constructed as to prevent the ingress of ground water. This indicates that the quality of the effluent from Bolivar will be somewhat better than that from the older treatment works. I shall have the matter examined, and I will probably invoke the assistance of the Director of Mines, because of his knowledge of the underground basin, to see what possibilities there are of using the method suggested by the honourable member.

SITTINGS.

Mr. HUGHES: In view of the strong public feeling against the length of time Parliament has been in recess, will the Premier consider altering the policy of his Government to enable the House to sit for periods similar to those in which Parliament sat in 1960—for about six weeks in the first half of the year and for about 14 or 15 weeks in the latter part of the year—so that Parliament can be kept close to the people?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: As the honourable member said, the Government arranged a few years ago to have two sessions in the one year as a trial to see what the result would be. As a matter of interest, I have had a number of representations from

members opposite who say that they prefer to have one session of Parliament rather than two sessions, as they feel that having one session enables them to settle down to do the work.

Mr. Jennings: I don't know who they are.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I do not want to go into that at the moment. The Government has no feeling on this matter but, if members prefer to have two sessions of Parliament and if that is a general view of members, the Government could arrange the programme accordingly. However, let me make it clear that in any circumstances it would be necessary for the House to meet, as it has done for many years now, in about the third week of July and to continue to sit fairly constantly to deal with the financial documents that must necessarily be passed at that time each year. Whatever arrangements are made, it is necessary for the House to meet in about the third week in July. As soon as the Loan Council meetings are over and the documents are prepared, they are submitted to Parliament. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, that is something that is imperative, because otherwise the whole programme of the Loan works of the State would be impeded. I will examine the honourable member's question and will discuss it with members of my own Party and, in due course, with the Leader of the Opposition.

DRIVING LICENCES: EYE TESTS.

Mr. JENKINS: I have been approached by one or two people over the age of 75 years who complain that they have to visit a doctor and obtain a certificate before being eligible to receive driving licences. Those people say they incur expense and sometimes have long waiting periods, and they wonder whether this procedure can be altered. Will the Premier consider allowing those people over the age of 75, when they have successfully passed eye tests, to be called on only every second year or, alternatively, allow them to call at the local police station and have eye tests there, thus obviating any costs and probably cutting down the waiting time?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I consider that it is necessary that the Government take steps to see that people on the road are physically fit for driving, because physically unfit drivers are not only a danger to themselves but also a potential source of danger to other people on the road. However, I will have the matter investigated to see if some more convenient arrangements can be made, always within the

understanding that the Government desires to see that people licensed to drive on the road are capable of driving efficiently and safely in their own interests and in the interests of the other travelling public.

LAND SPEED RECORD ATTEMPT.

Mr. HUTCHENS: Members will recall that certain plans were put into operation to provide for the well-known motor driver, Donald Campbell, to attempt to break the land speed record at Lake Eyre. Unfortunately—or fortunately, depending on how one looks at it—weather conditions made the attempt impossible and the project was washed out. Can the Premier indicate the total cost to the State of the preparations that were made?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Some of the costs involved were for services that are normally given; they were not additional costs to the Government. For instance, the Police Department provides protection for property and people under all sorts of circumstances. Therefore, I cannot state the total cost involved. The Government maintains the roads in the area, and some of the work that was done would have been done, if not immediately, possibly within a year or so. The main additional expenditure was on a causeway out to the lake. Honourable members who have not been there may not know the circumstances. Recently the Mines Department was conducting drilling tests for minerals on the lake. I visited that area, and I can say that, although the salt is very stable and strong out in the lake, there is a margin around the edge where boggy conditions exist. The Mines Department had the greatest difficulty in getting its plant on to the lake, and it was in connection with that problem that the main expense to the Government arose. I should like to check my figures, but, speaking from memory, I believe the original estimate was £3,000. I have discussed that item with the Leader of the Opposition. Subsequently, it was found that the formations were softer than had been expected, and I think the Engineer-in-Chief had to incur additional expense, possibly about £2,000, to make the road out on to the lake sufficiently strong. Again, Mr. Speaker, before I made an assertion that the total amount was £5,000 I should like to have the figure checked, because there was additional expenditure. The department provided for Donald Campbell in excess of the usual facilities. For instance, it provided some equipment that was on the lake. However, we specified that he would have to pay normal rates of hire for its use. Some equipment used for the preparation of the track was hired from

the Government, but it was hired at normal rates.

Mr. LOVEDAY: The Premier has referred to the police and roads in the area, but I draw his attention to the fact that the roads in the area seldom have other than a grader over them more than once in two years, and that the police officers involved in this project could have been more usefully employed elsewhere in the State. Will he bring down a detailed report on the amount of assistance, both machinery and manpower, given to the Bluebird project by all Government departments, and an estimate of how much the Government expects to spend on the project?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I can now answer the latter part of the question. The Government has approved of no additional expenditure on the project. I can assure the honourable member that it is not intended to spend any more money on it. In regard to the other matter raised by the honourable member, I shall give it consideration.

EGG MARKETING.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: In the Spring of last year, a season of high egg production, it became evident that the State Egg Boards were working under difficulties caused by price differences applying between States. Difficulties were also caused by interstate trafficking in eggs sold outside the boards. As a result, the Egg Marketing Boards of the various States have combined to form the Commonwealth Egg Marketing Association, to work towards an agreement between the State egg authorities. The chief difficulty of the egg industry is the heavy losses incurred in export sales of eggs and egg products from Australia, and one of the proposals of the Commonwealth Egg Marketing Association—C.E.M.A.—is to alter the present system of a levy on eggs marketed through the Egg Boards to a levy based on the number of birds owned by each producer. Reports are circulating among the poultry farmers in South Australia which suggest that the levy may be as high as 10s. per bird. The poultry farmers understand that export losses must be borne by themselves in the form of a levy of some description, but they are most concerned at the magnitude of the proposed per bird levy. Can the Minister of Agriculture say what progress is being made by C.E.M.A. and can he state the amount of the proposed levy per bird?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I think that everything the honourable member stated is

substantially correct. The council of egg marketing authorities has been labouring under difficulties because of those matters mentioned. I have attended meetings at different times in the Eastern States with the poultry authorities in order to try to reach some agreement whereby they can bring in a plan for stabilizing the industry. The council of egg marketing authorities has put forward a stabilization plan which involves the raising of a levy on a per bird basis, rather than levying the eggs that are handled by the various State authorities. As I understand it, the proposal is that all female fowls over the age of six months are to be counted and levied at a rate struck by C.E.M.A. This would involve Commonwealth legislation to make that action valid. The council proposes to suggest to the Commonwealth what the levy would be. The Commonwealth's attitude to date is that it will not consider bringing in an Act to strike a levy unless all States are unanimous. Hitherto South Australia has stood against the plan, whilst I understand that all other States are for it. The reason that I have not agreed to it is that Government policy in this State, while strongly in favour of stabilization of markets for primary production, requires that any plan should be desired by the producers and that they should clearly voice themselves to be in favour of it; also, any plan should be controlled by the producers and should be a constitutional one.

I know that there are producers who have not agreed upon the merits of this plan as it has been put to them. In the first place, this plan has been introduced in a most sketchy manner and I would find it difficult to describe it in detail. For the most part, I know that it involves a levy on birds and that that levy is to be used as an equalization fund to make up losses on export markets. I understand that it envisages similar prices for egg and egg products in the various State capitals, and that the plan is aimed at avoiding interstate trafficking in eggs and wasteful transport costs. Whilst this is probably a very good aim, the fact is that the cure could be worse than the disease. The levy struck by the Egg Board, at present 3d. a dozen, is the lowest in Australia, and it would be about 3s. 4d. to 3s. 6d. a bird. At present there is no way of telling what the levy would be, but it could easily be as high as 10s. a bird per annum. I have asked on many occasions what the levy would be, and have been told that it would have to be struck taking into consideration conditions at the

time. The honourable member will see that at present the plan is not far advanced. It is not that I am against a stabilization plan. I would be strongly in favour of one which would work and which the poultry farmers all wanted. Probably 20,000 people in South Australia would pay this levy, so it is a big question for the poultry farmers.

There is another point about this plan: there is no guarantee that, should it bring about a stabilizing situation, it would not be destroyed in itself by that fact, that the industry would become stable . . .

The SPEAKER: The honourable Minister is not debating this subject, is he?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: No, I am not.

The SPEAKER: If you are debating the question you are out of order. You must only give information in answer to the question.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I am giving information as to the Government's attitude on this rather important question, and I was saying that any stabilizing factors in the plan might mean that the industry would increase its production. Also, there are no guaranteed prices in the plan. For those reasons this Government has not agreed to it.

WATER RATES.

Mr. McKEE: I have a petition that was handed to me signed by market gardeners of Nelshaby and Napperby. It is protesting against the proposed increase of water rates to market gardeners and I ask the Premier whether he will accept it and consider it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes.

TELEVISION PANEL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yesterday I asked a question about the "Any Questions" programme on Channel 2 which was shown on June 4. In his reply the Premier said he would try to obtain the script of the session. If he has obtained it, is he prepared to table it for the information of members?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes. I sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in Sydney asking him to authorize the Adelaide manager to supply a copy of the script because of the questions that had been asked. As I have the copy here, I table it and ask leave for it to be incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

"ANY QUESTIONS."

Extract from Programme.

Casson: And the next question comes from—

Mrs. C. Wositsky: Claire Wositsky. As a parent I should like to ask how should society best deal with the school age—the problem of school age pregnancies?

Casson: How should society seek to deal with the problem of school age pregnancy? Myra Roper—

Roper: I think this is a very important problem. I don't think it has yet hit Australia quite so hard as in America. On my last visit to America this was a question that I was asked once or twice when I was visiting schools and universities, but I think the answer is, to start with, a much more enlightened approach to the whole problem of boy-girl, male-female relations.

I don't think any longer can we carry an absolute blanket forbidding of any kind of male-female sex relations until a married age. I think this is a thing which has to be very carefully considered, though the last thing I'm advocating, of course, is a *carte blanche* for promiscuity, but I think the whole answer to this is a re-thinking of our teaching of the young, to take away some of the forbidden fruit thought about sex—to be more open and frank and let people know that this is a very important, very important, but not a secret and rather frightening thing. And of course to tell them very much more the very real dangers of pregnancy and the folly of it but not to do it in a kind of sitting in judgment and telling people to keep away from forbidden fruit.

Casson: Ronald Cowan.

Cowan: I should have thought that there wasn't much of the mystery and forbidden fruit aspect of this which needed to be taken into consideration. It seemed to me, quite frankly, to take a phrase from a friend of mine, that the youth of today possibly relies too heavily upon the marvels of modern science in relations one with the other, that is to say that whereas the explorer when he used to go into the desert took rations and took care and was physically and morally prepared for the journey, nowadays you take a jeep and one day's supplies and you go out and the jeep of course conks out and there you are. And this of course is the problem of the explorer and the problem of teenage pregnancies. Now I take it that the questioner when she referred to teenage pregnancy meant extra-marital pregnancy. I take it that there's no real problem about pregnancy in the teenagers if the young lady and the young gentleman concerned happen to be married. My own view is that there isn't a great deal by way of enlightenment perhaps which is—that's to say in knowledge which is now necessary, what is needed is "morale" if that's the right word—a correct view of what this particular instinct is implanted for and what it's supposed to do and I understand that even psychologists—I hesitate to quote a psychologist as an authority for anything—psychologists take the view that there is a serious danger and a likelihood of serious consequences for, particularly unwanted teenage pregnancies and I suppose that 99.9 per cent are so unwanted.

Casson: Les Wright.

Wright: I sat here rather taking this question seriously until I got this delightful picture from my left of this wholesale rape in jeeps. I don't know whether this was going to be recommended to young gentlemen and young ladies. I will duck this question, I'm no longer a teenager—it's not my problem. I think this has to be an individual question—that's what I mean to say with that answer and it has got a whole series of answers which bring up questions of birth control measures and better education and better moral standards and so on. I prefer rape in the jeep: that's much more fun.

Casson: Ted Wheelright.

Wheelright: Well I agree with the points that have been made by Mr. Cowan and Miss Roper. This is an important question. We've got to face up to it. The question incidentally referred to school children, not to teenagers and we obviously have a great problem here because there are large numbers of young people who are reaching ages of puberty long before they can possibly get married or it will be desirable for them to do so, and I think society has got to adjust its morals here and, whilst agreeing with Myra, what I say here is not an incitement to promiscuity. University teachers have to be very careful Mr. Chairman on this because they get attacked on what they've said on television panels and accused of having seduced the young. But I really think that society will have to face up to the problem of teaching the use of contraceptives and making contraceptives readily, more readily available, because the young people are going to continue doing what they are doing now—we might as well make it safe for them.

Casson: We've had some very sensible answers on that one and I think on the whole Myra had the root of it saying that if you forbid things too much you encourage people to do it, and I think that really just about sums it up. Now we'll have the next question from . . .

POLICE ACTION.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Last session I raised certain matters concerning police administration. On that occasion I adverted briefly to a matter that was before the court. I could not explain it because it was *sub judice*, but it is no longer *sub judice* and, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, and the concurrence of the House, I wish to explain it briefly and ask the Premier a question. In No. 2 of 1962, action was taken in the Supreme Court of South Australia by Peter Edward Hurley against V. J. Forde, F. E. Palmer, G. L. Thorpe, J. A. Kowald, B. D. Lyons and P. C. N. Page, members of the Police Force, for damages for assault, and it appeared from proceedings in that action that the assault was occasioned in the course of the police officers' duties and that severe injuries were caused to the plaintiff. Settlement of this action occurred on December 7 last year and it was approved by His Honour Mr. Justice Mayo.

In that settlement the defendants agreed to pay £1,250 and costs for damages to the plaintiff. Mr. W. A. N. Wells, Q.C., of the Crown Solicitor's Office appeared for the police officers. I ask the Premier why were these police officers not charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm; secondly, what administrative action was taken in the Police Department concerning this matter; and thirdly, since it seems that Mr. Wells appeared for these men in a civil action claiming damages from them, what payment was made by them for the use of a Crown Solicitor's officer in their defence?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I was aware of this matter and, knowing the honourable member's interest in everything that affects the Police Force of this State, I obtained a report from the Crown Solicitor so that the facts of the case could be placed before the House and the honourable member fully informed. I regret that the report is somewhat lengthy, but as the matter has been raised I think the full facts should be available.

The circumstances giving rise to the claim arose originally at a time when the Supreme Court prosecution *The Queen v. John Harmer Broadstock and Ronald Edward Soar* was in progress. In the Broadstock case, the conduct and administration generally of the Vice Squad, of which two principal witnesses against Broadstock were members, came under close scrutiny and was made the basis of some very hostile cross-examination (the validity of the allegations made in cross-examination can be assessed in the light of the verdict against both accused). The above defendants were in no way associated individually with the Broadstock case, but were members of the Vice Squad.

On this account, the Hurley claim was referred direct to counsel for the Crown in the Broadstock case for information and for such action as was deemed necessary. The details of the alleged assault in the case of Hurley appear in the statement of claim accompanying this docket.

It must be emphasized that the police administration were, by the behaviour of Hurley's stepfather, placed in a difficult situation, which, however, was considerably ameliorated by the good sense and fairness of Hurley's solicitor, Mr. Kevin Ward. The stepfather, shortly after the alleged assault, called on the Commissioner of Police and made various threatening remarks and demanded satisfaction. He was told, very properly, that

he could either make a civil claim in the courts or, if he wished, could leave the whole matter in the hands of the police authorities, who would conduct a thorough inquiry and severely punish any officers found guilty of improper conduct. The stepfather indicated that he would not agree to leaving the matter in the hands of the police, and departed.

A formal complaint having been made, however, the police immediately embarked upon a domestic inquiry and an inspector visited Hurley and obtained a statement from him. Not long after having obtained this statement, Hurley's solicitor rang the police authorities and informed them that he was acting for Hurley and that Hurley was proposing to take action in the Supreme Court for damages, and he requested no further action be taken by the police to interview Hurley, whose civil rights might thereby be prejudiced. He also informed the police that the stepfather had been approached by one or more newspapers "for a story" but that he (the solicitor) had advised the stepfather against giving such a story. The solicitor concluded by saying that if the police insisted on pursuing their inquiries, knowing that a civil claim was to be made, he (the solicitor) might be unable to prevent the stepfather from releasing a story to the press. The police naturally gave the undertaking that he sought. They could hardly, with propriety, have done otherwise in view of the fact that the civil claim was to be made and that the police would, in the course of their domestic inquiries, have been bound to interview persons who would be witnesses for the plaintiff's case. Shortly after giving this undertaking, Hurley's solicitor was in touch with Crown counsel and from there the matter of the Supreme Court claim was negotiated in the usual way.

Because Hurley was an infant at the time of the alleged assault, any compromise reached was required to be submitted to a judge of the Supreme Court for his approval. On Friday, December 7, 1962, an application came on before His Honour, Mr. Justice Mayo, in Chambers, on summons to approve a compromise. An order was made approving the compromise which was, as the order of the learned Judge shows, reached "with a denial of liability". In brief, the compromise involved payment of the sum of £1,250 plus costs. In the result, this sum is being paid to the Public Trustee, who holds it in accordance with the terms of the order for the benefit of Hurley.

If it should be alleged or suggested that this compromise involved an implied admission of misconduct on the part of any or all of the defendants, it should be emphasized that the learned Judge was prepared, in the exercise of his discretion, to include in his order approving the compromise the words "with a denial of liability". It follows, therefore, that no allegation in the statement of claim and no provision in the order can be construed as an admission on the part of the police or any of them.

It may be worth while adding that the sum of £1,250 abovementioned includes, over and above that part of the sum which is referable to medical expenses and similar special damages, a further sum for general damages which is in the nature of approximately £150 in respect of each officer, assuming that they share equally the responsibility for payment.

Whether or not any domestic action is to be taken against the above officers is a matter which concerns the internal administration of the Police Force. The terms of the order are still being carried out, so the matter has not finally concluded from the point of view of the civil action. Whether or not any further domestic action is to be taken will be a matter which the Commissioner of Police will ultimately decide having regard to all the circumstances; one of which will be, of course, that each officer will have paid over and above a share of the special damages, the £150 abovementioned.

I take it that the damages are being met by the police officers themselves.

MORPHETT STREET BRIDGE.

Mr. COURCE: Last year the Premier offered to assist the Adelaide City Council financially in replacing or rebuilding the Morphett Street bridge, one of the main reasons being that the present structure caused a severe bottleneck to the ever-increasing flow of traffic to the rapidly expanding northern suburbs. Can the Premier say whether since then the council has approached the Government on this offer? Has any constructive decision been made and, more important, can the Premier indicate when the bridge is likely to be replaced?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Government's offer was contingent on the council's undertaking the construction work. At present the Government would not be able to provide officers to design and construct the bridge. The honourable member's statement is substantially correct. The Government offered to pay half the total cost of widening the

bridge and undertaking the ancillary works associated with it, which extend from Currie Street to Light's Vision. This area is one of the most serious bottlenecks to city traffic. This is a main traffic route out of the city to the north and is grossly inadequate. I understand that the City Council has considered the offer of the State Government and that it is having some investigation made, but I must confess that this is only hearsay.

Mr. COURCE: Will the Premier endeavour to expedite the matter?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I will see if I can expedite it by bringing the honourable member's question before the City Council.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member can ask only one question at a time.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT RENTS.

Mr. CORCORAN: Recently there have been many cases in my district where rents for soldier settlers have been fixed, and this has caused a sharp increase on the rents they were paying previously on a provisional basis. I believe that the fixing of rents is gauged on a cost and productivity basis, but in some cases the rent now being paid is almost double that previously paid, which is causing some hardship, particularly to the smaller man. Will the Minister of Repatriation say whether an individual settler has the right of appeal against the rent fixed, and, if the settler has not, will he indicate what action he will take in this matter?

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE: I am aware of some consternation in areas of the South-East among settlers at the amount of rent they will be expected to pay. There is some doubt about whether there are any rights of appeal against the rents, but I am investigating this. In this matter two bodies are concerned—the Commonwealth and the State. I have received a request to send an officer to the area to explain the position, but I do not think that any good purpose would be served by such a visit at this stage. However, I am giving the matter my personal attention, and when I am sure of the position I will visit the area.

GERANIUM AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Will the Minister of Works ascertain when tenders will be called for the building of the new area school at Geranium and what is the expected completion date?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I will do that, and I will inform the honourable member in writing.

OUTER HARBOUR FACILITIES.

Mr. TAPPING: In a telecast some weeks ago, the Premier, speaking about the by-passing of the Outer Harbour by larger steamers, said that ships such as the *Canberra* and the *Oriana* were not calling there, that we were losing trade and commerce as a result, and that people coming to this State from overseas were obliged to go to Melbourne or Sydney, which caused them additional expense. I support the Premier in his comments. The next day the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Downer) was reported by the *Advertiser* as saying that the *Canberra* and the *Oriana* could not call at the Outer Harbour because the facilities provided there were not adequate. In fairness to this State, I should like to point out a few things about the Outer Harbour.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is not debating the question?

Mr. TAPPING: No, I will avoid doing that. The *Canberra* is a ship of 45,000 tons gross register, and the *Oriana* is of 42,000 tons. At the Outer Harbour there is a depth of 35ft. at low water. Experts have informed me that this is sufficient water to accommodate these two ships with an ample margin of safety. The *Canberra* is 880ft. long and the *Oriana* 808ft. long; the swinging basin is 1,250ft., so there is a safety margin. I do not think the statement made by the Minister for Immigration did justice to the Outer Harbour or the State. Will the Premier make a statement this afternoon about the ideal conditions prevailing at the Outer Harbour as a denial of the claim made by the Minister for Immigration?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: As far as I know, the Outer Harbour is capable of handling successfully the largest passenger ship that comes to Australia at present. I do not think there is any doubt about that, and, indeed, the Government has had no representations from anyone for increased accommodation at the Outer Harbour. When I saw the Minister's statement I thought he was possibly referring to the fact that elaborate passenger terminals had been built recently in Sydney and Fremantle. As against that, we must remember that, of 58 passenger ships scheduled to come to Australia from Europe, only eight were to call at South Australia, so we were getting only a limited number of the ships coming here. The Minister for Customs inspected the Outer Harbour recently and expressed the view that everything was satisfactory from his department's point of view.

Mr. Downer immediately did something about providing an additional ship for migrants (and I express my appreciation for this) so that there will be a rather more orderly method for migrants to reach South Australia than previously, when many of them had to be over-carried and brought back on hurriedly arranged transportation, frequently involving them in leaving their luggage behind. However, this does not alter the fact that, apart from the tourist trade, there is a requirement for passenger ships to come to this State. The P. & O. Line was the only line that gave a regular service to South Australia; it was sending not all but some of its ships to this State. On the other hand, many passenger liners coming to Australia had a licence to call at only three ports, which meant that they had of necessity to call at Fremantle, Melbourne and Sydney, so Adelaide was automatically excluded from their ports of call. I say categorically that the Government has had no requests for additional harbour accommodation. The Government would consider immediately any request for additional passenger accommodation such as a ramp or a passenger receiving depot if there were any possibility that it would be effectively used.

RABBITS.

Mr. HARDING: Last session a Bill was passed to deal with the keeping of domestic rabbits, and during the debate it was learned that several men had spent money in establishing domestic rabbit farms in this State. I also learned that in New South Wales it was quite an industry and that an antidote was being used to counter the myxomatosis in domestic rabbits. Can the Minister of Lands say what action has been taken in this State regarding the keeping of domestic rabbits?

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE: I think it was only last year that a lengthy provision was included in the Vermin Act to enable certain people then keeping domestic rabbits to maintain rabbits according to a number given to them under a licence. For a considerable time inquirers have been informed that the Government strongly discourages the breeding of domestic rabbits. The amendment to the Vermin Act provided for a straight-out prohibition, but a number of honourable members thought that in order to give people already set up in the industry an opportunity to get their money back, as it were, a time factor should be included. A few people have asked that the number of rabbits they are allowed to keep under the existing licence should be increased.

In one case the permit was for 800 rabbits, but it was suggested that it should be 800 does. Anyone knowing anything about rabbits knows that could easily result in an absolute minimum of 5,000 rabbits in one year. The Government set a date in December, 1962, as the closing date for applications for permits. The premises of all applicants were inspected. The licences issued imposed a maximum number of rabbits that could be carried, and in general this was the number held at the time of the inspection. The licences are for 12 months only and if the holders wish to continue they must apply for a further licence. The intention, however, of the permits was to cover a period during which the holders could progressively reduce and ultimately dispose of their stocks. The Government has no intention of issuing licences to additional applicants.

FOSTER CLARK (S.A.) LTD.

Mr. CURREN: The Premier is no doubt aware that since last session Foster Clark (S.A.) Limited has had an official receiver take over its affairs. The growers in my district and those in the district of Murray are concerned about the non-payment for fruit and vegetables supplied to Foster Clark, and also to Brookers (Australia) Limited, which firm was taken over by Foster Clark. Can the Premier inform the House of the present position regarding the winding-up of the Foster Clark company? Will growers receive any payment, and what became of the processed products that Brookers had when taken over by Foster Clark? Is any legal action contemplated against the directors of the Foster Clark company?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Briefly, the answer is that all the assets of Foster Clark are in the hands of the receiver, who is taking action to wind up the company.

RECREATION AREAS.

Mr. LAUCKE: I am concerned that, in spite of the Government's generous policy of subsidizing local government authorities pound for pound in the purchase of approved recreation areas, certain councils embracing rapidly developing areas, such as the Tea Tree Gully District Council area, are finding it virtually impossible financially to acquire the requisite acreages as rapidly as necessary in order to avoid losing certain lands earmarked for recreational purposes. I was interested in a report in this morning's *Advertiser* of remarks by the Acting Town Planner. He said that mandatory levies on councils were the

only way to ensure sufficient future recreation spaces in the metropolitan area, and that a fund must be established from which the purchase of open spaces could be financed. This is in accordance with the recommendation of the Town Planning Committee that a metropolitan parks authority should be established with functions as set out on page 293 of the committee's report. Can the Premier say whether the Government intends to set up such an authority?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The last I heard of the Town Planner's report was that it was being circulated to local government bodies in order to get their views on what action should be taken. I believe there has been no response to the invitation. When something is received it will be considered.

BUS STOP SHELTER SEATS.

Mr. JENNINGS: Some time ago I received a letter from the Enfield Corporation regarding bus stop shelter seats in the council area. That letter states:

Over some considerable length of time this council has sought the provision by the Municipal Tramways Trust of suitable shelter seats at bus stopping places in various parts of the City of Enfield to provide bus travellers with some means of protection in inclement weather, in addition to being the means of assistance more particularly to elderly folk waiting for a bus. The council has not been able to achieve any success in this regard, either by way of subsidizing the cost of these seats or having them installed at the expense of the Tramways Trust. Recently an experimental seat was erected at Hampstead Road near Colac Street, which is adjacent to the pensioners' flats in this locality, and a request to the trust to share the cost of this structure was not successful.

The letter from the council then went on to ask me to take the matter up. As a consequence of that request, I wrote to the General Manager of the Tramways Trust, and I believe that the House should receive the benefit of this masterly piece of classic ambiguity that I received in reply:

In reply to your letter dated April 23, 1963, concerning the provision of bus stop shelter seats, I would advise that it is the policy of the trust to provide shelter seats at the end of fare sections and at terminals, and in a few instances at other busy points. Within the framework of this policy it is the practice to consider the extent to which a stopping place is used by bus travellers and the availability of alternative shelter such as shop awnings at or adjacent to the particular stop in question.

I consider that that letter from the trust is most unsatisfactory. Will the Minister of Works take the matter up with the

Chairman of the trust and endeavour to persuade him to give some effect to the request of the Enfield Corporation?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I am afraid I may not be as quick on the uptake as the honourable member, but I do not read into that letter any masterly ambiguity. I rather feel that the honourable member has allowed himself to imagine it, or that he has become intoxicated by the exuberance of his own verbosity.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I do not intend to develop that theme, Mr. Speaker, except to say that I believe that if the honourable member or the Enfield Corporation makes a specific request to the trust I shall have something to place before the Chairman, and I should be very pleased to do so. I think the trust's policy, as stated in its letter, is that it considers such shelters in the light of other existing shelters available adjacent to important stops.

Mr. Jennings: That has nothing to do with the request for seats.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: It has something to do with that. It would be quite unnecessary, in my view, for the trust to put shelter seats where there are shop verandahs on the side-walk immediately opposite the stopping places. I point out that the trust is always under pressure to maintain its services to the public at the lowest possible cost, and that all these things are factors in the costs of the trust's operations. I invite the honourable member to suggest to the Enfield Corporation that it make its request specific, perhaps for the trust to consider such shelters at certain important points; and I think that one of them may well be the place the honourable member mentioned in his opening remarks. I will then have the matter examined by the Chairman of the trust and advise the honourable member accordingly.

SUBDIVISIONS.

Mr. FRED WALSH: Yesterday I asked a question of the Minister of Works concerning the sewerage of Fulham Gardens and Seaton Park, and I was disappointed, to say the least, with the reply I received. I wish to quote from a report submitted to the House yesterday from the Town Planning Committee dealing with the matter of rejection of the subdivision of an area at Darlington and Tapley Hill. In the course of a report from the Public Health Department, the Secretary of that department said:

I am of the opinion that to satisfactorily dispose of household waste waters into the soil in this area is almost impossible. The area should not be subdivided unless a sewerage carriage system or some other means of removing household wastes from the area is provided.

In the latter part of the report, under the signature of the Acting Chairman, the following appears:

A close examination of problems associated with the subdivision of land of this kind clearly demonstrates the need to relate the expansion of the metropolitan area to the availability of services. This need has been the guiding principle in the preparation of the development plan.

Many agents and subdividers have given unwarranted assurances to people purchasing land that the land would be sewered soon, and unfortunately people have purchased the land and put in septic tanks with the thought that it would not be long before they would get sewers. Now we find, as the Minister said yesterday, that that will not be possible in the near future. Can the Premier say whether the Town Planning Committee has power under the Town Planning Act to prohibit the subdivision of areas where sewer connections are not available or not contemplated by the department, and where such areas are not suitable for the use of septic tanks? If it has not that power, will he consider amending the legislation accordingly?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Town Planning Act is normally dealt with by the Attorney-General and is not directly within my province. I understand that the Town Planner has the power to refuse a subdivision if that area is in the metropolitan area and if the Engineer-in-Chief does not give a certificate that it can be adequately watered and sewered at reasonable cost. The Government in many instances has required subdividers wanting sewers earlier than they would normally be provided to put up the money for those sewers to be provided forthwith: the subdividers had to make a contribution to the Loan Programme of the State to enable that to be done. The honourable member has raised a most important question, and I hesitate to give a final answer to it this afternoon. I will have the matter investigated and will communicate with the honourable member in due course.

PARKSIDE SCHOOL.

Mr. LANGLEY: Earlier I informed the Minister of Education that a house adjoining the Parkside Primary and Infant School was about to be sold. As this school urgently requires additional accommodation, can the

Minister say what has transpired in this matter?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: The honourable member mentioned this matter to me and also handed me some correspondence from the school committee regarding it. Unfortunately, by the time the honourable member received the correspondence it was almost too late to deal with the matter, as the house was being submitted by public auction. However, fortunately for our interests, the house was passed in at auction. I had the whole matter investigated, I referred it to Cabinet, and I was authorized to negotiate for the purchase of the house by private treaty. Negotiations are now in hand, and as soon as any decision is made I shall be pleased to inform the honourable member.

TAILEM BEND TO KEITH WATER SCHEME.

Mr. BYWATERS: The Minister of Works will recall that earlier in the year there was a deputation from the member for Albert (Mr. Nankivell) and myself in connection with the Tailem Bend to Keith water scheme and the request was then made that this scheme be included in this year's Estimates. Has the Minister any further information on this as we are most anxious about it?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The honourable member and the member for Albert have, quite properly, constantly kept this matter before me. In fact, the member for Albert mentioned it to me the other day. I can now give the honourable member for Murray the same information. I hope that we can provide some money on the Estimates for the coming financial year to make a start on the essential first stages of this scheme. It depends to some extent on the general Loan programme as determined by the Loan Council, but I hope that we can provide some funds on next year's Loan Estimates for this purpose. However, I cannot give either honourable member a categorical assurance on that until we know what emerges from the forthcoming Loan Council meeting.

LAKE ALBERT SCHEME.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Recently, at the annual conference of the Murray Valley Development League, the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Dridan) was reported as stating that in order to conserve water Lake Albert might have to be drained in perhaps the next 10 to 15 years. Can the Premier say whether any survey has been conducted into the nature of the soils at the bottom of Lake Albert and

if so, whether there is anything to indicate that these soils would be suitable for irrigation if the lake bed were to be reclaimed?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: This matter was investigated personally by me some time ago. A close investigation was made of the land underneath the water of Lake Albert. Generally speaking, it is not attractive. There are many areas that are stony and there are a few areas where there is a good rich silt, but they are very few. The main area is not attractive. I would place this project well down the list of priorities. The Chowilla dam will supply water to South Australia for a population of 2,000,000 people and an additional 40,000 to 50,000 acres of intense irrigation. The dam for which we have an excellent site at Teal Flat would again give us a large quantity of water, and both those projects are much more economic than the Lake Albert scheme would be. In my opinion that scheme is much further away than the Engineer-in-Chief indicated in his report.

ABORTIVE DETENTION COMPENSATION.

Mr. CLARK: Recently I was contacted by one of my constituents, a Southern European who had been in Australia for about three years, seeking my advice on the following matter. Early in January he was arrested and charged with larceny. He spent three months in gaol, was brought to trial twice and on each occasion the jury disagreed. At the third trial, on June 5, instructions were received from the Attorney-General to enter a *nolle prosequi* on the charge against him. The Senior Assistant Crown Prosecutor asked that instructions be given for his immediate release and this was done. Because of the charge, he has suffered great hardship, has lost his job and has been gaoled for three months. He lost nearly £400 in wages over this period and, because of his enforced unemployment and consequent loss of income, his car, on which he had already paid about £500, was repossessed. His legal fees were almost £100. Thus, he has lost about £1,000. Will the Minister of Education ask the Attorney-General to investigate the matter to see if there is any way in which this man, whose name I shall supply to the Minister, can be recompensed for the hardship and monetary loss he has suffered.

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: Yes.

DRAINAGE COMMITTEE.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: A fruitgrower constituent of mine living at the Cadell irrigation settlement lodged an application for an alteration to his drainage rates for consideration by

the drainage committee. This committee has not met for several months and I ask the Minister of Irrigation when it will do so.

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE: Briefly, the functions of the committee are to deal with appeals or objections to drainage rates that are levied in accordance with the Act, to recommend adjustments where effective drainage cannot be installed, or to decide any other questions that may be referred to the committee by the Minister. The committee comprises C. N. Steed, Secretary for Irrigation; J. Ligertwood, Engineer for Irrigation; and Dr. Marshall of the C.S.I.R.O. The committee does not hold regular meetings, but, as the necessity arises, meets when arrangements can be made. There are one or two cases requiring the attention of this committee, but because of heavy pressure of other work it has not been able to get together for some time. In view of the honourable member's question I will see when it is possible for the committee to meet.

KANGAROO INN AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. CORCORAN: The installation of the air-conditioning unit at the Kangaroo Inn Area School has not been completed. As the Minister of Education knows, it is most desirable at this time of the year in the South-East to have the convenience of this plant for the comfort of students and teachers. Can the Minister say when work is likely to commence again on the installation of this plant, and when it will be completed?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: The Director of the Public Buildings Department has informed me that Adelaide Air Conditioning and Domestic Engineers Ltd., the contractor for the installation of the oil-fired warm air heating plant at the Kangaroo Inn Area School, has verbally advised that two of its employees left Adelaide yesterday morning for Kangaroo Inn to make preparations to commission the plant. The contractor expects that the plant will be commissioned later this week.

FREE RAIL PASSES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My question is directed to the Minister of Education, but as it may involve a matter of policy perhaps it should be directed to the Premier. In February of this year I asked the Minister of Education by a letter why free rail passes were no longer being issued to secondary schoolchildren travelling on the main hills railway line to school. In due course I received a reply stating that the provision for these rail passes had been deleted when the education regulations

were consolidated in 1962. It seems from the explanation of the Director of Education which accompanied these regulations that this must have been done after specific approval by Cabinet or by the Minister of Education. On March 21 this year I again wrote to the Minister asking for the reasons that prompted this approval. I received a courteous acknowledgement on March 25 and an undertaking that the Minister was looking into the matter and would inform me as soon as possible; but, in spite of several telephone calls to his secretary, I have heard nothing further from him. I now ask either the Minister of Education or the Premier to say what were the reasons for the deletion of this provision, and whether the Minister or Cabinet will reconsider the decision with a view to restoring these free rail passes.

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I am at somewhat of a disadvantage as the honourable member originally directed his question to the Premier, saying that it was a question of policy which the head of the Government should answer, and then he directed his question to either the Premier or the Minister.

Mr. Millhouse: I have fallen between two stools!

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I wish that in future, before asking a question, the honourable member would make up his mind from whom he desires an answer. It would be better for the procedure of this House if that practice were adopted. I have considered this matter because it is somewhat involved. The regulations to the Education Act were amended some time ago, and I think that about 93 subject matters were included in the consolidation of the regulations. It was considered that no new matters involving policy would be included and I think this was stated in the reasons that went to the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation. However, one or two matters apparently involved policy and the Director of Education has especially asked me to express his regret to the member for Mitcham and anyone else who might be inconvenienced in this way because any changes in substance in the regulations were not specifically mentioned in the statement submitted to the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation as effecting any amendment to the law or any policy. In fact, I think there was an amendment to this regulation in that the metropolitan area as defined in the Town Planning Act was substituted for the old definition of metropolitan area. It was considered that, as the metropolitan area had extended in recent years, the radius of 10

miles from the General Post Office was no longer appropriate. It is not a matter in which I can give a decision, because it involves an amendment to the regulations and that can only be done by Cabinet. It is a matter of policy that will be decided by Cabinet in due course.

COUNTRY WATER PRESSURES.

Mr. HUGHES: Can the Minister of Works say whether the Engineer-in-Chief has examined and reported on the proposal for improving the water pressure at Moonta, Moonta Bay and Port Hughes?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I have a report from the Engineer-in-Chief which states that one of the main causes of the present difficulties is the big and growing demand for water at Moonta Bay and Port Hughes during holiday periods. This results in a peak demand which causes low pressures at the higher parts in the system. Proposals for improvement of the water supply to Moonta are being examined with a view to preparing plans and estimates. The Engineer-in-Chief states that this question involves certain hydraulic problems, and the object of the department will be to design the most economical scheme to achieve the desired result. When I have the final report from the Engineer-in-Chief I shall make it available.

At 4 o'clock, the bells having been rung:

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the final report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence, on Senior Boys Training School, Magill, and Junior Boys Training School at Lochiel Park.

Ordered that report be printed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech:

1. We, the members of the House of Assembly, express our thanks for the Speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood): I rise to deal briefly with a matter that was before the House earlier today, and the reply given to me by the Premier concerning the case of Peter Edward Hurley. That reply contained many unsatisfactory features that should be adverted to as soon as possible. The Premier drew attention to the fact that in the consent order made by His Honour Mr. Justice Mayo it was noted that the payment of £1,250 damages for assault was "with a denial of liability". The Premier seeks to draw the inference from that that perhaps these men were not liable for assault. The Premier should know—and the Crown Solicitor certainly knows—that the words "with a denial of liability" appear in many judgments, but they are merely to say that there is no admission for the purposes of other proceedings. It is extraordinary to suggest when somebody is sued for damages and agrees to pay £1,250 in damages that he does not think he is liable for damages. That is too absurd! If he does not think he is liable, he does not pay anything: if he pays £1,250 in damages then he thinks he is liable for a great deal.

The Premier's reply stated that Mr. Kevin Ward, the solicitor for Hurley, requested that no administrative action be taken. I have spoken personally to Mr. Ward on this to check the position with him. He has told me categorically that he made no such request. He made it clear to Mr. Wells, from the Crown Solicitor's Office, that his attitude was simply that he was not concerned in administrative action; it was entirely a matter for the Police Department. He was not involved in that matter so made no request about it. The only action he took in relation to police action was to protest when Inspector Giles went to the hospital to interrogate his client, and he protested to Inspector Lenton about this and said that he considered it not the thing to do.

Two other matters in the Premier's reply alarm me considerably. The first was the reference to the fact that at the time this matter arose the prosecutions of Broadstock and Soar were in progress and that the Vice Squad was under some criticism in the court by cross-examination by the counsel for Broadstock and Soar. With great respect I cannot understand how the Government can suggest that

it was publicly proper to hush up a matter of this kind because it might have had some effect upon a case which was proceeding at the time. That does not seem to me to be a proper course to follow, and I cannot see how Broadstock and Soar come into it. This was a matter for the administration of the Police Force, and I submit that it should have been proceeded with. After all, as the Premier said, these men were not involved in the Broadstock and Soar case in any way.

Finally, it appears—and I can only conclude this from the reply I was given—that the Administration seems to think that the payment by these police officers of £150 each in general damages is a sufficient penalty upon them for what has occurred. I have never found that the Crown has previously considered the payment of civil damages by an accused person sufficient to absolve him from penalties before the law for an offence. If these men committed an assault upon this young man and occasioned him actual bodily harm which put him in hospital, then they should have been proceeded against in the Police Court or the Criminal Court. Any civilian person involved in similar circumstances would have been indicted for assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

However, it now appears not only that these men have not been charged but that no further administrative action is contemplated. I cannot consider that this is satisfactory, because I can conceive of no greater public harm that can be done to the vast majority of members of the Police Force—and I believe that the overwhelming majority of them would be incapable of this kind of thing—than that men should be allowed to commit an assault in the course of their duty and go unpenalized. Normally these men would be penalized not just in civil liability but before either the Police Court or the Criminal Court; and, with very great respect, I think that that should have been done.

I hope that the Premier will be able to make further inquiries and tell the House that some action has been taken to ensure that at least an administrative investigation is held and give some reason why these men should not have been charged before the courts in the normal way with assault occasioning actual bodily harm. The suggestion that this should not be done while a civil action is pending does not appeal to me. I cannot remember any occasion when the Crown has taken the attitude that because civil proceedings are pending criminal proceedings should not go on.

In fact, the attitude is entirely the opposite. I have never found the Crown Solicitor's Office prepared to listen to a suggestion of that kind, and I do not think it proper that it should. I was flabbergasted by the nature of the reply given on this occasion. I did not intend to raise this matter here if something satisfactory had been done. It was not only Mr. Kevin Ward who prevented some publicity in this matter earlier; I also took some action to prevent newspaper publicity at a time when this matter was pending. I did not want to see the thing done in other than a proper manner. I raised it here only when I found that, six months after judgment was given and it was found that these men had paid £1,250 in damages for this grievous assault, there was no sign of any administrative action. I cannot consider that that is satisfactory administration of the Police Force.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): It appears that one or two matters mentioned by the honourable member are at variance with the Crown Solicitor's report. On a couple of other occasions I have investigated complaints made by the honourable member about the police and have found that his statements have not been borne out. That was so, particularly in a case in his own district. Regarding this matter, I will submit to Mr. Kevin Ward the full report of the Crown Solicitor. I have always found the Crown Solicitor and the officers of his department most precise in the information supplied to me. I will take up this matter with Mr. Kevin Ward myself to see if he substantiates what is in the docket. After getting his reply, I will inform Parliament, and we will consider the matter further.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from June 12. Page 27.)

Minister of Railways, Railways Department, £88,000—which Mr. Frank Walsh (Leader of the Opposition) had moved to reduce.

Mr. CLARK (Gawler): I support the Leader of the Opposition in his protest about the severity of recent rent increases for railwaymen's houses. As mentioned earlier, these increases are out of all proportion to the recent marginal increases received by railwaymen, which I believe range from 2s. to 10s. a week. Anyone who cared to look at the long list of rent increases I have before me would say immediately that they were out of all proportion. I think all railwaymen probably recognized that some rent increases were

inevitable, and possibly there was a small case for a small increase, but one has only to look at the list of increases to realize how severe they are. I do not intend to weary members by going through the long list I have, and no doubt other examples will be given by other members; suffice it for me to mention two typical increases. In one case the rent was increased from 21s. to 42s.—an increase of exactly 100 per cent. A sudden increase of 100 per cent is more than the average working man can afford to pay. In another case the rent was increased from 38s. to 57s., and this sudden unexpected increase is something that a family man cannot afford to pay.

If it were not so sad, it would be amusing to notice the increases in the rents of sheds. Some railway dwellings have sheds provided, and I think members probably know that nearly every extra convenience means that a little is added to the rent. These sheds, which formerly cost 1s. a week in addition to the rent, under the new schedule will cost 3s. An increase of 2s. may not sound much, but, when it is realized that it is a 200 per cent increase for the use of exactly the same shed, the severity of the increase can be realized.

Perhaps there would be some slight consolation if the increases were meant to cover the cost of additional maintenance, but I have been informed by responsible officials of the unions of the men concerned that for many years it has been almost impossible to get any maintenance done on railway houses, and the general reply to requests for maintenance has been that neither money nor manpower has been available. It appears that there will be a little more money available, so perhaps railwaymen can look forward to some maintenance for which they have been waiting for a long time. I have not got a great deal of faith in that, but possibly it will occur.

Possibly the blow would be softened if revenue gained from the increases were to be used to provide other amenities. I shall refer first to the amenities for the men themselves. I have done that in a sense already by mentioning maintenance of railway houses, which would be of great value not only to the men but to their wives and families. A letter was sent to me some weeks ago which I shall read to members because I think it is instructive and interesting. As men who have been associated with railwaymen know, it is not easy for them to get amenities. At Gawler there are nearly 70 men on the staff and they, apart from those living in rented trust houses, live

in cottages. The divisional manager of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen sent the following letter on December 20, 1962, to the Railways Commissioner about amenities for the men stationed at the Gawler railway station:

A request has been received from our members at Gawler for reasonable amenities to be provided, and I have been directed to ask that an amenities block be provided. There are 67 stationed at Gawler and they share the following amenities.

I have no great knowledge of the amenities provided at railway stations, but from what I have been told those mentioned could be fairly typical of the facilities at many of the stations where several men are stationed. The letter says that there is a booking-on room approximately 10ft. by 7ft. containing a number of dilapidated desks and tables of various sizes, heights and shapes, and a single light globe. This is for 67 men. Members may say that all the men would not be there at the one time, but there are many times when the 67 do try to get in. There is also a locker shed at the back of the station converted from the old tram shed and ideally sited and constructed as a dust trap. Also, there is one toilet kept locked for staff use, and a wooden "staff kitchen" containing tables, benches, an old wood stove without a fire door, a sink and drainboard, and the only hand basin on the station. Apparently if the men want to clean up they have to line up to do so. There are no showers or hot water service at the station, and no room that can be converted for use by the staff. Because all the staff now have the station as headquarters it is suggested that an amenities block could be provided in the proximity of the "staff kitchen".

That letter was written in December to the Railways Commissioner. I suggest that the divisional manager did the right thing for his men, and that he was seeking something that the Gawler men should have. So far there has been no reply to the letter. I do not say it has not been acknowledged, because there may have been an acknowledgement, but an acknowledgement is not a reply to a letter of that nature. If the men could be persuaded, and that will take doing, into believing that the rent increases would help to provide some of the amenities sought, it could soften the blow. I think many of the men would be happy if they thought money would be available for more amenities for train passengers. I am reminded of a matter I have often raised over the last few years. I have referred to the amenity of lavatory accommodation on the

diesel trains commonly known as "red hens". I have made claims and I still make them, and I think the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) has also mentioned the matter. I remember the answer I got a few years ago—perhaps it was five or six years ago. It stunned me and I think it also stunned the Minister who gave the reply on behalf of the Minister of Railways. The following is portion of the reply I received on September 18, 1957, page 680 of *Hansard*:

The "300" class cars referred to by Mr. Clark as "red hens" were designed solely for use on the suburban system, which includes the run to Gawler.

Sometimes Gawler is in the suburbs, and at other times it is not. Apparently as far as the Railways Commissioner is concerned it is in the suburbs. The reply continued:

It is not the practice on any railway system, so far as I am aware, to provide toilet accommodation on suburban cars, and I can see no real justification for providing such accommodation in cars on the run to Gawler.

Now comes the gem, the best I have heard since I have been here. The reply concluded:

I might add that it should not be overlooked that toilet facilities are provided at various stations in between Adelaide and Gawler.

In other words, it seems that the passengers were expected to alight at a station, make use of the toilet, and then run to catch the train or wait for the next one. I do not know how it could be done. I have a feeling that most of us here are always over-conscious about our dignity, but I had the experience of travelling on a train when the local member kept nit for another man whilst he urinated on the side of the travelling train. That was a disgusting situation. There are times when mothers and small children find themselves in unjust and uncomfortable conditions, and possibly danger, when no toilets are available on trains. If the railwaymen thought that something would come in the way of additional amenities it would help to soften the blow of the increased rents. We believe that the increases are unjust and unwarranted. They are too severe and I hope they can be reconsidered.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): Although I have been in this place for a long time, I must confess that this debate has been extremely unusual, and one I have not previously met. We have the Opposition moving for a substantial reduction in the line providing for retrospective pay for railwaymen.

Mr. Loveday: The Clerk said that is the only way it can be done.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: It is not the only way. Members know there are many ways of raising matters in this place. We saw an example of it today. The member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) spoke on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, and only yesterday a member of my Party spoke on a similar motion.

Mr. Loveday: Where did he get?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Where does the Leader get in moving for this reduction? If the Government accepted the amendment he would run away backwards.

Mr. Loveday: Why?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Because the railway workers would lose £88,000 in retrospective pay.

Mr. Lawn: That is not correct.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: This matter has come before Parliament because it is retrospective pay that has not been approved by the Arbitration Commission, and there is no other reason. If it were only ordinary pay approved by the Arbitration Commission it would have been paid in the ordinary way by the Railways Commissioner, but this is pay which the Government is giving in addition to what the award prescribes. Increases in wages are provided for, but the Arbitration Commission refused the men's application for retrospectivity. All this talk about rents of railway houses has nothing to do with the matter. I venture to say that if the Standing Orders were strictly applied all the remarks about the rents of the houses would be struck from the records. All these remarks should have been made on the first line, which was agreed to by the Opposition without any challenge whatsoever. There was no move to reduce that line.

Mr. Ryan: We don't have to.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: You do not have to do it now. If Opposition members had wanted to raise this matter effectively without relating it to retrospectivity, they could have done so during the debate on the first line. There was nothing to stop any member from raising the matter on the motion to go into Committee. Does any member really want this line to be reduced by £100? If he does, let him speak up.

Mr. Ryan: We are going to, but you are trying to stop us.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Honourable members do not want it cut down at all. What members opposite want to do,

if I understand their mentality correctly—and I must make some assumptions in that regard—is to raise certain railway matters, including rents and amenities. If that is the case, obviously the proper time to do it is on the motion to go into Committee, or they can move for a reduction in the general line of the Estimates. Members opposite accepted going into Committee, and they accepted the first line of the Estimates, which is an open debate. They will not get any thanks from the railwaymen for the action they have taken.

Mr. Ryan: Not much!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: This debate will inevitably mean that this amount will probably not be paid in the current financial year. Members opposite know that because I explained it to the Leader this morning. The Leader has moved to strike out £100 of the retrospective pay which the Government provided in excess of the Arbitration Commissioner's award. We had negotiated with the railwaymen and agreed to certain payments being made, subject to the Arbitration Commissioner's registering the agreement. The railwaymen were not satisfied with what we offered, because it applied only to a limited number of them: they wanted it to apply to all their men. The matter went to the Arbitration Commissioner, and he accepted that the Government's offer was fair. The Government raised no opposition regarding the personnel to whom it had agreed to pay the increases. He also gave something which we had not given, namely, in some instances 7s. 6d. additional and in some instances 5s. additional. However he refused to award the retrospective pay. The only reason this matter is before us today is because it is retrospective pay which is in excess of an Arbitration Award. I said a moment ago that if the Government accepted this proposal members opposite would not be very pleased. I think the member for Whyalla (Mr. Loveday), who is looking at me so belligerently, would agree that the Opposition does not want us to cut out the retrospective pay to the railwaymen.

Mr. Loveday: We moved for a reduction of £1, and it was not allowed.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: It does not matter whether you moved for a reduction of £1, 5s., or £100: it signifies disagreement with the line. When a member moves to reduce any line, it is immediately traditionally regarded as a disagreement with the line.

Mr. Lawn: It is a disagreement with the Government, and you know it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: If the Government were to accept the amendment, members opposite would be sorry only once, and that would be all the time, because it is something that I am quite certain the interests they represent would not want. As a matter of fact, when I received a deputation from the Trades and Labor Council on this matter I told them that I would bring in a special line. In other words, I am acting on a request from that council. The Railways Commissioner could not legally pay these amounts unless Parliament approved, and I told the council that I hoped this matter would be passed by Parliament in time for the amounts to be disbursed in this financial year. As this is a matter of some interest, I asked the Speaker to make a special appointment with his Excellency the Governor so that this Bill could be taken to him this afternoon in order to be in time for an Executive Council meeting on Monday next. This was an attempt to include the payments on the railways paysheet—a paysheet which, incidentally, involves about 10,000 people.

Members opposite had plenty of opportunity to move such an amendment as this when we went into Committee, but for some reason that I cannot for the life of me understand they moved to reduce the line that probably they support more than any other. I should like to refer to one or two things that members opposite have mentioned. They have placed the whole thing completely out of perspective. There are 2,300 Railways Department rental houses, and that represents only about 25 per cent of the total railway employees in the State. I have been informed that the South Australian Railways Department has taken a much greater interest in the housing of its employees than some other States have done. This morning I checked on a State that has had a Labor Government for many years. I refer to New South Wales, where the railways have very few houses available for employees. That is the first thing.

The second thing is that, for a limited number of employees, such as gate-keepers, the award prescribes that they shall be provided with houses rent-free. I am quite happy about that. If an award provides for such a condition—in certain cases a house being provided—that is something that is obviously all right. However, turning to the large number of railway employees in New South Wales, we find

a small number of houses owned by the department rented to special officers at normal commercial rents. This is in New South Wales, a Labor Government State. This means that there is no effective subsidization. Many railway employees are housed in rented quarters supplied by the Housing Commission or other landlords and there is no subsidy on the rent. That is the position in New South Wales.

What is it here, in South Australia? In the first place, as I have said, we supply 2,300 houses. After an investigation made as long ago as 1949, the old rent was fixed and brought into operation actually in 1954; it was 30s. a week, average. The new rents will work out at approximately 43s. a week, average. I ask anyone here: is there any other housing authority in this State that is providing houses for an average rental of 43s. a week?

Mr. Jenkins: Or in Australia!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The member for Adelaide realizes that this concession is being given not to all railway workers but to 25 per cent of them. It is a special concession given to a small number. Now let us look at the "glaring case" instanced by the member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters). I will read from a report about this "glaring case" where the "savage increase" was mentioned by the honourable member.

Mr. Lawn: It was so glaring that it blinded you?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The house to which he referred is, presumably, the one occupied by the superintendent of the Murray Bridge railway division.

Mr. Bywaters: That is only one of them.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: That is the only one we could find that fitted the circumstances of the honourable member's statement in this Committee. That officer gets £3,000 a year. His rent has been increased from 46s. 6d. to 82s. 3d. The house in question is an old seven-roomed house and there has been heavy expenditure on modernizing it and providing special equipment. Those are the conditions. That heavy expenditure took place some time ago but, as there was a general review and so as not to make two increases in a short period, the alteration was held over until the Housing Trust had examined the position.

There is another angle to this. In the last session of this Parliament, the membership of which was substantially the same as it is now, housing rents were dealt with extensively. The Leader of the Opposition and members opposite

supported the Government entirely in legislation which I have since seen and is almost parallel with the policy of the Labor Party upon the control of housing rents.

Mr. Lawn: No!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Members opposite said that this was Labor policy when we introduced that legislation, and they supported it. The honourable member was here and voted for it. If he did not understand what was happening, that is nobody's fault but his own.

Mr. Lawn: Nobody said it was Labor's policy.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I believe the honourable member voted for it as a result of a Caucus decision. I was informed that that was the position. Under that legislation, which was undoubtedly approved by honourable members opposite, anyone who considered that he was being charged an exorbitant rent had the right to take the matter to a tribunal. The Government said that, as it was new legislation, it would provide a consultative service to anyone who believed that he was in difficulty, that the Prices Commissioner would examine the matter and, if necessary and if he believed that the case was warranted, he would actually support it.

Mr. Ryan: He would get on well if he appealed against this!

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The honourable member is entirely correct. What would actually happen if he appealed against this?

Mr. Ryan: You would get empty houses.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: No. It would not pay to appeal against this because the court would undoubtedly fix a rent 50 per cent higher; that is why people would not appeal, because a fair rents court applies both ways. These are still heavily subsidized rents. Anyone with any knowledge at all of housing conditions today knows that you cannot possibly get a livable house anywhere for anything like 42s. a week. Honourable members know that, without a subsidy by somebody, a housing rent at that figure could not be obtained. This is the answer—and I shall not take much longer because I do not want to be accused of holding up this matter.

Mr. Lawn: You have had six months of holding it up.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: If honourable members opposite desire to hold it up and impede the passage of this provision, they can do so. That is their responsibility.

Mr. Ryan: You say on every occasion the same thing; of course you do.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: It is the honourable members' responsibility. I only point out publicly that I have carried out to the best of my ability the undertaking I have given to the Trades and Labour Council.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): First, I want to correct some of the points the Treasurer has just made. We are well aware of what we could have done in respect of this provision for our going into a Committee of Supply. In fact, I have on many occasions been associated with this on the opening day of a session. We were given a Supply Bill and were to discuss the provision to be made for the continuation of services for a further two or three months this year. Yesterday, we dealt with various items of the Supplementary Estimates concerning the Treasurer, the Minister of Immigration and Miscellaneous.

The next item refers to the Minister of Education and this is followed by the line Minister of Railways, Railways Department. This is the only item which lends itself to a discussion on this matter, and was the only one that gave an opportunity for it to be debated seriously. This is what I meant when I referred to the *Weekly Notice* (No. 22/63). There is no point in the Treasurer's saying that unless this Bill goes to the Legislative Council and to Government House promptly, these men will not receive their money. That is all moonshine. The general instructions stated that the Railways Commissioner desired to advise the staff generally that in accordance with the policy recently forecast by the Government these rents were to take effect from June 30. Other people who may be affected by these rent increases have not come forward as have the Railways Department personnel. Nothing has been heard from the teaching fraternity and they have not publicized this matter in any way.

Mr. Ryan: There are many who will be affected.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Some employees of the Gaols and Prisons Department living in departmental houses will also be affected. The whole point of this debate is that it is a protest against the Government for permitting such large increases in rents because of certain wage increases. The object of our protest is not to pat the Treasurer on the back for what he has done, but is a straight-out issue that we are dissatisfied with the Government for what it has done, and it can be accepted as a vote of no confidence and not a vote for the money provided by this line.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford: Why did you not say so on the first line of the Estimates instead of choosing this line?

Mr. FRANK WALSH: If the Treasurer desires to be so persistent in this matter and to suggest that we are always in the wrong, perhaps he could obtain some assistance from the Clerk of this House, who may indicate to him that I am reasonably correct.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the Clerk should be drawn into the debate.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I do not want to draw him in. Perhaps, if the Treasurer approached that officer, he might find that I was on the right track. This is not the first time that the Government has had a surplus at June 30 and has had to seek appropriation to put it to other uses, knowing that it would not be spent for months afterwards. I believe that if the Treasurer consulted the Constitution he would find that where there is a surplus it should be used to liquidate the State public debt. However, perhaps he sees fit to do something different. As Treasurer, he apparently desires to have his own way, which he has had for so long.

Mr. Ryan: He is in his last term.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I do not know about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think that you had better get back on the lines.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: We are on the lines, but not on the railway tracks. I reiterate that the only opportunity the Opposition had to bring the matter forward was under this line, and we have taken it. It is not a pat on the back for the Treasurer. In one instance, for a house at Long Plains, which is not in my district, the old rent was 25s. 6d. a week and it is now 47s. 6d., an increase of 22s. or 86 per cent. That is not the only one that has been increased, as I indicated by the list I gave yesterday. This debate is a condemnation of the Government's administration in permitting such high increases in the rents to be paid by men engaged in railway work. If these men had the normal tenancy agreements that are provided for Housing Trust tenants, they would have a reasonable excuse for thinking that they would be given some consideration, and they would then have some interest in their houses. But they can be transferred overnight from Islington to another location, perhaps in the metropolitan area, and because they have been transferred they have to vacate their houses. If transferred to the country they have no alternative but to move and they have no redress. However, they are

there to do a job and have to move. There is no security in any tenancy occupation according to the *Weekly Notice* and no security of tenure similar to that of people occupying Housing Trust houses.

It is no use my trying to give information that is not acceptable to the Treasurer. It would be further condemnation of the Government's policy in permitting such increases in rents to offset the marginal increases granted by a proper tribunal. The decision to give marginal increases is not a further excuse to increase rents. Many of the houses for which substantial rent increases were made are far below what would be considered a normal standard Housing Trust house.

I repeat this was the only opportunity we had for an effective protest against the Government's permitting such savage rent increases.

Mr. RYAN (Port Adelaide): Our protest is directed at the line relating to railways. If the Government would stay on the line so far as sane Government is concerned this State would be better off. Once again, the Treasurer has claimed that the Opposition is wrong. I have never heard him admit that the Opposition is ever right. He suggests that our protest should have been made on the first line, but I point out that if we had questioned the increase in railway cottage rentals on either the first or second lines the Chairman would have ruled us out of order. Our protest is, I claim, directed to the proper line. How do we link our protest at rent increases with the payment of salaries and wages? If a man has his salary increased and his employer imposes a higher rent for the house occupied by the employee then the man's salary is actually reduced.

I should like the Treasurer to argue the issues publicly. The Treasurer tries to hold a big stick over the Opposition by saying, "If you want to talk this matter out and protest over this issue you will delay this legislation", but we are prepared to go to the public and say why we are fighting on behalf of the railway employees. If the Treasurer presented his arguments publicly he would not be Premier for much longer. He knows that when men are fighting for their rights and for better conditions they are prepared to put everything into it, and will not take things lying down. If the Treasurer is fair dinkum let him stipulate a time and place and go with the Opposition and debate this issue before the railway employees. I know who will get their support. Towards the end of every session the Treasurer says, "Pass this. Speak against it or try to

amend it and you will hold up something that is of benefit to the people you represent."

Mr. Jenkins: Never!

Mr. RYAN: Has the honourable member been asleep all the time? Hasn't he heard the Treasurer say that in relation to workmen's compensation? Wake up! I don't think the honourable member has railway cottages in his district, but if he has he will certainly get plenty of protests for not speaking on behalf of his constituents.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member must address the Chair.

Mr. RYAN: The Treasurer referred to wage increases granted to these employees in December, 1962. The Conciliation Commissioner made his order retrospective to November, so the increases were made eight months ago, yet for political purposes the Treasurer has delayed introducing these Estimates. Why is it a matter of extreme urgency? Parliament could have been called together months ago as was requested by the public and the Opposition. The Treasurer has an ulterior motive. He wants to gag the debate now and to blame the Opposition, but he won't get away with it. People are a wake-up to those methods. If the Opposition is prepared to protest on behalf of the public, the public will support its protest.

The Treasurer says that 2,300 cottages are involved in these rent increases. The figure, according to the Railways Commissioner, is slightly less—2,265. About 25 per cent of the employees of the South Australian Railways Department are involved. If this matter is not important to the community and to the people who work in the Railways Department, I do not know who will explain what is important or unimportant. The Treasurer suggests that the Opposition is going haywire and is half-cocked in talking about something that has no relationship to the Estimates, but half of his remarks had no relationship to our protest. The line we are attacking refers to salaries and wages, and if a man is receiving a specific wage and his rent is increased the purchasing power of his earnings must decrease immediately. Although the Treasurer might be, as he says, one of the financial wizards of the time—and he is a wizard in putting forward his own case, but not a case on behalf of the workers—he must realize that these rent increases affect the employees.

The Opposition has put forward instances of rent increases ranging from 40 to 90 per cent and, in isolated cases, to above 100 per cent. I know of cases where the increase is 80 per

cent, and where it represents 23s. to 29s. a week. These men received small increases in wages, but none of them will gain anything after these increased rents have been subtracted. Members opposite said that the Government had nothing to do with this, and that it was a matter for the South Australian Railways Commissioner. The *Weekly Order* that informed railwaymen that these sums would be taken out of their wages was issued in accordance with Government policy. We are protesting to the very people who instigated these increases, and the South Australian Railways Commissioner is a mouthpiece of the Government and a pawn in the game of politics. It is a good thing for some people that there is an Opposition to air their grievances, and it is a good thing for railway workers that Parliament is meeting. If it were not, we could do only what we do not favour—raise these matters through the daily press.

The increases authorized by the Government will cause a great reaction throughout the State. The Treasurer said that if the people directly concerned were not satisfied they could protest under the Excessive Rents Act. If a humble member of the Railways Department thought he was being overcharged for rent and he applied to the court to adjust it, he would have no chance to prove his case, because it has been admitted that the authority that investigated this case and recommended the increase is the South Australian Housing Trust, and the trust would be considered by the court to be the authority.

Mr. Millhouse: How do you know that?

Mr. RYAN: We have been told that on many occasions. The member for Mitcham knows that, before the introduction of the Excessive Rents Act, the South Australian Housing Trust was the authority in this State.

Mr. Millhouse: That is irrelevant under the new Act, though.

Mr. RYAN: What authority made some investigations into these increases in rents? If a humble employee of the Railways Department applied to the court for a decrease in rent because he considered it was excessive under the Act, before long he would be registered as one of the 100,000 unemployed. If one of these employees appealed, I do not think the Government would take it kindly. It would be fearful that what it was trying to achieve would be upset, so it would make sure that anyone who appealed would not get a second chance.

Mr. Lawn: What would it cost a railwayman to appeal?

Mr. RYAN: When introducing the Excessive Rents Act, the Treasurer said that we would see how it worked, and, if we found it was not satisfactory, we could have another look at it, but I think the cost of obtaining concessions under this Act is prohibitive to the worker. The average railwayman, who is receiving just over the basic wage, cannot obtain relief under the Act; it is amazing to me that they have enough money left out of their wages to pay their rent. If the Treasurer looked at some of these cottages his eyes would be opened. The Railways Commissioner should pay some of the men to live in them instead of increasing their rents! By imposing general increases in rents on properties owned by it, the Government has set a standard that will be a lead to others. Some members opposite might ask what harm this will do. The harm is that, when the tenants are in a financial position to use the provisions of the Excessive Rents Act, the increases will be accepted by the court as a lead given to it by the Government to indicate that the increases are warranted. The courts would have to consider that the Government had given it a lead, and that there was a necessity for a general increase in rents.

Mr. Lawn: About 200 per cent, isn't it?

Mr. RYAN: More than that in some cases.

Mr. Lawn: The court would accept that in all cases.

Mr. RYAN: The court can accept only the general economic trend of the day and the opinion of the people who have been classified in the past as experts. Naturally, the authority the court will seek is the South Australian Housing Trust, which is the body behind the scenes in this matter. Does the trust ever consider what is involved for the tenants? I do not think it does. It is concerned only with the bald valuation.

Mr. Lawn: Are you sure that the Housing Trust actually recommended these increases?

Mr. RYAN: I have been told so.

Mr. Lawn: But the Treasurer would use the report, wouldn't he?

Mr. RYAN: He would not, as some sections would not be favourable to him. We have been told on many occasions that we have no control over the Housing Trust, which is outside the ambit of this Parliament. The only thing it must do is bring down certain reports to this Parliament; we have no control over its administration and the conduct of its affairs. Its recommendations are from a body not under Parliamentary control and, even if there is such a report, I do not know whether we have the right to ask that it be

tabled. The Treasurer mentioned the average. I think he has taken sections, not the State generally. Increases of 70 and 80 per cent for the rents of cottages at outback sidings are not warranted; any increase for any reason, economic or otherwise, would not be justified in these cases. If it were a fair and just system, people would be paid to live in these houses.

The Leader said that other citizens had some security. The tenant of a railway house has not much security. He can be transferred to other railway work, and if he does change his place of employment within the Railways Department he can be ordered out of his house because it is considered no longer necessary for him to live in it. The rent increase also applies to a number of railwaymen who did not get the marginal increase awarded by the court, and they do not come under the "agreement" award referred to so highly by the Treasurer. He objects to the use of the word "savage" in respect of the increase, but it is no longer savage but absolutely severe and unwarranted. The increase in the rent applies to people who have had no wage increases for years whilst employees of the Railways Department. I refer to stationmasters and traffic men, who did not get the marginal increase and do not come under the latest "agreement". The purchasing power of their wages has decreased considerably, yet we are criticized because we protest on their behalf. Whilst this is the form of democracy that is handed out to them we shall continue to protest. It may amaze some Government members to learn that some men have not received the increase yet. However, they will experience a decrease in the purchasing power of their wages whilst waiting for the increase. I repeat that it is wrong for the Treasurer to hold a stick over the Opposition and say that this matter must be at Government House tonight. Does Government House control the affairs of this State? Obviously it does not.

Mr. Loveday: Perhaps it is for the convenience of someone else?

Mr. RYAN: Yes, and that someone else might have power in this Parliament and want to dictate the terms. We shall not take that. If we think a debate is necessary on this matter we shall debate it on its merits. We have gone from the days when a statement like that would apply. The Treasurer said that if the matter is not at Government House tonight the men will not get the money. Today is not the end of the month or the end of the financial year, but it may be the end of

the political world for the Liberals, because they are in the minority in this Parliament. In this matter we shall continue to protest and will not be gagged by the Government or the Treasurer on this issue. I object to his statement that the increases are not savage and unwarranted. They are savage, severe and unwarranted. He left out the word "severe". There is a different interpretation on the matter when we add the extra word. I believe that the rent increases are unjust and unwarranted and I hope that our protest will be considered by the Government, which should have the decency to admit that a mistake has been made and alter the position to allow justice to apply in this matter.

Mr. CASEY (Frome): I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and other speakers on this side, and voice my opinion strongly on the action taken by the Government in increasing rents, which affects particularly most of the people in my district. I was interested to hear the Treasurer's remarks, but I was disappointed that he rose to such heights in condemning the Opposition.

Mr. Clark: Sank to the depths.

Mr. CASEY: He accused us of trying to dilly-dally on this matter, but I think it was gone into fully before any decision was made by the Leader. It was agreed that we would debate the matter on the line and I think that under the circumstances we are in order in expressing our disapproval of the Government's action in increasing rents of railway houses. As the Treasurer said, there are about 2,300 railway houses in South Australia. In the Peterborough Division there are about 584, about one-quarter of the 2,300. That shows the number of people who are directly concerned in this rise in rents. The Treasurer said that a rise was necessary in November, 1954, and that there had been no rise since then. However, there was an increase of 9d. a week for a water supply going to certain areas, and small amenities, such as power points and other fixtures in the houses, are paid for by the occupiers. In reality the rents have been increased slightly since 1954 in order to provide these better amenities. In some of the houses the amenities are out of all proportion to what is expected in other houses. Many of them have no water connected and no power supply on a 24-hour basis. They have no septic tank system and the occupiers are responsible for the cartage of the kitchen and sanitary refuse. These things should be considered, especially in connection with remote areas. Country conditions

are not comparable with city conditions, and for that reason every help should be given to the people who are prepared to go to the country, even if it means a rent reduction. Yesterday I received a petition signed by 250 people in the Peterborough Division of the South Australian Railways. I ask the Treasurer to accept it from them, and I will hand it to him in due course. It says emphatically:

We, the undersigned employees of the South Australian Railways, Peterborough Division, object to the iniquitous, unjust and calculated attempt of the Playford Government in its efforts to reduce our standard of living in the increase of rental values of those occupying Government-owned cottages. We request that this matter be ventilated upon the floor of the House. This is a wanton encroachment on our present standard of living.

It gives me great pleasure to ventilate this matter. Let us see the effect this will have on country towns, particularly in the northern part of the State. The Conciliation Commissioner and the Government have agreed to an increase in wages for employees in the South Australian Railways. Some of those employees receive an increase of 15s. a week, some 7s. 6d., some 5s., and some even less than that. What do we find regarding rents? Rents in the Peterborough Division have been increased by about 70 per cent, which means that more than the marginal wage increase will be absorbed by that increase, and that represents a definite decrease in the standard of living in the country areas.

The Treasurer said yesterday that the State's economy had continued to improve steadily during the year, largely as a result of the Government's financial and employment policy of 1961-62 and subsequently. On many occasions we have heard that the economy of this State is the best of any State in Australia, and that is what the Treasurer said yesterday. I think that when a Conciliation Commissioner is considering increasing wages he takes into account the economic position of the State, and if he says that an increase of 15s. a week is warranted I am sure that it is his opinion that the economy of the State can stand that increase. The increase in wages that was granted to the workers last year was no hardship whatever on the economy of the State.

What do we find today? We find that £1, 30s., and even more is to be taken out of wages in increased rents. Let me quote a few examples in the Peterborough Division. For a modern, prefabricated house the old rent was 33s., and the new rent will be 47s., an increase of 42 per cent. We have some old stone houses

that have been erected for more than 40 years, and no additional amenities have been provided in these houses over the last 10 or 20 years, to my knowledge. Some of them do not even have a wash basin in the bathroom, and many still have old galvanized iron baths. Some of them do not even have kitchen sinks, and the occupants have to use dishes for washing up. This is the sort of thing people in the country have been putting up with for years; we do not hear very much about these things inside these walls, and perhaps they should be aired more often than they are. For one of these old stone houses the rent has been increased from 28s. to 47s., an increase of 67 per cent.

I could go right through the list that I have here. For one old prefabricated house the rent has gone up from 23s. 6d. to 45s. 6d., an increase of 93 per cent. Here is the biggest joke of all! For a substandard house that has been condemned the rent has gone from 16s. 3d. to 31s., an increase of nearly 100 per cent. That is the type of thing that has happened. The Housing Trust has said to the Government, "Well, we have to increase the rents of these houses according to your policy," and the Treasurer has agreed.

Houses at Terowie are in exactly the same position. People in that town have to rely on their own water supply: they have rainwater tanks of about 4,000 gallons capacity, and when that runs out—as it did last summer—an employee of the Railways Department who occupies a house has to cart his own water. He has to pay for it, he has to supply his own pump to pump water up to the overhead tank so that he can take a shower, and he has to have his own trailer to cart the water. That often happened on the Cockburn track; when I first came into Parliament I succeeded in having the water rates reduced for those people because they had to cart water. At one time they carted it from Yunta, a distance of about 120 miles. All these things should be considered. It is hard enough living in the country today. I often smile when I think of Mr. Wells's statement before the court that it is cheaper to live in the country than in the city. Of course, I do not agree with that.

A town like Peterborough is wholly and solely dependent upon railway workers. Every pay cheque that comes in every fortnight represents income for the town as a whole, and a reduction of £1 a week in a man's wages—which is what it will mean—will be felt by the whole community. I sincerely hope that this Government will show that it has some

wisdom and do all it can to see that these increases in rent—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. CASEY: I sincerely hope that this Government will realize it has made a mistake in increasing the rents of these people who live in the country, and that it will take into account the lack of amenities in country areas.

The recent 10 per cent increase in wages gives tradesmen an average increase of about 10s. a week. The driver of a passenger train will receive about 19s. a week more under the new marginal award, and the general class driver about 17s. more, but many others will receive less than the average 10s. increase, and in fact many will receive only 2s. or 3s. more. I support the Leader and other speakers on this side of the Committee in this matter, and I sincerely hope that the Government will do everything in its power to rectify the injustice that will take place if these higher rents are forced on the people, particularly those living in isolated areas.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh): I support the amendment. The Treasurer professed to be surprised at the way the amendment was moved. Obviously, he has failed to understand what is understood in every Parliament of the British Commonwealth of Nations, namely, that when the Opposition seeks to move for a reduction in a line it is a motion of no confidence in the Government. How he could misunderstand this is beyond my comprehension. He went on to say that these rents were investigated in 1949. Thirty houses built by the Housing Trust since 1949 were affected in Mount Gambier, and since their erection the rental has increased from 38s. to 59s. 6d. There are also wooden buildings built by the Housing Trust, the rents of which have increased similarly. And yet we hear that "the fairest and most reasonable consideration" was given to the variation of these rents.

Let us look at one or two further facts. Many of these houses are substandard. There is at Terowie an old house occupied by the train examiner there, the rent of which has increased from 23s. to 48s., a 25s. increase. That house has no rainwater, and no septic system. There are three rainwater tanks and an underground tank that leaks—and everyone knows what that means. The water is seeping in and undermining everything.

Mr. Clark: That has been going on for a long time.

Mr. HUTCHENS: Yes, and that man has to pump water up to the ceiling in a container. He has no garden. They are some of the things we have been told about this afternoon. The Treasurer said that we were on the wrong lines and that we should have approached this matter in some other way. I congratulate my Leader on his effective reply. It will not be challenged because there is no challenge to it. Then we hear the story told by the Treasurer that he has made an appointment with His Excellency to produce this document at five o'clock. I repeat that it is a no-confidence motion and well justified.

Mr. Bywaters: What is wrong with sitting tomorrow?

Mr. HUTCHENS: If this was a matter of urgency, why did the Treasurer not call Parliament together in time to give us ample opportunity to give effect to what is necessary? He had no intention of doing so; he merely had the ulterior motive of depriving Parliament of its right to speak for the people it represents and of having his own way that he has had for far too long. He has said, in respect of the substandard houses, that "the fairest and most reasonable consideration will be given". Let us turn to Cockburn, where a packer lives in a condemned house, the old rent of which was 13s. a week. It has now risen to 32s. 6d. a week, an increase of 150 per cent. Is that "fair and reasonable"? Of course it is not.

Another railway worker, employed at Mount Gambier, is living in one of these places. He writes a letter to his union official explaining that he is occupying a house where there is a strong draught blowing through the holes in the walls and it is so damp that the atmosphere has been the cause of his youngest child's catching pneumonia. He has said that the draught is something that can be pardoned but, because of the rotten conditions under which he is living, they have a damp atmosphere night after night.

Mr. Jenkins: Would there be a trust house available?

Mr. HUTCHENS: When the honourable member stops whispering in his beard I will remind him that he has asked a question. I have seen this place and have been told that, if the man moves out, the Railways Department will not want him because it is part and parcel of his job to live in the house, as he can be called on from the railway house when he is wanted. It is a condition of his employment that he live in it. I am grateful for the

question from the honourable member for Stirling because that is what I was told, and I believe it to be true.

We hear talk about "fair and reasonable". Look at the poor unfortunate soul living in dwelling No. 763 at Cockburn. He is one of these people who will benefit from the generosity of the Government! This is the sort of hypocrisy being poked at us. He gets a margin of 8d. a day under this generosity—but 8d. only for a short duration, because it becomes an award then. His rent was 13s. 6d. a week; it was raised to 32s. 6d., a 19s. increase. When this was done, he drew it to the attention of his union representative, who

took it up and said, "This man is living in a very inferior type of house. He has not even a chimney on it." The authorities said, "We have made a mistake", and the rent was reduced. This is the "fairest and most reasonable" that the Treasurer speaks of. The rise was about 30 per cent. I do not want to weary the House with too many figures, and I regret that it has been made necessary for me to give some. I have particulars of nearly 200 houses where the rent has been increased and, in order that there shall be no mistake, I have worked out the average increase for some 42 of them, which I shall now give the House quickly. They are as follows:

Area.	Cottage No.	Old rent.		New rent.		Increase.		Percentage increase.
		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	
Bowmans	170	25	0	35	6	10	6	42
Long Plains	77	26	0	47	6	21	6	83
Long Plains	225	25	0	45	6	20	6	82
Long Plains	223	25	6	47	6	22	0	86
Long Plains	224	25	0	45	6	20	6	82
Long Plains	227	25	6	47	6	22	0	86
Mallala	163	27	9	47	0	19	3	69
Mallala	162	26	9	45	6	18	9	70
Mallala	164	27	9	47	0	19	3	69
Mallala	161	25	9	43	0	17	3	67
Two Wells	333	27	9	45	6	17	9	64
Two Wells	65	26	9	46	0	19	3	72
Virginia	220	31	0	46	6	15	6	50
Virginia	221	30	6	48	6	17	6	57
Virginia	157	28	0	47	0	19	0	68
Virginia	160	27	0	45	0	18	0	67
Mallala	270	28	3	47	6	19	3	68
Virginia	159	27	6	47	6	20	0	73
Bowmans	301	25	6	41	0	15	6	61
Angaston		29	9	52	0	22	3	75
Angaston		29	3	50	6	21	3	73
Angaston		28	6	48	6	20	0	70
Angaston		34	9	53	6	18	9	54

Mr. Ryan: What is the average increase?

Mr. HUTCHENS: I shall work it out in a moment. I have another set of figures, which are as follows:

Station.	Cottage No.	Old rent.		New rent.		Percentage Increase.
		s.	d.	s.	d.	
Taillem Bend	257	28	9	47	6	65
		38	0	50	0	32
		37	6	51	6	35
		32	3	57	6	78
		28	9	42	6	48
Snowtown	179	32	3	47	0	46
		28	0	42	6	52
		24	0	36	0	50
		26	0	41	6	60
		25	0	39	6	58
Pinnaroo	232	20	0	35	0	75
		25	0	39	6	58
		19	0	31	6	66
		18	6	31	6	70
		17	0	31	6	85
Cockburn		13	0	32	6	150
		17	0	31	6	85
		32	0	57	6	80
		28	6	51	6	81
Gawler						

I took those examples merely at random. There is an ulterior motive behind all this. While the Government pretends that it is being generous to the railway employees, it is at the same time using irritating tactics hoping and wishing that these men will go to the extreme of holding up the transportation of our goods. That is what it is doing. It is political humbug and a lack of sincerity, and this type of thing has long caused the people to lose confidence in this Government. If the Government were decent it would accept the motion of no confidence and walk out, and let an honest and conscientious Party come into office and do justice to the people.

Mr. LOVEDAY (Whyalla): The question of why and how this matter was introduced has been capably dealt with by the Leader and the Deputy Leader. It is a motion of no confidence in the Government and I want to deal with some of the remarks of the Treasurer. When a person takes refuge in averages and does not go much further than that, one can always be sure that if one examines the details, the averages will not reveal much. The Treasurer said he had a great consideration for the welfare of the railwaymen in regard to retrospective pay.

Mr. Ryan: He only says that at election time!

Mr. LOVEDAY: He says that the Railways Department has 2,300 houses but only 25 per cent of the total employees occupy them. He then says that he has information from New South Wales that only a few houses are owned by the Railways Department there, and that a few are rented to special officers at a commercial rate. He does not say how many, but the special officers are no doubt receiving quite high salaries. In New South Wales most of the houses are supplied by the New South Wales Housing Commission. Of course, when one examines what happens in South Australia, the people who work for the New South Wales railways are obviously much better off as a consequence of the policy of the New South Wales Government than are our railwaymen as a result of the policy followed here. When one considers the conditions of the people who live and have lived for a long time in Housing Trust houses in this State, one realizes that they are far better off than the people who have been living in houses owned by the Railways Department, because they are not subjected to terrific fluctuations and increases in rent as are railwaymen who occupy railway houses and they do not have to occupy sub-standard houses.

We have been told that the investigation of 1949 showed an average rent of 30s., but that the new fixed rent showed an average of 43s., an average increase of 13s. a week. There are 2,300 houses owned by the Railways Department, and the average rise of 13s. a week yields an extra £77,480 a year. This is not quite the £88,000 given in retrospective pay. It is a wonder the difference was not made up by adding more rent to some of the substandard houses. It is interesting to note that the increased rents almost balance what the men are getting in retrospective pay. This sudden and unjustified increase has been designed to recoup the amount given in retrospective pay. This amount will have to be found by 25 per cent of railway employees, so that the 25 per cent will be contributing to the retrospective pay of 100 per cent of the railwaymen. What justice is there in that?

Mr. Ryan: There isn't any.

Mr. LOVEDAY: The Treasurer has been careful not to go far afield for his examples. One instance was of a house 80 years old which had been greatly modernized and on which the rent had been increased from 46s. 6d. to 82s. 3d. He suggests that increase was justified because the house had been modernized, and he quoted the salary of this officer. Presumably the salary has something to do with the increase in rent, not what sort of house it is. Even though the house has seven rooms and has been modernized it does not compare with the modern Housing Trust double unit with all modern amenities which can be rented for £3 7s. 6d. or £3 12s. 6d.

Mr. Bywaters: What person would want a seven-room house when he is on the point of retiring and his family have grown up?

Mr. LOVEDAY: The member for Murray referred to the stable-type house, which was constructed almost a century ago like a stable with two houses in the one building. He instanced a packer receiving a low income and paying 22s. 6d. a week rent which was increased to 49s., an increase of 120 per cent. Many examples were given by the member for Frome of substandard houses, and many of them with a low rental have been offered as an inducement for people to go to outback places where there are no amenities whatsoever. The member for Frome also mentioned to me four houses close together in one of these places. They are identical in appearance and yet the increases in rent vary. The rent increases from one house to the next and when he asked me what might account for this, I said that the

highest rent was payable on the house at the end because that was closer to all the city amenities. Obviously that was the reason!

These are absurd inconsistencies in the way things have been done. The member for Frome said that rents in the Peterborough Division had been increased by 70 per cent—and this in a place where men should be kept satisfied! It is hard enough to get men to work in these areas, and the Commonwealth Railways Department had to get people in similar areas on a two-year bond, to remain in their houses on the East-West line. It dumped them in the never-never and kept them there and one or two became mentally ill. Rents in these places are low because men will not work there otherwise.

The Government talks about being interested in decentralization yet the highest increases in these charges are in the worst type of house in the places farthest from the city—and the members of the Government have the nerve to sit there and talk about their consideration for country dwellers! I have met some people in these distant places whose only reason for staying there is the low rent. The houses are substandard without any amenities. It is sickening to come into this Parliament and hear objections to having this matter discussed properly. Why was not Parliament called together earlier to discuss these matters if the Treasurer now wants more time? All this talk about members on this side objecting to two sittings is nonsense. Through the late Mr. O'Halloran this Party asked for two sessions a year. Parliament has not met for over six months and we have had no chance to deal with these matters properly. These rents will operate within a few days, so what chance is there otherwise of making a protest? Let us examine some comparisons that the Treasurer has been making.

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

Mr. LOVEDAY: The Treasurer said that today it was impossible to rent a house for less than 42s. a week. It is interesting to note what was said in the last report of the Housing Trust. This report is dated April 1, 1963, and it indicates a range of rents for country houses: for instance, a six-room double-unit house lets for 40s. 6d. to 80s.; a five-room double-unit house for 35s. 6d. to 72s. 6d.; a four-room double-unit house for 33s. to 63s.; a three-room double-unit house for 30s. 6d. to 60s.; and where there is a disability—such as a widow on a pension—the trust makes special

adjustments and decreases the rent. I suggest that many railway employees living in the district of Frome and elsewhere far from the city suffer equally grave disabilities—although not necessarily the same disability as the widow on a pension—which should have been taken into account in fixing their rentals.

The rents on these railway cottages were first fixed in 1941. Why haven't they been altered since then until now? I suggest that the Railways Commissioner knew perfectly well that the rents should be kept low. He knew that he could not get men to work in certain areas unless the rents were kept low. I do not think the department would have been keen on making these sudden and drastic rent increases. I believe the increases were made for the reasons I suggested earlier, otherwise the Railways Commissioner would have acted as the Housing Trust has acted for many years. The trust is not a benevolent institution. It has general contingency reserves of over £3,500,000 and it has few bad debts, so it does not run its business for fun. Nevertheless, in Whyalla—and I quote Whyalla because I know the position personally—the rents for the original double-unit houses have been adjusted five times from 1941 to 1956. However, so long as a person is an original tenant he can get a three-room trust house for 31s. 6d. a week; a four-room house for 33s.; or a five-room house for 35s. 6d. Those houses are far superior to the ones under review at present on which there have been rental increases of more than 100 per cent. The railway cottages are substandard and many have no damp courses. They are out of date in every respect and bear no comparison with the double-unit trust houses on which there have been five rental adjustments since 1941 and yet which can still be rented for 31s. 6d. to 35s. 6d. per week.

The adjustments to railway cottage rentals show shocking inconsistencies and lack of consideration for employees who deserve every consideration. The Treasurer referred to the question of retrospective pay and said that the Opposition was acting contrary to the best interests of the railway employees by moving this amendment. Even if the proposed sum were reduced by £100 the railway employees would be prepared to sacrifice that if this rent position could be rectified. I do not believe that all railway employees are so callous of their fellows who occupy railway cottages that they would wish to see these shocking increases imposed. The rent increases have been imposed in a manner that is provocative of industrial trouble, is completely inconsistent

and unjustified, and is an outstanding piece of maladministration. If there were good administration the increases would have been gradual and related to the situation. In no instance can that be said to be so. I hope that at this late hour the position will be reviewed in the interests of the railway employees concerned.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie): I support the amendment and register my protest on behalf of all railway workers, particularly those at Port Pirie. I have received a letter from the secretary of the Port Pirie Sub-Branch of the Australian Railways Union, which states:

Our members residing in railway homes are receiving notices increasing their rent. In many cases the rises seem excessive. Most of them complain that they receive very little service from the department. In fact all the men I have spoken to have intimated that they do most of the jobs about their homes with little or no assistance from the department.

The letter instances some of the proposed increases. Houses that were originally available for 33s. a week will now command a rent of 60s. The letter concludes:

Have we still a Fair Rents Board in existence?

That is the general feeling and I assure members that these men are most concerned about the Government's attitude. The Treasurer said that we would get no support from the railway employees, but I assure him that we will come out of this far better than the Government will. If ever there has been an Irishman's increase, this is it. The men receive an increase in wages and an increase in rent at the same time. Surely the court granted the wage increase because of increased costs of living! I am sure it did not intend the Government to benefit by the decision.

I understand that the average rentals mentioned by the Treasurer apply to the metropolitan area. He did not mention the sub-standard country houses. Incidentally, the cost of living in country areas is certainly much higher than in the metropolitan area, particularly on perishables. It would appear that the Railways Commissioner is endeavouring to recoup revenue losses from the pockets of his employees. For years South Australian railway workers have been lagging behind their counterparts in other States in conditions and marginal increases. It was not until after months of negotiation with the Treasurer and the Railways Commissioner that some relief was granted to sections of these employees. It now seems that these excessive rent increases are designed to penalize railway employees because of their success in receiving the

margins they are rightly entitled to get. As the member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) pointed out yesterday, the railway worker is one of the most important Government employees in this State. Practically everyone, and certainly every type of primary and secondary industry in this State, relies on these men at one time or another. This rent increase is an injustice that many of these men who have families will find extremely hard to bear.

This is a bad example for the Government to set because it will no doubt encourage private landlords, who (as I think most members will agree) need little encouragement, to do likewise. As pointed out by other speakers, many railway cottages are substandard and do not have decent facilities. I need not elaborate on that, as it has been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that many of these houses have galvanized baths, no sinks, and no water inside. I know this to be true because I have travelled extensively throughout the country, and I know that many of these houses should be condemned as unlivable. I hope that the Government sees fit to reconsider this matter and give the people the justice to which they are entitled. I support the amendment.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood): In supporting the amendment, I do not wish to detain the Committee in reiterating points made by previous speakers, who have dealt with this case adequately, competently and, at times, with brilliance. I am not surprised that so little has been heard from Government members, as the Government is obviously not too comfortable about this matter. The kind of specious argument produced by the Treasurer on this occasion is the type we have heard from him previously. He does not seek to deal with the merits, but suggests that there has been some mistake in tactics on the part of the Australian Labor Party. He does not seem to agree with the authorities in Parliament on the way in which a motion of no confidence should be moved. This is the only way we could protest, as is clear to everyone. This protest was desired by railway workers in this State, and I am sure that, when other members of the community see what has happened, it will be desired by them.

The increase in the rents of certain Government-owned houses is not limited in its effect to the tenants of those houses: it will have its effect on the general standard of rents in the community. This is something that will cause Parliament grave concern before long. Last year Parliament abolished the Landlord

and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act and substituted a fair rents court. The procedure in that fair rents court is something that has yet to be tested to any degree, but the court has to rely for part of its assessment on the general standard of rents in the community. If the rents of Government-owned dwellings are considerably increased, this must affect the general standard of rents in the community and any control that could be placed upon rack-renting landlords by the fair rents court itself.

Already we should realize that increases in rentals in the community must cause us some concern. In Norwood, which is largely a rental area, increases in the rentals for older type houses have been alarming. In some cases they have exceeded the proportionate rent increases that have occurred in the cases that have been cited, but further rent increases in these dwellings are forecast. When these further increases take place, it seems likely that the tenants will be driven to desperation to go through the expensive procedure with which they are faced when they go before the fair rents court because they will have nowhere else to go, but at that stage of the proceedings the fair rents court will be faced with the fact that the rents of comparable dwellings in the community are going up, and that they are doing so after this has been encouraged by the Government.

This increase in the rentals of railway workers' dwellings will have a widespread effect on the community in this way. We cannot go on doing this sort of thing. The Government should have acted with restraint in this matter; it should have set an example to see that excessive rents were not charged for substandard dwellings. The only effective authority is that section of the Housing Trust that deals with the Housing Improvement Act, and the only effective rent control in my district is in respect of those dwellings that have been declared substandard, in which case rental orders are made to prevent landlords from getting high rentals. However, for those borderline cases of houses that cannot be declared substandard (some of which are comparable with many of the medium class railway cottages dealt with in this debate) the rents will be affected, as I have pointed out. I believe that the Government has taken a precipitate, unwarranted and harsh action in this matter. It has done grave harm to many railway workers, and what is more it has done something to the detriment of the community generally, and particularly to the rent-paying section.

The Committee divided on the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition:

Ayes (18).—Messrs. Burdon, Bywaters, Casey, Clark, Coreoran, Curren, Dunstan, Hughes, Hutchens, Jennings, Langley, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, Ryan, Tapping, Frank Walsh (teller), and Fred Walsh.

Noes (18).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Coumbe, Ferguson, Freebairn, Hall, Harding, Heaslip, Jenkins, Laucke, Millhouse and Nankivell, Sir Baden Pattinson, Mr. Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford (teller), Messrs. Quirke and Shannon, and Mrs. Steele.

The CHAIRMAN: There are 18 Ayes and 18 Noes. As the numbers are equal, I give my casting vote in favour of the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived; line passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1).

The Supplementary Estimates were adopted by the House and an Appropriation Bill for £1,064,000 was founded in Committee of Ways and Means, introduced by the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford, and read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is based upon the Supplementary Estimates which have been dealt with by the House. Clause 2 authorizes the issue of a further £1,064,000 from the general revenue for the purposes set out in the Supplementary Estimates. Clause 3 appropriates that sum and sets out the amount to be provided under each department or activity.

Clause 4 provides that the Treasurer shall have available to spend only such amounts as are authorized by a warrant from His Excellency the Governor, and that the receipts of the payees shall be accepted as evidence that the payments have been duly made. Clause 5 gives power to issue money out of Loan funds or other public funds if the moneys received from the Commonwealth Government and the general revenue of the State are insufficient to meet the payments authorized by the Bill. This is a normal clause and the authority will almost certainly not be required this year. Clause 6 gives authority to make payments in respect of a period prior to July 1, 1962, or at a rate in excess of the rate which was in force under any return, award or determination. I think honourable members realize the purpose of that. In particular, it authorizes the retrospective payment of wages to railway employees. I commend the Bill for the consideration of members.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I take this opportunity to point out that the vote taken a little while ago resulted from what we on this side of the House consider to be a most unsatisfactory position. We commend the industrial organizations of this State, and even this Government will admit that our work force is very moderate. Although provision has been made to pay certain increases to railway personnel, it is poor compensation for the taking away of other money by way of rent increases.

The evidence submitted by members on this side of the House in the debate on the Supplementary Estimates clearly shows the need for an investigation into the type of accommodation provided for many railwaymen. Some of the accommodation is overdue for demolition. I think the least the Government should do is lay on the table of the House, not later than the next sitting day, a full report by the Housing Trust on these increases. Such action might assist in curtailing the hostility of the people affected by the imposition of these increases. As it is necessary for this matter to go to another place—and knowing that certain members of that House support me—I will not further delay the passage of this Bill.

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

Later:

Bill returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

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

That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered, the House meet on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in each week, at two o'clock.

Motion carried.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD moved:

That during the present session, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and after the six o'clock adjournment on Wednesdays, Government business take precedence over other business, except questions.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): In my opinion, any matters that come to this House from the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation should be considered in Government time. Can the Premier say whether Wednesday afternoons can be reserved entirely for what we on this side of the House consider to be private members' business, instead of that period being devoted to motions for disallowance of regulations that have been considered by that committee?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Two types of motion can result in respect of subordinate legislation. Any member of the House may move for the disallowance of a regulation. That, in my opinion, is a private member's job and should be done in private members' time but, concerning motions that may be moved by the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation where that committee has decided to disallow a regulation and it is a decision of the committee, the Government will provide time for that matter to be dealt with outside of private members' time. But it has to be an official matter that has been raised by the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation, not by a private member as such. If a private member of the committee is moving against what may be a decision of the committee, that must be regarded as private members' business. Last year the Government made some provision to help members in this regard.

Motion carried.

[*Sitting suspended from 8.14 to 9.7 p.m.*]

ADJOURNMENT.

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

That the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, July 23, at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

At 9.8 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 23, at 2 p.m.