HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, August 21, 1963.

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

QUESTIONS.

EXAMINATION FEES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: In this morning's press appears a report of a question asked by the Deputy Leader yesterday and the reply by the Minister of Education concerning public examination fees. My Party and I regard this as a contentious matter. The Minister no doubt will recall, and it is recorded in *Hansard*, that I raised this question on July 30. The Minister in his reply said that Cabinet had investigated this matter but that it really had nothing to go on because the university was an autonomous body. In my second question I said:

According to the press article I quoted, there is doubt about these fees. No-one would want to reduce fees for a service, and if examiners are being underpaid, we should be told. Can the Minister indicate what fees are paid to the examiners, or is this matter regarded as confidential?

The Minister said he would be pleased to obtain that information. On the following day, when asking another question, I quoted section 18 (3) of the University of Adelaide Act, and then said:

This indicates to me that the Government will now accept the recommendation of the University Council. Is the Minister in a position to agree with my contention that the Government has now accepted the increases? Can the Minister of Education say what fees are paid to the examiners, what sum will be provided for this purpose, and whether parents who have paid and are continuing to pay fees for the next examination will be re-imbursed if the fees are reduced? With a view to setting the matter in order, particularly as Government expenditure is involved, will the Minister call for a report from the Crown Solicitor? I do not want to interfere with administration, but the examination fees should be determined by the Minister and Parliament, and not by the University Council or University Senate.

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: To clarify any misunderstanding, I point out that the Deputy Leader yesterday asked me a question on behalf of the Leader, who was absent through indisposition, as well as on his own behalf, and I replied. I would have preferred to reply to the Leader, who first raised the matter. I have already had some discussions with the Vice-Chancellor of the university and I have an appointment for him to call to see me at my office at 10.30 tomorrow morning, when I shall discuss the matters raised by the Leader as well as several other equally relevant and important matters. If I am able to supply all the information by tomorrow, I shall do so in reply to a further question, otherwise I shall endeavour to do so by next Tuesday.

PETROL PRICES.

Mr. COUMBE: Recently I have heard suggestions that a reduction is contemplated in the price of petrol. As several foodstuffs have been reduced in price recently, can the Premier, as Minister in charge of the Prices Department, confirm or deny those suggestions?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Price reductions for foodstuffs arose from the removal of sales tax upon certain items, as provided in the Commonwealth Budget. No price reductions were mentioned for petrol or fuel oils, but in fact there will be a small reduction in the price of petrol. I shall be making an announcement about that today.

Mr. Jennings: On ADS7 tonight?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: No. I will be announcing much better news tonight.

The SPEAKER: Order! This session is not being broadcast.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Investigations have disclosed that the price of standard and supergrade petrols can be reduced by one halfpenny a gallon. The Prices Commissioner conducted the investigations, and full facts will be made public through the newspapers.

REID MURRAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. LOVEDAY: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question concerning employees of Reid Murray who paid part of their wages into the firm's savings account?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: My colleague, the Attorney-General, has informed me that any part of an employee's wages, when placed in a savings account of a company by which he is employed, would immediately cease to be wages, and, in the event of the liquidation of that company, he would not be entitled as regards money in the savings account to the priority for payment of wages under section 292 (1) of the Companies Act, 1962.

COMMONWEALTH AID FOR EDUCATION.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Last night, during discussion of the lines of the Loan Estimates

in Committee, some discussion ensued on the question of Commonwealth aid for education. When speaking on that matter, I omitted to raise one aspect that I wished to raise. Will the Premier say whether, at a Premiers' Conference or elsewhere, a direct approach has been made by the States to the Commonwealth Government for financial aid specifically for education?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Premier of New South Wales had a complete survey made in that State, which also took in some of the features of other States, on the requirements of education. He circulated that information to all States and, if the honourable member is interested, I can probably lend him my copy for his information. The Premier of New South Wales, having discussed the matter with all State Governments, arranged for it to be placed on the agenda of the Premiers' Conference. It has been discussed at two Premiers' Conferences at least, and direct requests, which were supported by all the five States on each occasion, have been made to the Commonwealth Government. Arising from that, I believe that the Commonwealth Government may be considering the appointment of a committee of inquiry, but I am not sure of that. However, the matter has been placed before the Commonwealth Government.

HOSPITALS FOR AGED.

Mr. HUTCHENS: On the front page of the last issue of *Truth*, under the heading of "Private Hospitals Torment for the Aged", there is a report stating that nurses had made amazing claims. Among other things, it states:

> Eighteen men and women are existing on a starvation diet. They have to wash in cold water; hot water is not available. Fires are not allowed to be lit and fireplaces and radiators are barred.

I am grateful to this newspaper for having published this article because recently constituents have written to me asking if I could recommend a home. I said that I knew of several homes I was not prepared to recommend, and I referred the inquiring party to the almoner at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. I acknowledge that some homes, particularly church homes, are doing a remarkable job in providing for the aged. Will the Premier say whether the Government has any plans to police such homes to see that they are of satisfactory standard and that they provide reasonable comfort for those who are paying patients?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I have not seen the article mentioned and have not checked the information, so I have no general information about the control of these homes. However, if my memory is correct, about five or six years ago the Government introduced a Bill which was passed and which made the licensing of homes necessary. I believe a licence has to be provided by the local government authority. That arose because of conditions in a home in the eastern suburbs which, on examination by the Government, proved to be not satisfactorily run. I assume the article referred to gives some substance to the statements read by quoting places and facts and, if that is so, I will check the position and see whether action is necessary.

KOONGAWA SCHOOL.

Mr. BOCKELBERG: Will the Minister of Works indicate whether the request for a septic system for the Koongawa school has been considered?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I have received a note from the Director of the Public Buildings Department stating that the request for the septic tank installation at this school has been investigated by the Public Buildings Department and that a report on the cost and availability of a suitable water supply has been referred to the Director of Education for consideration. I recently saw the docket on this matter, and I think I am correct in assuring the honourable member that the matter will be dealt with soon.

CIGARETTE MACHINES.

Mr. JENNINGS: Recently, certain small business people in my district, particularly mixed business and delicatessen proprietors, have complained about a peculiar system that seems to be abroad in the community at present whereby a firm establishes in private houses cigarette-vending machines. These small businessmen are naturally disturbed at the effect this will have on their businesses, and they are rather suspicious that these machines will be used not only by householders and their families but possibly by neighbours. I realize that I cannot argue the matter, but it seems that the suspicions are probably well founded, because it seems inconceivable that a person would establish in his home a machine from which he could buy cigarettes for himself. Will the Premier comment on this practice?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: At present many competitive devices are being used which, in the general interests of the

public, are not desirable. I do not know whether this matter falls within the scope of legislation the Government intends to introduce, but I will certainly investigate it.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD.

Mr. CASEY: The Chairman of the Betting Control Board, Mr. T. E. Cleland, was reported in the *News* of August 16 as saying that the board, when making investigations into totalizator agency board betting, was not to express opinions or to make a recommendation. He was also quoted as saying:

The Premier has given the board no discretion.

As this statement appears to conflict with the Premier's statement in this House on August 8 (that the terms of reference would not be closed), will the Premier release the text of his instructions to Mr. Cleland? If he will not do this, will he allow the board the right to make its recommendations direct to this Parliament and allow Parliament the right to decide this social issue? Further, does the Premier think that the board should be free to express its own views and that this would be desirable in the public interest, particularly as he has already indicated to this House (with which view I wholeheartedly agree) that the board already has the powers of a Royal Commission?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The question whether or not a totalizator agency board off-course betting system would be supported would depend to a considerable degree upon the point of view of the person concerned. I made it clear to this House that the Government desired the Betting Control Board to get the ascertainable facts regarding T.A.B. and to place those facts before honourable members. It is for honourable members themselves to make up their minds and to decide what action should be taken.

Regarding the letter that I was instructed by Cabinet to send to the board, there is no objection whatsoever to its being made available to this House, and I will not hesitate to bring it down and read it to honourable members should they desire to ask me questions on that topic tomorrow. I made it clear before, and again make it clear, that what the B.C.B. has been asked to do is to get the fundamental information as far as possible on the results of T.A.B. off-course betting where it has been established. The reason for that is that the people who are asking for this system to be established here wish it to be established in accordance with what has been done in Victoria, where it is claimed to be so successful. In those circumstances I think it is only right that honourable members should have precise information on what has happened where the T.A.B. system has been established. I am sure that members will then be competent to decide whether or not to support it.

DRUGS.

Mr. TAPPING: On August 7 last I asked the Premier a question concerning the use of habit-forming drugs, and the Premier said he would obtain a report for me from the Minister of Health. Has he that report?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: A report from the Director-General of Public Health states:

Some drugs such as morphia are strongly habit-forming and dangerous if used without strict medical supervision. They are rigidly controlled. Others, such as barbiturate sleeping tablets, and the so-called "pep-pills", may often be habit-forming if used to excess. They are available only on medical prescription. Many other simpler drugs occasionally appear to be habit-forming in individual cases. This is true of relaxa-tabs and even of A.P.C. and aspirin. It is not considered reasonable to restrict the availability of these simple remedies to the whole population in an attempt to prevent their misuse by a few odd individuals. The position is kept constantly under review by the Public Health Department, and at the national level through the National Health and Medical Research Council. Drugs are added to the restricted lists whenever the evidence warrants such action.

TELEVISION IN CARS.

Mr. FRED WALSH: Has the Premier obtained the report he promised in reply to a question I asked recently about television in motor cars?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Road Traffic Board has previously considered a provision in the regulations under the Road Traffic Act specifying the conditions governing the installation of television receivers in vehicles, as is contained in the Australian Motor Vehicles Standards Committee Regulations. However, at that time, it was of the opinion that such a regulation was not necessary as the question of television in cars in South Australia had not arisen and, as far as the trade people were concerned, it did not seem likely to arise in the foreseeable future. As pointed out by the Royal Automobile Association, there is now a likelihood that television receivers for cars will be marketed in South Australia, and the board will submit a regulation for consideration soon.

RAILWAYS POLICY.

Mr. HALL: Recently I asked a question of the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, concerning railways policy, particularly whether a public relations office would be established within the Railways Department. Has the Minister a reply?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Railways, informs me that the principal aim of the railways administration is to obtain more business. During the financial year just ended it succeeded in doing this. Although revenue from the carriage of grain was down £745,000 on the previous year, the total revenue was down only £80,000—an increase of 10 per cent in the tonnage of general merchandise contributing substantially to this result. Passenger revenue was up 1 per cent. Customer service is, of course, essential, and this is provided by the commercial section of the Traffic Branch, while general publicity is provided through the Secretary. From time to time the Commissioner has given a good deal of thought to the question of strengthening public relations and advertising activities, and indeed he has received propositions in this regard. However, he considered, and still considers, that the very substantial amounts involved could be used more effectively in other directions. There can be no doubt that the success the railways are achieving in gaining traffic in the highly competitive field of general merchandise comes from the provision of improved services at lower charges, and that such charges are only made possible by improved efficiency combined with careful control of expenditure.

Mr. HALL: I am pleased to receive the Minister's reply concerning my representations, but I am rather disappointed that the Commissioner does not see fit to arrange for the establishment of a public relations office in the department. However, I hope the Commissioner will be willing to accept the advice of impartial observers, which will cost the Railways Department nothing. Will the Minister ask his colleague, the Minister of Railways, to remove from all railway ticket-selling offices the sign commencing with the words "Tender Correct Fare"?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I will do that. It is necessary for the Commissioner's officers to have protection otherwise they will be obliged to have change for all denominations of coin that may be tendered to them, and they might not be able to provide this. That is the intention of the notice. Whether the wording is such as to attract or repel patronage I cannot say, but I will bring the matter to my colleague's notice.

APPRENTICES.

Mr. LANGLEY: On November 6 last year the following article appeared in the *Advertiser*:

State Government departments were being instructed to employ the maximum number of apprentices, the Minister of Labour and Industry (Mr. Rowe) said yesterday. This followed a recent survey of apprentice employment by the Public Service Commissioner (Mr. C. A. Pounsett). Mr. Rowe said that the Government thought all departments should employ as many apprentices as practicable, because of the importance of apprentice training and the need to create maximum employment for children leaving school.

Can the Premier, representing the Minister of Labour and Industry, say how many extra apprentices were employed by the Government this year compared with the last five years?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

LEAVING HONOURS CLASSES.

Mr. BYWATERS: Recently a survey was taken of students at Murray Bridge High School on whether they would carry on with Leaving Honours if a class were established at Murray Bridge, and the probable successful candidates who would be willing to carry on the extra studies provided a Leaving Honours class was established at the school numbered about 25. When the same students were asked whether they would carry on with Leaving Honours studies if no class were established there, only 14 students said they were prepared to go to the metropolitan area to take the Leaving Honours course. As many people today are anxious to know whether Leaving Honours classes will be established in country areas—and this applies particularly at Murray Bridge—because they have to arrange for accommodation for the children, can the Minister of Education say whether the Government intends to establish a Leaving Honours class at Murray Bridge next year?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: At present, Leaving Honours classes are in operation in 14 metropolitan and country high schools, and I have approved the establishment of such classes in another six high schools, namely, Elizabeth, Mount Gambier, Plympton, Port Pirie, Adelaide Technical and Darwin. The claims are being considered of several

other high schools: namely, Campbelltown, Gawler, Kadina, Mount Barker, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln and Victor Harbour. I have not named the schools in any order of priority. The honourable member will notice that I have included Murray Bridge, which stands high in the order of priorities, but it is not possible to establish it for 1964. The classes for the 20 high schools for next year will exhaust the resources of our highly qualified specialist teachers and it will be impossible to establish any more before 1965. That is how I am at present advised. I understand that, at present, Murray Bridge High School has an enrolment of about 660 students compared with 573 last year, with 143 students in the third year and 65 in the fourth year. That is the nucleus of a strong Leaving Honours class soon. It would not be proper for me to commit myself or the department at this stage any further than the six schools I have announced. I am anxious that further Leaving Honours classes be established, particularly in country centres, but those classes are extravagant in the use of our highly qualified and specialist teachers. I am advised that it would be risky to announce the establishment of any further classes at this time of the year. If it is possible, later in the year, to decide on more, I shall be pleased to do so.

RAILWAY STANDARDIZATION.

Mr. McKEE: Yesterday, in reply to my question about rail standardization, the Premier said that £324,000 had been allocated to purchase rails. Can he say where these will be purchased? It has been suggested that these rails will be welded at Port Pirie. If this is so, can the Premier say whether the Government will do this work or will it be done by private contract?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: It is hoped that the rails will be purchased in Australia. The price of Australian rails at present is much more attractive than the price of rails overseas. From conversations I have had with the Railways Commissioner, I understand he intends to obtain welding equipment, set up a plant, and undertake the work. I will confirm that, because I am not sure whether it will be done at Port Pirie or at Peterborough. I will inform the honourable member soon.

DREDGING OPERATIONS.

Mr. HUGHES: During the debate on the Loan Estimates, the Treasurer said that he would obtain information about any allocation for the deepening of berths and channels at Wallaroo. Has he that information?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Many questions were asked yesterday on lines of expenditure on the Estimates. I was hoping to have all that information available tomorrow. I have set about obtaining it, but, with so many questions and other matters intervening, I have been unable to obtain all details requested by honourable members. I hope that a report will be ready tomorrow.

GAWLER SCHOOLS.

Mr. CLARK: Recently I sought information from the Minister of Education regarding the conversion of the old Gawler High School to a primary school to be called the Gawler East school. Has he further information?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I have had a comprehensive survey made of school needs in the Gawler district, particularly concerning the conditions at present prevailing at the Gawler Primary School, where conditions are unsatisfactory. An area of 2 acres 2 roods 4 perches of steeply sloping land contains the headmaster's residence, a masonry building of nine rooms, eight timber rooms, old and new toilet blocks and shelters, and these restricted premises accommodate an enrolment that grew from 489 in 1950 to 839 in 1961. Relief was afforded to the extent of 215 when the new Evanston school was opened in 1962, but the Gawler school, with 625 on the roll, still has a much greater number than can be considered satisfactory for such small premises. In addition to this overcrowding, the school is disadvantageously situated in the north-western extremity of Gawler, which is inconvenient to most of the scholars, many of whom live a mile away and some two miles away, especially on the eastern and south-eastern sides of the township.

I consider we should reduce the enrolment to a figure, say 250, that can be accommodated in the permanent building, making it possible to return much of the grounds to assembly, exercise and play uses by the removal of the timber classrooms. To permit this to be done, and to relieve a number of children of a long walk to and from school, it seems advisable to consider the establishment of other schools conveniently situated in the township. A site for a new school in Willaston to the north is being acquired, and it is most probable that it will be necessary to seek a site for another

school in Gawler South, where Housing Trust house-building activity will later probably result in a large number of children.

New schools in these areas will be required in a few years' time, but there is an immediate need for a new school in Gawler East to serve the area that lies to the south of the North Para River and to the east of the north-south line of Reid Street and the South Para River. The headmaster of the Gawler South school has informed me this week that children from this area are already enrolled at his school, and because subdivisions in section 6, 3074 and 3073 will increasingly produce children of school-going age, an enrolment approximating 250 can confidently be expected in the next few years.

To serve this area, a primary school in the Lyndoch Road premises of the Gawler High School would be conveniently situated, and as it is expected that the remaining classes of the high school will transfer to new premises in the southern part of Gawler at the end of this year, it seems possible to make the vacated premises available for use as a new Gawler East Primary School. A certain number of alterations and improvements will be required to fit the premises, especially the brick building, for primary use, but while this work is being done, some of the existing timber rooms could be retained for administration and class use. Accordingly, I have approved of the Gawler East Primary School being established as from January 1, 1964, as a new class III school.

GERANIUM AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Can the Minister of Works say when tenders are expected to be called for the proposed new area school at Geranium?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I have received the following report:

The private firm of quantity surveyors preparing the specified bill of quantities for the new buildings at the Geranium Area School have advised that they anticipate completing their work by the end of August, 1963. A final detailed estimate based on the completed documents will then be prepared and, subject to Government approval of funds on this estimate, it is expected to call tenders approximately at the end of September, 1963.

UPPER MURRAY GAME RESERVE.

Mr. CURREN: Recently an application was made by a group of sportsmen, known as the Upper Murray Field Sportsmen's Association, for an area at Woolenook Bend, near Renmark, to be leased to the group for development as a game reserve. I have been informed that the application was refused. Can the Minister of Agriculture outline the reasons for the refusal of that application and can he say what plans his department has for the future use of that area?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The area referred to is a forest reserve. The Upper Murray Field Sportsmen's Association applied to have the use of that land for encouraging the breeding of wild fowl and other game birds with the object of building up the bird population in the district for the benefit of shooters and nature lovers. I believe that that is a fair interpretation of the association's objectives. The association wrote to several Ministers, but the matter was referred to me not only because the Fisheries and Game Department is under my control but because I am also Minister of Forests and this area is a forest reserve. The Conservator of Forests reported to me that on no account did he want activities of the nature proposed pursued in that area. His department has plans to develop this timber stand, which has quite a potential. Those plans will not be effected immediately, but the department proposes to develop the area in future and it objects to any suggestion that the land be released for the purposes mentioned. The land tenure on a forest reserve is particularly secure. The department, as custodian of about 250,000 acres of land in South Australia, looks after its forest reserves well, and I sympathize with the Conservator's views. On the other hand, I am not necessarily saying that the aims and objects of the association are unworthy. I am willing to examine any further proposition it may make, but not in relation to this particular forest reserve.

MARRABEL WATER SCHEME.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: On August 14, in reply to a question, the Minister of Works said that the Engineer for Water Supply had made certain recommendations to the Engineer-in-Chief concerning the Marrabel water scheme. The Minister undertook to discuss the proposed scheme with the Engineer-in-Chief with a view to making a final report. My attention has been drawn to the fact that the Public Buildings Department has authorized an expenditure of over £1,000 on a water supply involving a bore and storage tank at the Marrabel Primary School. If there is a likelihood of the Marrabel water scheme being authorized by Cabinet, the proposed expenditure on a bore water supply for the school will be unnecessary. Can the Minister of Works say when he will be able to make a final report on the Marrabel water scheme?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: This scheme has been under consideration for some time, but because of difficulties concerned with various factors it has been a little delayed. However, I think that the problems that were harassing us have now been largely overcome. I expect to submit a proposition to Cabinet within the next week or two, and if Cabinet approves the project the scheme will proceed. I will supply the honourable member with additional details of a purely domestic nature—which would therefore be of no great interest to the House—but, generally speaking, the way is clear for the scheme to proceed. I am not sure, but I doubt whether funds can be found for it under the general line "Country Extensions" this year. I think it will have to be provided for in the 1964-65 Loan Estimates, but at least a definite programme will be laid down. I will discuss the question of the school supply with the Minister of Education to see whether that can await the completion of the main scheme. If it can, that will avoid unnecessary expenditure at the school.

MILLICENT COURTHOUSE.

Mr. CORCORAN: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked on August 6 concerning improvements to the frontal appearance of the Millicent courthouse?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Plans for improvements to the Millicent courthouse building have been completed and the contractor is being requested to submit a price for the work as a variation to his building contract. As soon as an offer acceptable to the department is received, he will be requested to proceed with the work.

OIL SLUDGE.

Mr. LAUCKE: Recently complaints were raised about the presence of oily sludge at various points along our southern coastline. It was suggested at the time that the oily substance might have originated from passing ships or from the oil refinery. Can the Premier say whether the seismic surveys being conducted off our coastline in the search for oil have as yet revealed any likely prospects of oil, and whether the presence of oily substances along the beaches after heavy weather is thought to have originated from underseabed oil deposits?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: True, there have been occurrences of sludge in St. Vincent Gulf recently. From time to time substances are washed up from the ocean on to our coast, and these are of a mineral oil nature. I do not believe that the origin has ever been specifically traced to any area, but investigations are proceeding. Indeed, a big bore is being arranged at present in the South-East, based on seismic information, largely brought about by an examination of the deposits referred to. Of course, from time to time there may be some leakage from the tankers supplying the refinery, and that matter is now receiving the attention of the Minister of Works.

CLERICAL ASSISTANTS.

Mr. RYAN: For a considerable time the Education Department has employed part-time adult clerical assistants in secondary schools with an enrolment of over 600 students. In some schools where the assistant has resigned difficulty has been experienced in getting the replacement of an adult part-time employee. Will the Minister of Education say whether the department has considered making this a full-time position? If it is a matter of economics, will he indicate whether the suggestion I made previously (that the position be offered to a junior on a full-time basis) could be adopted, particularly as some children leaving school find it difficult to obtain positions at present?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I shall be pleased to refer the honourable member's question and statement to the Public Service Commissioner, but I point out that clerical assistants are public servants within the meaning of the Public Service Act and are not under the control, authority or jurisdiction of the Minister of Education or the Education Department. They are appointed to the larger secondary schools on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, who has established a working rule which, I think, is to treat technical high schools more generously than high schools because he thinks a multiplicity of interests is involved, particularly as technical high schools conduct adult education classes as well. I think the suggestion is a practical one, and I will take it up personally with the Public Service Commissioner.

THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.

Mr. HUTCHENS: I know a person who was involved in an accident while travelling in a taxi and who, for various reasons, claimed damages for £40. He was told by the company insuring the taxi and the driver that, as the accident was not due to negligence by the taxi

driver, the claim would have to be made on another company with offices in New South Wales. I wrote to the company and received the same sort of reply. I thought it was the intention of Parliament that taxis were to be insured in a manner that would enable passengers to claim without any trouble from the insurers of the taxi in which they were travelling. As I do not think it is fair at this stage to disclose the names, if my assumption is correct and if I give particulars to the Premier, will he see whether something can be done to save this person further inconvenience?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes, I shall be pleased to do that if the honourable member will give me the correspondence.

DERAILMENT.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Following on the recent derailment of the goods train near Jabuk on the Pinnaroo line, I received a letter from the Pinnaroo District Council, which is supported in principle by both the Peake and Lameroo councils, suggesting that the poor condition of the track along this line has possibly caused the undue length of time taken to work a freight train along it, as well as the derailment. In view of that, will the Minister of Works obtain from the Minister of Railways a report on the condition of the track and ballasting on the Pinnaroo line and the reasons for the low speed limits required on certain sections of it?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes.

KOPPERAMANNA FATALITY.

Mr. CASEY: Shortly after the recent accident that occurred on the punt at the Cooper Creek crossing at Kopperamanna, I had discussions with the Minister of Works and recommended certain improvements. Has the Minister anything to report about additions to this punt to make it safe in future?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes. I was interviewed by representatives of residents on the Birdsville track adjacent to the crossing and by other interested parties, and certain improvements have been effected to the punt. In saying that, I am not suggesting that the punt as at first designed was inadequate for its task, but it is always possible to provide additional safety precautions, and that has been done. The buoyancy of the punt has been improved by the addition of two more buoyancy tanks, which give it much more carrying capacity and greater stability laterally. In addition, a hand railing has been placed around the edges of the decking. I think additional life jackets have been provided, and solid chocks have been provided longitudinally on the decking to prevent the wheels of vehicles slipping sideways when the decking is wet or when the punt has a slight tilt. In addition to that, the cable across the river has been strengthened; the mooring posts at each end have also been strengthened, and an outboard motor has been provided to propel the punt across the river. I believe the honourable member will agree that that is the most that can possibly be done under present circumstances. It will provide that essential vehicles for the use of people on the track, and also other people who must use the track even in flood periods, will be catered for. Although the limit of load to be carried on the punt has not been increased as a result of the additional precautions—if it were, probably the additional precautions would be defeated, so the load limit remains, I think, at eight tons gross —the punt should be more than capable of carrying that load with absolute safety.

FOSTER MOTHER.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: About 10 days ago I was approached by a lady in my district—a married woman with four children of her own—who had been notified by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board that her licence as a foster mother had been revoked. This lady has been fostering, for the last 18 months, a part-aboriginal child who is now 3½ years old. This lady was most upset about the revocation of her licence. She was told by the board that it would not give her any reasons for its action. I subsequently spoke to Mr. Cook, the Chairman of the board, and I know that he received a petition that had been circulating in the district. Yesterday I received a letter from the Secretary saying that the board was unable to agree to renew the licence. I am unhappy with this decision. If I give the Premier the name of the person involved, will he ask the Chief Secretary to request the board to reconsider the matter and also to look into it himself?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I shall be pleased to do that. Obviously, I do not know the particulars of this case, but if the honourable member will give me the name of the person concerned I shall ask the Chief Secretary to ascertain the exact position. I will inform the honourable member later.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE CHARGES.

Mr. BYWATERS: Recently I asked the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General, a question concerning Public Trustee's charges. Has the Minister a reply?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: The Attorney-General has supplied me with the following report from the Public Trustee:

Real and personal property which accrues to the survivor of joint tenants does not form portion of the estate of a deceased person. Succession duties are not payable in respect of such property by the administrator of the estate. It is the surviving joint tenant who is required to file with the Commissioner of Succession Duties the prescribed form U and pay the succession duties assessed by the Commissioner. In administering estates the Public Trustee, if instructed to do so, prepares for the surviving joint tenant the form U and attends to the payment of the succession duties assessed and the collection of the succession duties certificate required in order to deal with the joint property. In the majority of cases the cost of these services would be greater than the fee charged. The fee is prescribed under the Fees Regulation Act at the flat rate of £3 3s. Such fee is payable by the surviving joint tenant, not out of the estate of the deceased. Solicitors and corporate trustees make a charge for similar services. It is considered that the fee of £3 3s. charged by the Public Trustee is comparatively moderate. The fee of £3 3s. was fixed in 1959 when commission rates and fees chargeable by the Public Trustee were increased to meet the costs of service of the department.

MANNUM FERRY.

Mr. BYWATERS: During the Address in Reply debate I spoke about the punt crossing at Mannum and its total inadequacy during weekends and holidays. This matter has caused much concern to local residents and people who have to use the punt to cross the river in connection with their business or when going to church. Will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Roads, take notice of the remarks I made on that occasion and see whether it is possible to provide another punt for Mannum?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: In the normal course of events the Minister's staff would, I think, read all the remarks that were made, but in order to make sure that the Minister has noted this matter I will raise it with him so that it can come up for a reply in the ordinary course.

BOLIVAR SEWAGE WORKS.

Mr. HALL: From time to time I have asked the Minister of Works to appoint a committee to inquire into the possible uses of treated effluent from the Bolivar sewage treatment works. Has the Minister further information?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: This has been the subject of several discussions I have had with the Engineer-in-Chief and his officers, and also with Cabinet. As a result of recommendations made by the Engineer-in-Chief, Cabinet has approved the setting up of a committee to investigate the possible uses of effluent, which will be considerable. The committee will consist of Mr. H. J. N. Hodgson (Engineer for Water and Sewage Treatment in the Engineering and Water Supply Department), representatives of the Mines Department, the Agriculture Department, and the Lands Department (Irrigation Division), and a Waite Institute agronomist. The committee will consider all factors associated with the use of this effluent, including its relatively high salinity, soil characteristics, drainage and the economic aspects.

STIRLING WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. SHANNON: Towards the end of the last financial year, the Engineering and Water Supply Department purchased the necessary pipes for the extension of the water supply to Stirling and Crafers, and laid a considerable number throughout the area. I am informed (I think correctly) that there has been a delay in supplying water because of the failure of the Highways Department to carry out certain work on the main road between Crafers and Aldgate. As it seems there will be some hiatus if this matter is not quickly resolved, and as it seems that the Engineering and Water Supply Department is incurring considerable loss of revenue until the work by the Highways Department is completed, will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Roads whether a decision could be made soon on work to be done on the main road? Further, what liaison exists in this matter between the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the Highways Department?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I will discuss the matter with the Engineer-in-Chief and let the honourable member have a report.

POLICE REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

LOTTERY AND GAMING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1961. Read a first time.

FOOD AND DRUGS REGULATION: MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham): I move:

That Regulation No. 15 (amending the principal Regulation No. 40) relating to meat and meat products, made under the Food and Drugs Act, 1908-1962, on April 11, 1963, and laid on the table of this House on June 12, 1963, be disallowed.

This regulation is one of a group of 22 amending the consolidated regulations made under the Food and Drugs Act and gazetted in 1958. The regulations deal with various matters ranging from pet meat, false colours of labels on food, the standards for Vienna bread, and the prohibition of the sale of the drug thalidomide.

Mr. Jennings: Also the manufacture of ice cream.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes. The Subordinate Legislation Committee heard evidence on many matters contained in these regulations.

Mr. Bywaters: Your committee?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: It is not my committee, although I have the honour to be the Chairman. The honourable member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) gave evidence on the question of pet meat which is covered by the first regulation, and is the subject of another notice on the Notice Paper today. The honourable member for Gouger (Mr. Hall) made representations on the subject of ice cream and packaged meat, and Mr. Beck, of Master Butchers Ltd., gave evidence on behalf of that company on some matters, including smoke essences. This is not included in this motion because it is contained in another regulation.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford: You would not be in order in dealing with that.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am glad of that little correction from the front bench. I get such corrections fom time to time. Representations were made on a matter on which there is no motion for disallowance. It is one regulation only that is the subject of this motion. Any member can move for the disallowance of one of a set of regulations, but unfortunately this regulation contains about 20 paragraphs dealing with several matters pertaining to meat or fish. I shall address myself to two specific matters which, in the opinion of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, warrant this motion for disallowance. They are, first, the question of the addition of preservatives in minced or chopped meat and, secondly, the question of the standard laid down for the preparation of tripe—not the type of tripe that we sometimes hear in this House, from both sides—

Mr. Lawn: From the member for Mitcham!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: And from the member for Adelaide. I now refer to the tripe that is one of the foods that some people—and I say that advisedly—like to eat. Those are the two matters upon which this motion centres. The paragraph relating to minced or chopped meat is as follows:

4. Chopped or minced meat is meat which has been disintegrated by mincing, chopping, cutting or comminuting and includes rissole steak, hamburger steak, pie meat and other chopped meats sold under a specific name.

There is nothing wrong with that part, but the next sentence is the one to which objection has been taken—in the committee's opinion, validly. It is:

It shall not contain any preservative, salt or other foreign substance.

The other paragraph, which deals with tripe, is as follows:

12. Tripe as sold for human consumption shall not be prepared so as to impair its nutritive qualities, shall not contain any added substances except salt and—

And this is the part of the paragraph to which objection has been taken—

—its reaction value as determined by the prescribed method shall not be less than pH 6.5 nor greater than pH 7.5.

Another matter concerned the addition of farinaceous matter—which, I understand, is starch—in sausage meat. There is provision now that sausage meat shall contain not more than 6 per cent and not less than 3 per cent of farinaceous matter. Some objection was taken to the new proposal, but as that paragraph depends substantially upon the minced meat provision, as I will explain later, it is not necessary for me to go into that in great detail. Unfortunately, the other matters that are contained in this regulation will have to be disallowed if the House agrees to this motion. In most instances there is no objection to the other provisions. However, I point out that to make a fresh regulation omitting the objectionable features of the present regulation is not difficult. In any event, the 1958 regulations are still in force and still give, at least in the short run, adequate protection to the public.

We have taken 41 pages of evidence on this regulation. I will not weary the House by quoting it all, but it is fair and necessary that I should outline the evidence we have taken on the two specific matters. The first witness was Mr. Sydney Riccard Beck, the Secretary of Master Butchers Limited. He gave evidence

to the effect that preservative has always been permitted in minced meat. The preservative used is sulphur dioxide, which is a recognized preservative used in many foods, including most soft drinks. He testified that that preservative had no harmful ill-effects. Under the regulation there is an absolute prohibition against the addition of any preservative in minced meat. Mr. Beck refuted the suggestion which had been made, and which was in fact made later, that by the addition of preservative one could make apparently stale meat appear to be fresh. The real objection, as Mr. Beck has explained the matter, is not in the preparation of minced meat, which can be done when perfectly fresh and be fresh when it is sold, but in the fact that if there is no preservative in the minced meat it deteriorates rapidly. While it may be perfectly fresh when purchased by the customer—in most cases the housewife—instead of its keeping for a week, as minced meat with preservative will do, it deteriorates within a few days.

Mr. Bywaters: Didn't you prove that to your own satisfaction?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes, and I will explain how in a moment. That was the crux of the problem so far as minced meat was concerned. He said that even in the cooler months butchers had received many complaints about minced meat deteriorating. He was certain that in the warmer weather during the summer those complaints would be multiplied many times over. He pointed out that preservative is still permitted to be included in sausage meat, and he also discussed the question of farinaceous matter. He explained that it was impossible for the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board, which prepares about 80 to 85 per cent of the tripe sold in South Australia, to comply with the provisions that I have quoted. I shall say more about that later.

Mr. Shannon: Wouldn't it be wise to tell us the promulgator's reasons for bringing this regulation in?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes, if the honourable member wants me to. Regulation 15 is the one to which we have been referring, and in the explanation, which was supplied to the committee by Mr. McCarthy, the Secretary of the Food and Drugs Advisory Committee, the following appears:

Proposal: to delete the present standards for meat and meat products and to substitute the uniform draft standards for meat and fish recommended for adoption by all States by the National Health and Medical Research Council. For the purposes of clarity the whole regulation is struck out and re-made.

Reasons: The proposed regulation does not to any large extent vary the present requirements; the principal differences are as follows:

1. Minced meat—preservative is no longer permitted; with proper refrigerated storage minced meat can be sold unpreservatized.

The explanation then refers to manufactured meat, which I need not read, meat pie and prepacked meats. The latter was referred to by the member for Gouger (Mr. Hall) when he gave evidence. Mr. McCarthy concluded his explanation by saying:

The provisions for canned meat and canned fish which are included remain the same as before.

Members will note that in his explanation Mr. McCarthy did not even mention tripe, which is one of the other matters to which exception was taken. The next witness was Dr. Philip Scott Woodruff (Director-General of Public Health), who gave evidence in support of the regulations. He said, in effect, that the regulations aimed to achieve uniformity so that manufacturers and suppliers would meet the same standard in border areas (for instance, Mount Gambier) so that a manufacturer need print only one label for use throughout the country. It was obvious from his evidence that the aim of the regulations was to achieve uniformity throughout Australia. He was asked first about the addition of smoke essences, but I need not go into that, as his evidence on it was accepted. When asked about preservatives for minced meat, he said:

The Federal Additives Committee, which is a committee set up by the National Medical Research Council, in 1963 reaffirmed its opposition to preservatives in minced meat and recommended that the trade should attack this situation by installing better refrigeration.

He had had the advantage of seeing the evidence given by Mr. Beck. He went on to say:

Mr. Beck said that a prohibition on the use of preservative in minced meat cannot be sustained on the ground of any harmful effects. I challenge that—

I ask members to observe the following phrase.

— but not to any extent. Sulphur dioxide is an irritant and we have to be careful of the amount permitted and think of it in relation to the total amount of the commodity likely to be eaten.

The honourable Mr. Potter asked him:

We have been eating meat containing sulphur dioxide for many years in South Australia, haven't we?

He replied:

That is so.

He was then asked:

Are there any cases where people have been affected?

To this he replied:

I am not aware of any.

He was then asked:

It is used in other foods, such as soft drinks, isn't it?

He said in reply:

Yes.

Although, according to him, there is apparently some theoretical possibility of harm, he had to admit, when actually asked, that he knew of no instances of harm and that, in fact, sulphur dioxide as a preservative had been used in foods for many years in South Australia, apparently without ill effect.

Mr. Shannon: Did he say why other States had adopted these restrictions?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: No, but he did say that every other State except Tasmania had the restrictions, which they had had for some time.

Mr. Shannon: Can they sell these articles in reasonable condition without these preservatives?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes, but they add a little farinaceous matter (starch) so that their products come within the regulations. If starch is added, the meat becomes coarse ground sausage meat, and then people are allowed to add the preservative, as the addition of 3 per cent starch to minced meat enables them to be able to use the preservative.

Mr. Hall: And this will lower the quality of the minced meat, will it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: It will alter the nature of the minced meat, and it may well lower the quality. It will contain some proportion of starch so that the preservatives can be added. The committee was then in this position—it had had one witness against the regulation (and I say with great respect to him that he was not a practical butcher) and one witness in favour of it (not a practical butcher—a medical practitioner).

Mr. Jennings: A butcher of a different kind!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I was not going to say that.

Mr. Shannon: I think you are unfair to Dr. Woodruff, who has some knowledge on the score of health.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes, I certainly do not want to reflect in any way on Dr. Woodruff.

Mr. Shannon: His health services are well known.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am pointing out only that he is not a practical butcher. That being so, the committee felt it should have evidence from somebody engaged in the trade, and for that purpose it invited Mr. Lindsay Mase, a master butcher, to give evidence. I emphasize that Mr. Mase did not approach the committee; he was asked whether he would be prepared to come along to help it. His evidence was of extreme help because not only did he come along but he brought with him several samples of meat that he had had prepared in his own factory the day before.

Mr. Shannon: And he knew from first-hand experience what troubles he could run into.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: That is right. He brought along two small packets of minced steak (one with preservative and the other without) and two packets of minced meat (one with preservative and one without). Even on the Wednesday when he came, one could tell the difference between those that had the preservative and those that did not. The samples with the preservative were a good, bright colour.

Mr. Shannon: Made from nice fresh meat.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: With the colour kept in by sulphur!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: That is correct.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: The same is done with apricots.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Does it do any harm?

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: No.

Mr. Shannon: If I were investigating such a matter I should like to see the article prepared.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Let me read what Mr. Mase said about his samples. I asked him whether he had samples with him and he said:

Yes. I have some samples of mince with preservative and mince without it. These were prepared about 24 hours ago.

He went on to speak about the mincing machine that had been used. I think he said both samples were prepared at the same time, but I have no doubt, from the general drift of his evidence, that they were prepared at the same time with the same quality meat. At first, all the difference one could see was in the colour. He was good enough to allow us to keep these samples of meat, and Miss Bottomley, who is well known to all members in this House, was kind enough to allow us to keep them in one of the refrigerators. To my knowledge there are associated with Parliament three persons at least who are highly

skilled in domestic matters: Miss Bottomley, who looks after us when we are here; the member for Burnside, who is a practising housewife; and the Hon. Mrs. Cooper, who is also a practising housewife and a member of the Legislative Council.

Mrs. Steele: Practical, too, I think.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Practical and practising. We had the advantage of Miss Bottomley's opinion and the member for Burnside's opinion on this experiment as the days passed. I am indebted to the Clerk Assistant in this House, who acts as one of the joint secretaries of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, for the preparation of a table which I have here showing the condition of these samples day by day. On August 7, which was the first day, the minced steak had a good red colour and a good smell. That was with preservative. Without preservative it had a poor colour—brownish—but a good smell. Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to include this table in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

MEAT SAMPLES KEPT UNDER HOUSEHOLD REFRIGERATED CONDITIONS.

	Minced Steak.				Minced Meat.			
	With Preservative.		Without Preservative.		With Preservative.		Without Preservative.	
Date.	Colour.	Smell.	Colour.	Smell.	Colour.	Smell.	Colour.	Smell.
7/8/63 . .	Good (red)	Good	Poor (brown)	Good	Good (red)	Good	Poor (brown)	Good
8/8/63 . .	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Good
9/8/63 . .	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Good
12/8/63 . .	Good	Good	Poor	Bad	Good	Good	Poor	Bad
13/8/63 . .	Good	Good	—	—	Good	Good	—	—
14/8/63 . .	Good	Good	—	—	Good	Good	—	—

Conclusions:

1. Meat without preservative was of an unattractive colour at the beginning of the experiment as compared with meat containing preservative.

2. Meat without preservative smelt putrid after six days, whilst meat with preservative was still edible after eight days, the smell and colour being quite good.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: The effect of it was that for the first few days, although the colour of the unpreservatized minced meat and minced steak was definitely brownish compared with the samples with preservative in being a good red colour, the smell remained the same. On the Friday the member for Burnside examined the samples for me and said without hesitation that although she thought all samples were good she definitely preferred the samples that contained preservative. I think that is correct; the honourable member will correct me if I am wrong. Miss Bottomley, whose opinion I also respect and value highly, said the same thing, but she remarked that it would be over the weekend that the real test would come. Mark you, these things were being kept under refrigeration all the time. By the Monday, which was August 12, the differences were most obvious. Both samples without preservative smelt and had definitely gone off, quite apart from the colour, which was bad. It was at that stage that Miss Bottomley peremptorily ordered their destruction.

Mr. Clark: What do you buy this stuff for: to eat it or to keep it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: We were making a scientific experiment, which I hope is impressing the House; it was as scientific as we could make it, and I am sure it was quite reliable. Who here would question the opinion, on a matter like this, of Miss Bottomley or the member for Burnside? By Monday, that without preservative had definitely gone off and had to be destroyed. Even on the Wednesday, a week after we had placed it in the refrigerator, the minced meat with preservative still looked good and appeared good. However, I must say that Miss Bottomley thought, knowing it had been kept for a week, that it should not—as I suggested it should—be put on members' tables. However, in appearance and in smell—I even saw her taste it in its raw state—it seemed to be perfectly good. There we have the experiment that we carried out here of the meat with preservative lasting for a full week whereas the meat without preservative had definitely gone off some days earlier. Mr. Mase in his evidence said that appearance was very important in merchandizing meat today. The

member for Burnside did not like the appearance of the meat without preservative, and definitely preferred the other, within three days of manufacture. That was a very important experiment, and I present the results to the House.

Mr. Mase in his evidence bore out just this with his own experience. He said that now, not using preservative, while the meat was perfectly fresh, he could not and would not risk selling minced meat except on the day it was made. He pointed out—and this is a very important matter for 26 of the 39 members in this House—that while it is comparatively easy for a metropolitan man such as himself in business, manufacturing a lot of minced meat, to make it every day, it would be extremely difficult for country butchers to make their minced meat and sell it and for it not to go off. Many people, especially those in the country, are in the habit of buying minced meat and using it over a period of a week or so, and under this regulation they would not be able to do that.

Mr. Bywaters: The consumer will not be able to do it.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: No. It will no longer be possible, if this regulation is allowed, for a person in the country to come into town, buy minced meat and use it during a period of a week or so; it will have gone off. I think that is all I need say on that question.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: How is the sulphur content of it gauged? What is the permitted amount?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: None; this regulation cuts it out altogether.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: What is it at the present time?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: We were assured—and we accepted this assurance—that it is impossible to make stale meat appear fresh by putting preservative in it. I will endeavour to get that information for the Minister.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: With dried fruit, only a certain amount of sulphur is permitted in European countries.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: We are talking about meat. There is an upper limit. If I can get the information for the Minister I shall let him have it. There seemed to be no justification for forbidding the use of preservative, and certainly not sulphur dioxide, in minced meat. On the contrary, if it is forbidden, then it will mean that perfectly fresh minced meat that we have been using all our lives will no longer be available to the public; it just will not keep after sale, and the customer will be the one who will suffer. On that point, we asked Mr. Mase how long he had been using sulphur dioxide and he said:

> All my life, and I have been in the game for almost 50 years. My father used it before me.

I am indebted to the honourable member for Murray, who has informed me that under the old regulation the amount permitted was up to 3½ grains a pound, or one liquid ounce to 30 lb. of meat. On the question of tripe, we heard that it was impossible to comply with the present regulation. Dr. Woodruff admitted that, and said in his evidence:

> The Metropolitan Abattoirs Board has approached us since the promulgation of the regulation and said that they are finding difficulty in meeting the standards. It was said, much to my surprise, that the tap water they used has a pH-alkali content of about eight. The Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science says that that is odd because they have trouble with water where the pH is about six on the acid side. I think it is a difficult matter to resolve. We propose to have a look, with the abattoirs people and biochemists, at this problem, and we do not propose to take any action at present.

Subsequently, Mr. Wharton (General Manager) and Mr. Arnold (Secretary of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board) gave evidence. Mr. Wharton said he had written to the Food and Drugs Advisory Committee on June 5 asking for assistance, but had not yet received a reply. Dr. Woodruff explained that the pH requirement had been the standard in force in New South Wales for years. The idea was to get a uniform standard throughout Australia for the preparation of tripe with the pH factor not varying more than 6.5 to 7.5. Those members who are familiar with this know that seven is the neutral figure. The scale goes from 0 to 14; seven is neutral, back to one is acid, while up to 14 is alkali. Dr. Woodruff was surprised when the abattoirs board got in touch with him to say it was having difficulty in getting to that standard. The committee thought it wise to take evidence directly from officials of the abattoirs board, and Messrs. Wharton and Arnold in evidence said that the water at the abattoirs was tested and found to have a pH content of 8.7. There is not the water at the abattoirs that will allow the management to comply with the standard laid down in this regulation.

The Hon. P. H. Quirke: Is that reservoir water?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Three samples were sent for analysis. Sample A was water from the Barossa reservoir with a pH content of 8.22;

sample B was from the abattoirs bore with a content of 7.68; and sample C had a content of 8.16. I asked Mr. Wharton whether it was impossible for the abattoirs to comply with the regulation using existing methods, and he said that investigations were being made to see whether the abattoirs board could comply, but up to that time it could not. He told the committee that as long as he could remember the present method of processing of tripe had been used, and that there had been no complaints and no evidence that the tripe was injurious to health. Any tripe produced today is produced in defiance of this regulation, because it is impossible for the abattoirs board to comply with this standard. Until this regulation was made no standard had been laid down in the regulations for the preparation of tripe. The standard from another State has been applied, but this standard cannot be attained because of the quality of our water. The Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board produces 80 to 85 per cent of the tripe in this State, yet it cannot comply with the regulations. It is beyond question then that the regulation should be disallowed. We would be making a mockery of Parliament if we approved a regulation which cannot be complied with and which need not be complied with in the interests of health, as it has been shown that no harm has resulted from the present processing method.

Those are the two main points which obliged the committee to seek the disallowance of this regulation and which abundantly justifies the disallowance of this regulation. Other matters in the regulation are satisfactory. I hope members have been able to follow my explanation, and will be prepared to accept my motion.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): I hope that members will not accept this motion out of hand. The regulation was made with the object of maintaining public health, and we cannot lightly strike out a batch of regulations. We should inquire carefully into what is behind the regulations, why they were introduced, and the standing of the people who prepared them. I believe these health matters, particularly where we are dealing with preservatives and drugs, require close study of the background. We should consider the matter from that viewpoint. I shall give an explanation of the regulations under Dr. Woodruff's signature. I believe that this information was originally submitted to the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

At 4 p.m. the bells having been rung:

The SPEAKER: Call on the Orders of the Day.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Mr. Speaker, I—

The SPEAKER: If the Premier wants to continue he must move the suspension of Standing Orders.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: In the circumstances, I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

MAINTENANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 14. Page 484.)

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): I believe that this Bill should have been founded in Committee. I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to clause 4, and in so doing refer you to Standing Order No. 283, which states:

Every Bill which imposes a charge upon the people or authorizes the borrowing or expenditure of money, shall be founded upon Resolution of a Committee of the Whole House, submitted by a Minister, and agreed to by the House.

I refer you, Sir, particularly to the words "authorizes the borrowing or expenditure of money". Last year, when dealing with a similar Bill you said:

Clause 9 is permissive in character as the Bill states that the Minister may grant an application for payment of a weekly sum. Even so, if payment is approved by the Minister, it appears to me that such approval would authorize the expenditure of money.

I now refer you, Sir, to the principal Act and to the effect that the amendment proposed by clause 4 of this Bill would have. I think that this clause goes perilously close to transgressing the ruling you gave last year, if it does not transgress it. Section 34 of the principal Act states:

(1) The sum payable under this Division to any person for or towards the maintenance of any child shall be payable out of moneys provided by Parliament for the purpose, and shall not be more than fifteen shillings a week unless in the opinion of the Minister exceptional circumstances warrant the payment of a larger sum.

(2) Any sum paid to any person pursuant to this Division shall be payable as from the date of the receipt of the application by the board and shall cease to be paid on the child's attaining the age of fourteen years: Provided that the Minister may, where in his opinion the special circumstances of the case make it advisable, direct, in writing, that such sum

shall, after the child reaches the age of fourteen years, continue to be paid for such period, not exceeding two years, as is fixed by the Minister on the recommendation of the board. Clause 4 will extend that period to four years. At present 16 years is the upper limit, but the proposal to extend the age to 18 years must authorize the payment of money. Standing Order No. 283 provides that any Bill that authorizes the expenditure of any money shall be founded in Committee. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that you will probably want time to consider this matter. In my opinion section 34 of the principal Act was undoubtedly founded in Committee, and I believe that under Standing Order No. 283 any amendment to that section should also be founded in Committee. Incidentally, I believe that one or two other clauses also undoubtedly authorize the expenditure of additional money. I believe that all clauses preceding the clause relating to blood tests come within that category. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition made no attempt to conceal the fact that the Bill's intention is to liberalize the payments that can be made under the Act. That was the basis of his second reading speech. He sought to liberalize payments: he certainly did not seek to curtail them.

I have obtained a couple of reports on this proposed legislation. As honourable members know, this matter comes within the province of another Minister and obviously I am not as conversant as he is with the working of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department. Clause 3 will limit the power of the court to order a near relative to repay the cost of past relief. At present the court may make such an order if, in its opinion, a near relative is able to pay. The court can order the payment of such sum as the near relative can reasonably afford. The proposed amendment will require the court to be of opinion that special circumstances make a repayment desirable. In other words, the amendment makes it unlikely that a court could ever order a repayment, whereas now the court has discretion. Under the circumstances, I believe that this clause is undesirable and should not be supported. It has been accepted by almost every country that there is an obligation upon a person to support his dependants. I believe that there is an obligation on people to support their near relatives. The amendment will require the court to be of the opinion that special circumstances make the repayment desirable. In the absence of any definition as to what matters constitute special circumstances, I doubt whether the amendment goes much further than the existing provisions in some respects, but in general terms it is a direction of the court. I think that clause is undesirable.

Clause 4 will enable the Minister to extend the limit for child relief from 16 to 18 years of age. The reason stated by the Leader is that the relief should be available for the same period as children may be subject to control by the board. I have no particular view on this matter; it is merely an extension of the Minister's discretion. However, as I previously mentioned, I believe it authorizes the payment of public money, and for that reason I consider the Bill should have been founded in Committee.

Clause 5 introduces two new sections, the first giving to a female relative the right of appeal from a refusal of assistance or as to amount. This clause virtually removes the Minister's existing discretion, and it is a matter of policy whether the Government would wish to give to a magistrate power to order relief. This clause is rather out of keeping with the policy of the Leader's Party, which has always required, in matters of this description, that there should be a Minister available in the House to support the decisions made. I do not believe there is much advantage in the clause; in fact, I think it would not get anywhere, and as an obvious result magistrates would be giving different rulings on almost precisely the same type of case.

The second new section will provide that in assessing applicants' means account may be taken of social service benefits, but it is not to be taken of gifts of food or the loan of household goods or chattels to applicants. The Chairman of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board has furnished a report on this matter that I will make available in a few moments; I will leave it for the time being. Again, I point out that in the ultimate there is no need for this clause, and, if it is to be carried to the extent that the Leader desires, it will lead to a breakdown of the whole services provided by the board.

Clause 6 will provide that moneys received by the Minister as maintenance payments cannot be applied in the repayment of past relief granted by the board without a court order. I will deal with this matter in a few moments, not from the legal point of view but from the point of view of the administration of the board.

All of these amendments except clause 3 relate to Division III of Part II of the Act, which contains special provisions for the relief

of children. This particular part of the Act has not been used for some years, and I doubt whether the Bill achieves the ends the Leader desires.

The next amendment in clause 7, however, is a re-introduction of the provision for blood tests in paternity cases. The Chairman of the Public Relief Board has informed me that this is impracticable, especially in country areas, and that it has been rejected as a uniform practice at interstate conferences. I understand that there is no difficulty in mothers having voluntary tests, but I will refer to that matter later.

Clauses 8 and 9 provide for the attachment of earnings. This principle is under discussion with the other States and while our Chairman is not opposed to it he considers it to be premature to an Act pending further consideration and similar action in other States. I do not see any objection to this particular provision; I see some merit in it. However, a Bill is being prepared which it is hoped will be accepted on an interstate basis. Many advantages accrue from having maintenance legislation that has uniform provisions. Uniform legislation would be a great help to this State and would be desirable. This Bill is now being prepared in Victoria for submission to the respective States. Some other States have been opposed to this provision, but I do not think any substantial objection can be raised to it. It is the desire of this Government in the uniform Bill to see if this particular phase of the legislation can be accepted and applied on a uniform basis throughout the Commonwealth.

Clause 10 provides that a magistrate may commit a child to an institution for a particular term rather than until the offender reaches the age of 18 years. I have previously reported on this matter and I personally am disposed to agree with the magistrate that the amendment is desirable on the general basis that a discretion should lie with the court. However, the board opposes this amendment, saying that there is no great advantage in having the child for a relatively short period.

Clause 11 makes a corresponding amendment to section 102 (*a*) of the principal Act, which empowers the board to assume control of a destitute or neglected child or to place it in an institution until the age of 18. The amendment appears, however, to be misconceived because section 102 (*a*) empowers action to be taken by the board itself and not by a court. Possibly the word "court" in the amendment has crept in by mistake and the Leader may have intended to refer to "the board". Even so, I do not see any particular point in such an amendment, which has nothing to do with committal for an offence.

That, broadly speaking, is some comment on the legal aspect of the case, and I will now point out one or two general matters. The basis of relief payments in the various States varies, but it may be stated broadly that payments in South Australia are at least as high as in other States and that, in some respects, they are higher. Relief is available to deserted wives in South Australia immediately on application if they are destitute. Relief is available until a maintenance order is obtained and continues afterwards whilst there is a need.

Maintenance claims are of two main types. If the claim is for subsistence maintenance only it is dealt with promptly. If it is for a greater rate of maintenance, particularly if it is combined with custody and/or separation proceedings, it may be some time before a court decision is reached. In all cases the department believes it should give the husband an opportunity to state his case.

The proposed amendment to section 24 of the Maintenance Act, dealing with relief recovery, is a policy matter. However, there are particular cases, such as pending compensation, etc., where relief should be recoverable. Any proposed amendments to Part II Division III of the Maintenance Act (sections 27 to 39, inclusive) are academic only, because that Division has not been used for years. The Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board issues all relief under section 22. Under that section there is no legislative restriction on ages of recipients or on amounts of relief. Variations of the departmental relief scale are approved by Cabinet.

Any proposal whereby an applicant for relief could appeal to a magistrate if he were not satisfied with the original decision raises important theoretical and practical implications. Judicial review of relief issues would interfere with Ministerial prerogatives and adversely affect Treasury financial control. It would also make decisions on welfare matters subject to legal control by any one of a number of magistrates. In practice, a court decision could not be expected in a short period, nor could a court readily keep abreast of changing circumstances in individual cases. The department already ignores gifts of food, etc., when assessing for relief, and also ignores

other help given by charitable bodies to destitute people. Nor does the department take account of household goods, except for luxury items on which time payments are still being made. I draw attention to this last statement, because I have frequently heard it said that if a person has a wireless set it automatically affects his relief payments.

The department realizes that there is some public criticism of its method of retaining portion of maintenance moneys to offset relief already issued. However, the criticism is not based on detailed knowledge. Recovery of relief orders can only be obtained for relief already issued. For this reason and to safeguard Government funds the department prefers to seek court maintenance orders which can provide for the future. The method is designed to provide a deserted wife with a regular income over a period. She receives either relief or maintenance, but not both.

The proposal for blood tests in paternity cases is one of policy. However, the interstate conferences of Attorneys-General have rejected a similar proposal. There would be some medical and legal difficulties in practice. It is rare for a woman to refuse to co-operate voluntarily in blood tests.

Attachment of earnings in maintenance cases would be advantageous, but as this matter is being included in the draft uniform Maintenance Bill it is suggested that an amendment to the Maintenance Act at this stage would be premature. The proposal to give magistrates power to commit children to institutions for short periods is one that is strongly opposed on theoretical and practical grounds by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

Members will gather from my remarks that I cannot support some portions of the Bill. Attachment orders are in a different category. Although we may say complacently that this matter is being considered by an interstate authority, and may be included in uniform legislation later, it is not the answer I would accept if I were the Leader of the Opposition and had introduced the Bill, for it may or may not happen. Under the circumstances, I do not intend to oppose the second reading, but in saying that I make it clear that, although I accept a large part of the Bill, I do not accept all of it, because there are several matters on which I have some doubt and on which I would like to hear further argument. Perhaps I could be persuaded that some matters are advantageous. I shall not oppose the second reading because I think the Bill should be dealt with in Committee and the details thrashed out. On a number of occasions members opposite have, on supporting the second reading, reserved the right either to support or reject the third reading.

Mr. Lawn: We shall convince you that the third reading should be carried unanimously.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I have frequently heard the Opposition Whip say that he reserved the right to change his view on the third reading. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I believe that you might consider investigating some of the implications associated with the expenditure of money under this Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood): I support the second reading. I listened with great interest to what the Premier had to say. At the outset he objected that there might be some clauses—and he mentioned clauses 4, 5 and 6—that would infringe Standing Order 283. The ground for his doing so is that, although the principal Act now provides the Minister with authority to issue moneys, the proposal in the Bill alters slightly the way in which he may apply that authority. However, the principle of authority to the Minister is established in the principal Act now, and the only alteration made by clause 4 is that the Minister may apply that existing authority in a slightly different manner. I do not think that infringes the principle of Standing Order 283 or of Treasury control.

Clause 5 provides not simply for the issuance of further relief but for a right of appeal from an existing decision. The authority for the issuance of the money is already there in the principal Act. This clause provides only for a right of appeal from the Minister at present given authority to issue the relief, and it in no way interferes with Treasury control. The Premier referred to clause 6, but in fact that does not authorize the expenditure of moneys in any way. Therefore, with great respect, I believe that the Premier is in error here, that all the clauses of the original Bill that were ruled out by you, Mr. Speaker, last year have been deleted from this new Bill, and that the Bill does not now in any way infringe the ruling given last year in relation to Standing Order 283.

Turning to the merits of the Bill itself, the first amendment is to section 24 of the principal Act. In one of the reports the Premier read to the House he said that that was contained in Division III of Part II of the Act, and that that was a division that was little used at present. In fact, section 24 occurs in Division II, not in Division III, of

Part II of the Act, and it is the general provision relating to relief which is acted upon in almost all cases by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board; this is their only authority for the issuance of general public relief, other than to the special class of mothers of dependent children. Our amendment is that relief should not be repayable unless the court thinks that special circumstances justify an order for repayment. The Premier had a bit each way in his reply on this matter. First, he said that the discretion was already there in the court and that it did not make terribly much difference to the existing provision, and in the next report he read out he said that our amendment would prevent the court from granting repayment in almost any circumstances.

In fact, as the Act now stands, the court will order relief to be repaid where it considers that there are means available to the person who is being charged with the payment of relief originally made to some relative. The view that has been taken by the Labor Party on this matter is that relief should not be repayable; that it should not be treated as a repayable loan except where special circumstances exist which the court thinks would make that situation desirable; that, generally speaking, relief should be a payment and not a loan; that it should not be an advance by the State to a necessitous person which must be recovered from somewhere; that it is not a payment out by the community which the community will then seek to gain reimbursement for; and that it is a payment by the community to people in necessitous circumstances as a community duty.

Let us see what can happen under the present Act and what does happen. Where there are people in necessitous circumstances to whom relief is granted, the father, grandfather, mother, grandmother, husband, wife, children, or grandchildren of the person to whom relief is granted can be made to repay that relief, even though in fact there is no longer very much family connection directly involved. Although the person upon whom the repayment impost is being made has other commitments to other dependants, nevertheless he may be required by the court to repay it, and the basis that is taken is not whether in fact this is a justifiable repayment in the circumstances but whether he can afford to pay, in the same way as whether he can afford to pay an unsatisfied judgment summons order. That is the basis that is taken for assessment: whether in fact he can, by stretching his existing resources to the utmost, pay £1 or £2 a week in repayment of public relief, even though that will extend him considerably and make the payment to his existing other dependants difficult for him.

In our opinion, that is an entirely wrong basis for the payment of public relief. Relief ought to be paid; it ought not to be repaid except in exceptional circumstances; and in those cases the onus should be on the board to make out a case to the court to show that repayment is justified, and that there are some exceptional circumstances—a windfall of some sort, or some obligation involved—that would make it a just thing for the person being charged with the repayment of relief to make the repayment. What happens now with the repayment by people who have had relief paid to them? Many members have cited instances in this House of this sort of thing. A man goes into gaol; his wife and children, while he is in gaol, are on public relief; because public relief is inadequate—and nobody can suggest that public relief payments leave the family in any sort of reasonable circumstances, because it is very difficult to keep alive on public relief in this State—almost inevitably debts are run up by that family while the breadwinner is in gaol. No sooner is that man released from gaol and has some regular payment coming to him than the first charge made upon his wages is the repayment to the department of the relief given to his dependants while he was in gaol. In other words, the greatest difficulty is placed in the way of a man's rehabilitating himself immediately he leaves the gaol. This is not the sort of thing we ought to do in connection with public relief in this State: we ought to use public relief as an assistance to these people in an attempt to rehabilitate the family.

Mr. Loveday: We should not punish the wife and children.

Mr. DUNSTAN: No. Apart from being forced to pay money out of his wages for such repayment, he is forced to meet other debts that have been run up during the period he has been in gaol. Even though he has insufficient to keep himself, his wife and his children, repayment of relief is ordered in those circumstances because the basis of assessment is the same basis as is applied in the unsatisfied judgment summons jurisdiction. Let me cite another sort of case. A widow gets public relief for a period for her children. If she then manages to get a job that takes her out of the widow's pension class and she

is no longer a claimant on public relief, she is required to make a repayment to the department of the public relief she received during the period when she could not obtain this other employment.

In these circumstances why should we go on with this policy? Why should not we make it perfectly clear that this repayment of relief should not take place except where the board can make out special circumstances to a court that would justify the repayment of relief? When this matter of repayment of relief was first raised in this House—and it was raised some years ago, during the Budget debate, upon the report of the Auditor-General, when it was shown that large sums were being recovered by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board—the Premier said he had no knowledge that it was going on and did not know it existed; it was extraordinary to him and he would inquire. Then he came up with the kind of reply that we have had from the Chairman of the board today.

Let us deal with some provisions. The replies given today through the Premier were totally inadequate. There is the proposal, with which the Premier does not find much fault other than on Standing Orders matters, to increase the right of the Minister to grant public relief to children up to the age of 18. Obviously, this is necessary in some cases where they are going on with educational courses. There is not the slightest reason why public relief should compulsorily cut out at 16. If it does, the practice deprives young people of necessary assistance from the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

Let me turn now to the question of appeal from refusal to grant relief. The basis of assessment of public relief at the moment in this State, I say without hesitation, is shocking. I am astonished at the attitude at times taken by the department towards people who have applied to it for public relief. Let me give one example. I have in my district—and I discussed this with the departmental officers only the other day—a man who is an invalid pensioner. He is on an invalid pension and has a wife's allowance for his wife; also, he has children of school-going age. He gets the very small amount for the eldest child from the Commonwealth that is granted to an invalid pensioner. He has only that amount on which to exist, apart from the fact that he has from an estate the right to occupy a house without payment; so he has no rent to pay. But, even accepting the fact that he has no rent to pay, the house is not of such a standard that he would have to pay much rent even if he were paying rent for it.

His income cannot in any circumstances be described as equal to what the average working man in this community would get to keep a family of similar size. There is due to him through the Public Trustee from the estate some money each year as a beneficiary of the estate, which consists of some houses of rather ancient vintage. The Public Trustee has made only one payment to him from the estate since it came into being last January. He made a payment to him of £45 last January in respect of the October quarter; he has had no further moneys and will get no further moneys for a considerable period, simply because the houses of which the estate consists were in such a run-down condition that the trustee used his authority as trustee of the estate to employ the estate moneys to repair the houses; otherwise, they would not continue getting money from them, in so bad a condition were they.

So that man has had no money from the estate since January; yet he has been denied public relief on the ground that he has an interest in an estate—which he does not get. When I went to the department about it I was told, "He has an interest in an estate." I replied, "He is not getting the money. How do they eat without money?" The reply was, "Oh, well, he is better off, in the opinion of the departmental officer, than a man earning £15 a week with eight children, and in consequence the department cannot grant him any public relief." That is the kind of assessment going on at the moment. If that were taken to court, I do not believe that the court would refuse public relief to a man in those circumstances. He cannot, on the income available to him, feed and clothe his children properly and give them the advantages they should have as young people in this community: yet that is through no fault of his own, but only because of his illness.

Let me turn to the other kinds of things going on. A family falls into severe difficulties through unemployment or a long period of sickness of the breadwinner, where he cannot get compensation. Let us take a case where a man is injured on his way to work, not in his employer's vehicle and not through anybody's negligence, and he has no claim. He is in bed and can get only Commonwealth benefits; he has a wife and children to keep. In those circumstances he must have public relief, but what if he already, before he had

that accident, had a motor car on time-payment? He does not get public relief until he sells the motor car, even though because of the terms of the hire-purchase agreement under which he has that motor car he will make a loss of hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Loveday: He still has to pay the balance.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Yes. He gives away the equity he has in the car; he has still to pay money under the hire-purchase agreement and he has to do that before he gets a brass razoo in public relief. He has extra money to pay because of the car. This money that he is required to throw down the drain is an asset that he has built up himself—and all this because of an accident. That is the basis of assessment by the department. Can it be said that a court will not review that sort of thing?

I deny what the Premier said here about public relief in this State. According to the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the amount we spend on looking after the aged and on child welfare in this State is by far the lowest of any money spent in the Commonwealth, and has been consistently so. Our payments of public relief are niggardly and miserly and should not be continued in this way. We should give the right to a full review of these cases not to some administrator in the department but to a magistrate in open court so that he can inquire and see what is just. That is why we have sought to put this in the Bill, because the administration has proved inadequate to the task of granting public relief to necessitous persons in this State.

Let me now turn to the other new clause, which provides for a different basis of assessment. We provide:

(*a*) Account may be taken *inter alia* of entitlement to any payment for social service benefit or pension by the Commonwealth of Australia.

It is natural enough that that should be taken into account, but objection is taken to the fact that the department is told:

(*b*) Account shall not be taken of gifts of food or the loan of household goods or chattels to an applicant by any person.

The Chairman of the board says, "We take no notice of anything except luxury goods on time-payment." What does he mean by "luxury goods"? Honourable members have had examples of this in cases in their districts, as I have. A widow with a young family has a television set placed in her home by a family friend. She is not paying (because she has not the money to pay) the rental on the television set or time-payment on it, but, because that television set is there in the house and the rental payments are being made on it by someone, the department says, "You can't have it. If that television set is in the house, you don't get public relief; you have to get it out of there. If your friend can pay for a television set to be in the house, he can pay the money to you instead of the money that this department pays." That is going on all the time and case after case of that sort of thing has been cited on this side of the House. There is hardly a member on this side, particularly if he represents a crowded metropolitan area, who does not have brought to his notice a case of that kind every week. I have had piteous letters from widows in my district faced with this. I also disapprove of the case where gifts of food have been made in addition to the amounts given by the department, and then the department has reconsidered the amount of public relief paid. The attitude appears to be that if people can give gifts, then they can substitute for the department. In other words, a premium is placed on the kindness and charity of people in this community. Although there is no obligation on them, they wish to assist the family that is not getting more than a measly pittance when it gets public relief in the first place.

Those of us who have to deal with cases of this kind, find our blood running hot when we see the way these people are pushed around by those associated with the department, and it is vital that the Act should refuse to allow the department to carry on this way. For some reason the attitude of the board seems to be to cheesepare on the poor people in order that the Government may retain as much money as possible. That is a wrong attitude on the granting of public relief in this State. Clause 6 alters section 38 of the principal Act. Again, the report of the Chairman on this matter was inadequate. He said that while public relief is given to a deserted wife, the department seeks to get a maintenance order against her husband, and she will receive either maintenance or public relief, but not both.

In fact, she does not get entirely one or the other. She is granted public relief; then the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board seeks an order against her husband. Anyone knows that on most of these maintenance orders the husband pays fairly irregularly. The department has a terrific job obtaining payments from the person against whom payments have been ordered. In consequence,

from time to time the wife does not get any payment because there is no cheque for her in the department but, if she has had public relief before the order comes through, she does not get the whole of her maintenance. Moneys are deducted from that maintenance payment for the repayment of the public relief she has had. That happens in many cases. The worst feature of this is that no maintenance payment that I have ever heard of being ordered in the maintenance court is sufficient to keep a neglected wife and her children in reasonable circumstances. The court simply states that it has to leave sufficient for the man, because it does not want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

The man has to go on working and cannot be deprived of so much money that he will not work any more. So the wife is given what is left, and maintenance ordered for children may be as low as 35s. a week for each child, and for a wife may be as little as £3 or £4. She has to exist on that. Very rarely does the amount approach what the wife would have if her husband was at home, and what he would bring into the house. Yet she is required to repay, out of the amount of her irregularly paid maintenance order, the public relief she has already had. That is why this provision should be inserted. This is an utterly inhuman attitude on the part of the board. I admit there have been cases when the action of the board in demanding public relief repayments has been so gross, that on appeal to the board, it has admitted a mistake and it has not required the repayment of the public relief. When the wife receives £4 and the board takes £2 for repayment, that is too hot; but it does happen.

I want to ensure, as does every member on this side of the House, that it does not happen under any circumstances, that the only way the Minister can deduct moneys shall be on the authorization of the court, and that the court will have to find as a fact that the deduction can be made without hardship. That is the only fair basis—not on the say-so of a clerk in the department. These cases do not get to the Minister's table. The deductions are made within the department itself, and the only way deductions should be made from maintenance in the hands of the department is by a court order that deductions can be made without hardship to the person concerned.

Mr. Loveday: No standard has been laid down for what should be left for the wife and family.

Mr. DUNSTAN: No, none at all. An administrative decision is made stating that so much is required, and the person can have the remainder. That is not a decision of the court: it is an administrative decision.

Mr. Loveday: Under social services, a standard will be fixed.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Yes, but there is no standard here. We tried to fix a better standard last year, but the Speaker ruled that we could not do it. Other sections of the Act remain anomalous but, under the Constitutional position of the Opposition, we cannot do anything about it on this occasion.

Mr. Bywaters: We shall have to wait until we become the Government.

Mr. DUNSTAN: The report to the House on the section dealing with blood tests stated that the imposition of blood tests has been opposed at the conference of Attorneys-General—I do not know by whom. The provision of blood tests has been in the legislation of other States for some time, and no move has been made to remove it from their Acts. In fact, the New South Wales provision is much wider than the provision in this Bill. Under the New South Wales provision, a man against whom an affiliation order is made (that is, a demand for the maintenance of an illegitimate child of which he is judged to be the father) may now demand a blood test, and if that test is not taken the order is set aside—that is, if the mother refuses to comply and have a blood test made. She cannot be forced to have it but, if she does not have it, then she cannot go on with the order. That is not provided in this Bill. All that is provided is that in future, where an affiliation case is brought, the defendant may require a blood test, and no order may then be made unless the person bringing the case agrees to submit herself and the child to that test. What is wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? As it stands, the provisions of the Maintenance Act place a defendant in an affiliation case in a very difficult position. It is almost impossible for him to get out of an affiliation case when one is brought against him. The standards of proof required in that case are such that it is difficult to contest one. When one is contested and the man says he is not the father of the child (and gives some reason for thinking that he is not), why should he be charged with the maintenance of that child if he is not its father? That could be established by a blood test. True, the test cannot establish paternity. It cannot show that a man is the father of a child, but it can, in some cases,

show that he is not the father, and that he is innocent. If that is so, what harm has been done by establishing the truth in this simple manner? Blood tests have been accepted overseas. Other States have provided for them. It is not true—and I deny the department's report—that mothers are readily willing to undergo blood tests. I have known of many young women who have instituted affiliation cases but who have refused blood tests. The court has said, "There is no provision for demanding a blood test" and that was that. One cannot even discuss blood tests in a court: such discussion is irrelevant because there is no provision for blood tests in our legislation. A man can maintain his innocence, but his innocence is determined upon an unsatisfactory basis, when a blood test could readily establish it. Why should blood tests be denied? I cannot see the reason for objections to them.

The Premier said that in some cases blood tests might be difficult to conduct in country areas. I have not found that blood tests have been terribly difficult in country areas in cases of driving under the influence of liquor. Blood samples are taken with comparative facility and are forwarded to the city for analysis. I do not think that there would be much difficulty in making blood tests in the country. In fact, I know of one instance where a blood test was taken in the district represented by the member for Whyalla. That was in an affiliation case. It is not true that we will experience difficulties in administering this provision in our country areas. It can be done under the Road Traffic Act, so why not under this Act?

The Premier's reply to clause 8 was virtually the reply given by the department last year—that this matter is still under discussion in other States. It still is, but there is no certainty that the discussions will result in agreement between the States on the question of attachment of earnings orders. Some States object to such orders, although I do not know why. A similar provision is contained in the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act. If a person brings an action for divorce, she can get an attachment of earnings order for maintenance, but if a person seeks a separation order under the Maintenance Act, she cannot get one. If a deserted wife does not want a divorce and simply goes to the court for maintenance, she cannot get an attachment of earnings order even though her husband is avoiding the payment of regular maintenance. Most members have received piteous letters from women left in that plight. They have maintenance orders, but they cannot get public relief subventions when the maintenance is paid irregularly unless the maintenance has not been paid for some time. It takes time for these women to secure public relief. Public relief is not granted easily. In many cases women are expecting cheques from the department, and when they do not arrive they go to the department to make inquiries, but are told to wait. They may have to wait for some time, and in the interim they are apparently expected to live on fresh air. Why should we not take the earliest opportunity to provide that earnings be attached? No man can suggest that his earnings should not rightfully be attached where the court has judged that he should maintain his dependants.

Clause 10 provides that a court may, if it sees fit, commit a child to an institution for a short period, or for a period less than the period involved in a child's reaching the age of 18 years. The board vehemently opposes what all magistrates have continually asked for. No child is committed to an institution until he has acquired a record over a period. Magistrates normally do not send children to institutions until they have records. However, what can a magistrate do? He can release a child on a bond; he can fine a child (and if the child has no earnings that is no great hardship to the child and it certainly does not teach him a lesson); he can place the child under a custody and control order (that is, he can commit him to the custody and control of the Welfare Department until the child reaches the age of 18 years, whereupon the department may determine where the child shall be. If he gets into trouble he can be taken from his parents and be placed in an institution until he reaches 18 years); or he can commit the child to an institution until the age of 18 years.

In one case 13-year old boys were involved in a series of pilfering offences. When they came before the court, the court felt that it was necessary for the boys to be placed in an institution for a period. The boys needed institutional correction. The court decided that it was not safe for the boys to be at large, from the boys' own point of view and from the public's point of view, but the court was not of opinion that the boys should be committed to an institution until they were 18. The court wanted to send them to an institution for a set period, but the only order that the court could make was that these boys of 13 years be committed to a reform institution until they were aged 18 years. In other words, the boys were being committed to an institution

for five years—a far greater term than an adult would serve in an institution for a similar offence. The court was reluctant to do this, but that was all it could do. The board's reply to this is, "It should be within our discretion. We can release them from the institution before they reach the age of 18 years." Why should the discretion of the penalty to be imposed be in the hands of the board? The board is the authority that administers the correctional institution, but the court seeks to be able to determine the penalties according to the circumstances of the cases. The court should be satisfied that the offenders serve the remedial period that the court determines necessary; not what the board determines. It should be within the court's discretion to determine the period for which an offender shall be committed to an institution. What now happens is at times undesirable. Sometimes a magistrate will remand a boy to a home for a lengthy period, whereas the case could be determined immediately if the magistrate were able to make an order in accordance with what he regarded as proper. Consequently, since magistrates have consistently asked for this discretion, I believe they should be given it. I believe that the board's attitude that it should retain absolute power as to how long an offender should remain in an institution is entirely wrong. The discretion should be with the court, and not with the board. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. LAUCKE secured the adjournment of the debate.

FOOD AND DRUGS REGULATION: PET MEAT.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray) to move:

That Regulation No. 1 (amending the principal Regulation No. 9) relating to pet meat, made under the Food and Drugs Act, 1908-1962, on April 11, 1963, and laid on the table of this House on June 12, 1963, be disallowed.

Mr. BYWATERS: When I gave notice of this motion I did so for the purpose of extending the time allowed me to gather further information on this subject. Since then I have ascertained that the kangaroo meat, which I believed was covered by the regulation, is not covered by it. I believed it was undesirable to cover "roo" meat because of the quantity sold as pet food, particularly in the metropolitan area. I have obtained a legal opinion that the regulation does not cover "roo" meat, therefore I do not intend to proceed with the motion.

Motion lapsed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.13 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, August 22, at 2 p.m.