HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, November 12, 1963.

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

QUESTIONS.

BUILDING ALLOTMENT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: My question to the Premier concerns the erection of a house on the wrong block. I understand that a similar occurrence has been referred to in the House this session. In the case I quote the purchaser received a loan from the State Bank to erect the house, and apart from repaying the loan through a monthly instalment of £16 11s. 6d. he is paying £12 3s. 9d. monthly to a finance company. A diagram of the allotments involved in this matter indicates that one person purchased four allotments and another person purchased one. It appears that, after the latter raised the finance, he built a house on the wrong block. The person who has arranged the finance and had the house built is really trespassing on the other person's block, I understand. This person offered to pay £100 and any other expenses in settlement, but the owner of the block would not agree; he desires to sell all four blocks at £1,000 each, although I believe the present selling price is only about £500. Although I realize that there are no legislative enactments to permit any action to be taken to redeem the position, will the Premier say whether legislation will be introduced to protect a person involved in such a case as I have mentioned, so that, in the event of the parties not being able to reach a settlement, the money involved would be protected?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: If the Leader gives me the facts, I shall have the matter investigated.

PENOLA REPEATER STATION.

Mr. HARDING: Has the Premier a reply to a question I asked on October 31 about a repeater station to be established at Coonawarra, in which I asked whether the power was to be supplied by the present franchise holder at Penola, whether the line would be erected by the present franchise holder, and whether it would be built according to the specifications and plans of the Electricity Trust?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I have taken up this matter with the Commonwealth Director of Works, who informs me that the repeater station will be a stand-by diesel set to ensure continuity of supply, but the normal and usual source of supply will be by a line connected to the system of the Penola Electricity Supply Ltd. The franchise holder (Penola Electricity Supply Ltd.) will be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the powerline, but it is expected that the Commonwealth will pay the capital cost of constructing the line. The line will become the property of the franchise holder. The standard of the line has not yet been finalized, but the Commonwealth would expect it to be based mainly on the Commonwealth requirements and loads if the full capital cost initially was to the Commonwealth's account. This does not mean that the line would not have some capacity to connect consumers located along the most direct route, but the Commonwealth would not expect to pay either for a line appreciably heavier than required for its needs or for one installed on an indirect route designed to provide for the ultimate expansion of the district.

FLUORIDATION.

Mr. HUTCHENS: There has been much controversy about the possibility of fluoridation of the metropolitan water supply and, although I do not want to become involved in the controversy, I assume that the Engineering and Water Supply Department has estimated the possible cost. Can the Minister of Works indicate the estimated cost of fluoridation of the metropolitan water supply?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes. Having had prior notice that the honourable member desired this information, I obtained the following report from the Engineer-in-Chief:

The estimated cost of installing fluoridation equipment for adding fluoride to all water supplied to the metropolitan area, including Elizabeth, Gawler and Salisbury is £71,000. The estimated annual charge, including fixed and operating charges is £21,600 per annum. Calculated on the basis of 720,000 persons served by these supplies the estimated overall cost is 7.2d. a person per annum.

IRISH HARP ROAD.

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked last week about the resurfacing and widening of the Irish Harp Road, which has been renamed Regency Road?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Roads, informs me that the completion of the widening of the Irish Harp Road has been delayed because of difficulties encountered in acquiring the necessary land. Negotiations are in hand to acquire sufficient

land for widening to Airlie Avenue. As soon as the land is acquired this section will be widened. Because of expensive properties being involved between Airlie Avenue and the Main North Road it is not planned to widen this section immediately.

EGG LEVY.

Mr. McANANEY: The levy on eggs delivered to the Egg Board substantially rose last week to 5d. a dozen on eggs delivered to merchants for grading and 6½d. a dozen on eggs delivered to shops under licence. Will the Minister of Agriculture ascertain the reason for this as the increase appears great when the lower level of production this year is considered?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will get a report for the honourable member.

FERRIES.

Mr. CURREN: Last week I asked for a report on the road traffic signs on the western approaches to the Kingston ferry. I understand the Minister of Works now has a reply.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Roads, informs me that standard warning signs are erected at the approaches to the Kingston ferry. However, an inspection will be made by officers of the Highways Department to determine whether additional signs are necessary or whether the existing ones can be moved for better visibility.

Mr. BYWATERS: Has the Minister a reply to the question I asked last week about the need for an additional ferry at Mannum?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Roads, informs me that the Highways Department is currently investigating traffic conditions at the Mannum ferry. Traffic counts have been taken over a period, and the possibility of installing a second ferry at Mannum is being considered in relation to the priorities on other important works.

Mr. BYWATERS: Has the Minister obtained a report from the Minister of Roads in reply to a question I asked last week about gates at ferry crossings?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Roads, informs me that the provision of gates at the approaches to ferries is not compulsory. However, hydraulically-controlled boom gates have been provided by the Highways Department at all of the modern ferry crossings where concrete ramps have been constructed. In accordance with the ferry lease agreement between councils and the lessees, "the gates at the approaches to the ferry shall be closed at all times when the ferry is unattended. When gates operated from shore landings are provided, they must be closed except during loading and unloading."

DENTAL TREATMENT.

Mr. CASEY: I draw the Government's attention to the unsatisfactory position concerning dental treatment for country children and pensioners. Although I understand that the waiting list for dentures at the Dental Department of the Royal Adelaide Hospital is about 2½ years, I claim that this does not truly indicate the need for treatment, as many country people refrain from applying for treatment for several reasons including age, poor health, cost of travel (although this cost is borne by the department in some cases), and difficulty of obtaining accommodation in Adelaide. Because of these difficulties extreme pressure has been brought to bear on country dental practitioners, to such an extent that they have to treat people in the country either for a reduced fee or for no fee at all. Can the Premier say whether the Government is aware of the present position and, if it is, what steps are contemplated to assist country dental practitioners to treat patients, particularly children and pensioners? I have in mind particularly children in grades up to grade 3 who are now treated by the dental authorities whereas the remainder of the children are only given a minor examination.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Government is well aware of this problem and introduced the service referred to by providing caravans for dental officers so that they could give a service to as many country children as possible. The big problem is to provide dentists. For many years the dental school at the University of Adelaide has turned out only a limited number of dentists, completely inadequate for the requirements of the country. I point out that many fees charged at the Royal Adelaide Hospital for dental services are low compared with fees charged by private dentists. In those circumstances, many people try to obtain treatment at the Adelaide hospital if they can. I do not believe that the figures the honourable member has quoted relate to urgent cases although, generally, I accept his statement. We are lacking in dentists, and we have tried every means possible to get more dentists. True, the number coming from the dental school is improving. I

am sure the honourable member would be surprised to know that when I examined the figures a few years ago the total number of dentists graduating in South Australia then was three. We have an acute shortage of dentists, both in the metropolitan area and in the country, but particularly in the country.

HILRA CROSSING.

Mr. CLARK: Yesterday morning a fatal accident occurred at the Hilra level crossing near Salisbury North. The member for Wallaroo (Mr. Hughes) is also concerned with this matter as the Moonta-bound Bluebird railcar was involved. I know that the sympathy of all members goes out to the widow and six children of the deceased man. Such an accident places much strain and anxiety on the driver of the railcar. When the accident happened the motor car was travelling west over the crossing where four tracks crossed the road. The crash occurred on the fourth track, on the western boundary of the crossing, and 55 yards from the other three tracks. There is a "stop" sign on the eastern side of the crossing. After crossing three tracks, which lead to the Weapons Research Establishment, motorists have to travel a further 55 yards before crossing the single track to Port Pirie, which has no warning sign. On the western side of the crossing is a "stop" sign and motorists cross the single Port Pirie track and travel 55 yards to where there is a warning sign indicating the three tracks. Warning lights have been repeatedly advocated by the Salisbury District Council, the Salisbury North Progress Association and me. At least four accidents have occurred there. Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Railways to call for a report on this accident and to re-investigate the provision of some type of warning signal at this crossing?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes.

STURT RIVER FENCING.

Mr. FRED WALSH: My question arises from the death, by drowning, last Tuesday of a seven-year old girl in the Sturt River at Novar Gardens. I have received two letters concerning this fatality, one from the North Glenelg Returned Servicemen's League and Community Centre Incorporated as follows:

In the past 10 to 15 years the residents of this community have viewed with increasing concern the dangers presented by the Sturt River which passes through this area. This is due to the lack of fencing and the increasing volume of water being diverted into it. During this period there have been many near drownings and the parents live in constant fear for the safety of their young children. Numerous appeals made to the authorities have been fruitless. Banks have continued to erode away and fences are now practically non-existent.

The scene of the recent tragedy is a permanent concrete basin holding four feet of water which leads to a river bed of varying depths choked with weeds from Pine Avenue to Tapley's Hill Road. No effort appears to have been made by the authorities to minimize the dangers presented. At a special meeting of the Board of Management of this organization, which represents a wide cross-section of the residents of this area, it was resolved to ask for your assistance in bringing this deplorable state of affairs to the attention of the Government authorities concerned.

The second letter on similar lines was from Mrs. K. Tuckfield, who witnessed the accident last Tuesday. She expresses concern on her own behalf and on behalf of the parents of children in the neighbourhood. They believe that they will not forget what they saw last week. According to the press report of this fatality a nearby resident, Mrs. Neale, said that her six-year old daughter recently had a narrow escape from drowning at the same place. Another woman, Mrs. Keith Bailey, the mother of three-year old twins and a four-year old boy, said she wrote to the council in the winter following her husband's rescue of a small boy at the same spot. The council later informed her that her letter had been forwarded to the Engineering and Water Supply Department. The Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Dridan, was unable to say who would be responsible for fencing along the river until he had been informed of details. Mr. Stott, on behalf of the West Torrens Council, denied any responsibility.

Some years ago, when Sir Malcolm McIntosh was Minister of Works, I approached him about the provision of fencing at the Torrens River outlet. With his usual good graces he saw that fencing was provided there. Will the Minister of Works say who is responsible for the provision of a fence at that part of the Sturt River referred to? If it is the responsibility of the department will he discuss with the appropriate officer the question of the erection of an adequately protective fence in order to prevent the possibility of further loss of life or injury to children? If it is not the department's responsibility, will he have the matter taken up with the West Torrens council with the same object in view?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I will do as requested. I have not had a report on this matter, but I did read the account of the fatality. The honourable member will appreciate that I share his concern, as do other

members of this House. I gained the impression from the press report, and from the photograph accompanying it, that the bank of the river was actually fenced at the scene of the fatality. A fence appeared in the photograph, although I do not suggest that it was man-proof. A well-worn path was apparent at the edge of the river. Presumably it was the path that the child was following at the time or on which she was playing. It has occurred to me that this is probably a case where it so often happens that, although the land is fenced off and is not actually available to the public, through long usage a pathway has become established and is used regularly by children and parents. I will try to get a report on the matter to elucidate the points the honourable member has raised.

MORGAN WEIGHBRIDGE.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Representations have been made to me that there is no weighbridge at Morgan suitable for the use of the commercial clients of the Railways Department, whereas at a small rail siding at Lanosa, about 1½ miles from Morgan, is a weighbridge now closed to commercial users. As it is the continuing policy of the Railways Department to promote and encourage the use of railways for freighting heavy merchandise, will the Minister of Works ask his colleague, the Minister of Railways, to investigate the possibility of transferring the weighbridge from the Lanosa siding to the Morgan railway station?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Yes.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.

Mr. RYAN: Last week I asked the Minister of Education whether he would investigate the late arrival in some instances, and the non-arrival in other instances, of the salary due to teachers in various schools. Has the Minister a further report on this matter?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: Yes, I investigated the matter at the request of the honourable member and also at the request of the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, who wrote to me at the same time. I have received the following report from the Accountant of the Education Department:

I appreciate the compliment paid to the efficiency of my officers and of the Postal Department by the fact that when the envelopes containing the salary cheques for seven schools did not reach the addressees on the due day, the event was so unusual that it justified a complaint to the Minister of Education. The implication is clear that the non-arrival of a pay cheque at the correct time is almost unknown to the individual teacher.

The facts in this case are: there is no question of failure to draw any cheque or of dispatching any cheques to the wrong school. All envelopes were correctly addressed. In accordance with normal procedure, the cheques listed for Thursday posting were taken to the Pulteney Street Post Office before 4 p.m. The P.M.G. schedule provides for letters received at Pulteney Street Post Office by 4 p.m. to be forwarded at 5 p.m. to Grenfell Street where they are sorted for delivery to metropolitan post offices by 6 a.m. on Friday, thus being included in the morning delivery. Last Friday morning telephone calls were received from a number of schools reporting the non-arrival of salary cheques. My officers kept contact with the post office and the schools, and the position by Friday afternoon was: the salary envelopes for 18 schools failed to arrive in the morning delivery. Of these, 11 were received in the afternoon, leaving seven not delivered on Friday. All of those remaining undelivered on Friday were delivered on Monday morning. The heads of these schools were asked to return the envelopes in question. Five have come to hand and bear the correct cancellation of "Pulteney Street, October 31, 1963." There was no fault of omission or commission by any officers of this department.

I also asked the Secretary of the department for a report, and he reports:

The Pulteney Street postmark on the five envelopes returned from schools bears a date stamp but no time stamp. I have been advised by the Pulteney Street officials that bulk postage mail is never time stamped. The Accountant has again assured me that all cheques were posted prior to 4 p.m. (including the cheques which were received by many schools on time). The fact that some cheques were not received until the following Monday convinces me that some hitch occurred in one of the post offices.

The Secretary's report concludes:

I have been advised that the Pulteney Street Post Office is a collecting and not a sorting office. Mail lodged at Pulteney Street is delivered to Grenfell Street for sorting. All mail will, in future, be lodged at Grenfell Street in an attempt to avoid a recurrence of late cheque arrivals.

I hope that there will be no recurrence of this unfortunate incident.

SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Mrs. STEELE: Considerable public interest has been displayed in the position of the Supervisor of School Libraries. Has the Minister of Education an interim report on the progress of the discussions he said he would initiate with the Public Service Commissioner, the Director of Education and the Principal Librarian of the Public Library?

The Hon. Sir BADEN PATTINSON: I conferred with the three gentlemen in my office at Parliament House last Wednesday

afternoon, when the whole matter of the position of the Supervisor of School Libraries was canvassed at great length. I also had a long discussion that afternoon with the President and members of the Executive Committee of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, all of whom expressed great concern. Finally, it was agreed that the Public Service Commissioner (Mr. Pounsett), the Director of Education (Mr. Mander-Jones), and the Principal Librarian of the Public Library (Mr. Brideson) would meet soon thereafter at Mr. Pounsett's office and have further discussions so that the differences of opinion between them could be reconciled, thus enabling the Public Service Board to come to an early and final decision on this vexed question.

MALLALA ELECTRICITY EXTENSION.

Mr. HALL: Recently I asked the Premier a question concerning the undue and aggravating delay in making certain electricity extensions in the Mallala district. Has the Premier a reply?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Chairman of the Electricity Trust reports:

A contract has been let for this extension but the time of starting work is dependent on the completion of other work the contractor is doing for the trust elsewhere. The present proposal is that work should start in February, 1964, but the trust is endeavouring to arrange for an earlier start. Considerable delay was originally caused on this project because the Postmaster-General's Department would not agree to the transmission line being installed along the same road as telephone wires and landowners objected to the line being run across property. Eventually the design of the line had to be changed because of these difficulties. Although the trust had hoped to carry out this work earlier, definite promises have not been made to applicants because large extensions of this nature must always be subject to progress of work elsewhere.

Holiday shacks at Port Parham would not normally be connected before permanent residents in the district. However, if the work is carried out while crops are still standing, it may be necessary to arrange the construction schedule so that work in these areas will not interfere with crops. No recent electricity connection has been made to a holiday resort south-west of Mallala.

FISHING REGULATIONS.

Mr. McANANEY: Some months ago the Fisheries and Game Department took the opinions of fishermen representing the Coorong, Meningie, Narrung, Milang and Goolwa areas regarding the changing of fishing regulations in the area. Some advocated an increase in the minimum size of callop and silver perch allowed to be caught, as they believed such an increase necessary if the area was to continue to produce fish. As fishermen are keen to know whether new regulations are to be introduced so that they can order nets of a different size if required, will the Minister of Agriculture ascertain whether changes are contemplated?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: No change in the regulations is imminent, and I suggest that the fishermen accept that statement as authentic. On the other hand, the Director of Fisheries and Game is in more or less constant touch with fishermen in various waters of the State to find out their views about possible changes when the regulations are under review. Although no changes will be made in the immediate future, I should think that several changes in respect of fish sizes and like matters will be considered later.

STATE BANK ADVANCES.

Mr. RICHES: Last week I asked the Premier for a report from the Chairman of the State Bank Board on the suggestion that advances for house building at Port Augusta had been reduced from £3,000 to £2,500, and the Premier said he would consult the board and obtain a report. Has he done so?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: As I told the honourable member in the House, I thought there had been no alteration; the Chairman of the State Bank Board reports that there has been no change in policy by the State Bank. Provided that the valuation is sufficient and the applicant is deemed able to meet the commitments involved, the bank continues to make housing advances, in strict priority of date of application, of up to £3,000 on the basis of 95 per cent of valuation, or beyond £3,000 and up to £3,500 on the basis of 85 per cent of valuation. This applies whether in the metropolitan area or country districts. Of the nine most recent cases in the Port Augusta area, six loans for £3,000, and three (because of lower valuations) for £2,900, £2,880 and £2,545 respectively, have been approved.

EASTERN SUBURBS DRAINAGE.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Some time ago I drew the attention of the Minister of Works, who represents the Minister of Roads in this Chamber, to the fact that there had been serious flooding in certain parts of my district, including areas in which the old eastern suburbs drainage scheme had provided for alterations to drainage. Since then, I have received a letter from the St. Peters corporation drawing my attention to the serious flooding in the area

and asking what can be done to expedite the work originally agreed on some years ago. Has the Minister a reply to my question?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I have received the following report from my colleague, the Minister of Roads:

The original agreement was made in 1947 between the councils of Burnside, Kensington and Norwood, Payneham, and St. Peters, and the Highways Department, for the construction of drains in St. Peters Street, Second Creek drain from Magill Road to Payneham Road, and the Magill Road drain from Verdun Street to Second Creek. Under the agreement, the Highways Department was to bear 50 per cent of the cost, and the balance was apportioned between the four councils. The estimated cost of the total scheme, which was made without detailed investigation, was £51,500. Because of the development of the area, conditions have considerably changed, and, because of greater run-off and increased costs, the estimate for the Magill Road drain alone is now about £60,000. Because of the greater estimated costs, the councils object to meeting the additional expense. A meeting was subsequently held in December, 1962, of representatives of the four councils and the Highways Department, when it was agreed that the Highways Department would submit a revised estimate of the cost of the whole work so that the matter could be reconsidered. Because of the shortage of survey and design staff, the necessary investigation has not been made, and an estimate has not yet been prepared. If the councils so desire, a further conference will be called by the Commissioner of Highways.

GAWLER RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. CLARK: On October 10 I asked the Minister of Works to request his colleague, the Minister of Railways, to consider the possibility of erecting improved platforms on the Gawler railway line at Para, Kudla and Tambelin sidings. Has the Minister a reply?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Minister of Railways states that the Railways Department has a priority list for the construction of earth-filled platforms at suburban stations. It is unlikely that the present programme, which provides for concrete platform walls at five suburban stations, will be completed before December, 1964. Counts of passengers have been taken at Kudla, Tambelin, and Para, and it is agreed that the step-down platforms at these stations, which are at present in sound condition, should be replaced with earth-filled platforms as soon as the Railways Department is able to fit the work into its programme. The Commissioner has requested the Chief Engineer to so arrange. However, as will be seen from the above, there will be a delay of about 12 months before the work can be commenced.

CAR PARTS.

Mr. HALL: I was alarmed to read in this morning's *Advertiser* an article headed "Saving on Car Parts" indicating that the Tariff Board would soon hear evidence on a proposal to impose a higher tariff on imported motor vehicle parts. I believe that the distribution of these parts in Australia is in the hands of a very tight circle. I have recently read a statement that two fewer wholesale distributors of motor vehicle parts operate in Australia now than operated pre-war, despite the greatly increased number of motor vehicles on Australian roads. I believe that the Government would be involved in increasing expenditure resulting from an increase in the price of the Australian-made parts protected by the increased duty. Will the Premier ascertain from the Prices Commissioner whether the Australian motor parts industry is suffering from the competition provided by imported products?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I will try to get the information for the honourable member.

DESALINATION.

Mr. SHANNON: I do not apologize to the Minister of Works for not giving him prior notice of this question. I noticed in this morning's paper a report by an American expert, who is apparently in Australia, dealing with methods of desalinating low-grade waters in some of the more arid parts of the United States of America, which methods, according to him, are applicable to areas with similar conditions in our State. I should like to know whether this gentleman has anything to offer in the way of advice or information (I know full well that the Engineer-in-Chief investigated this problem while overseas) and whether anything new has arisen as a result of recent developments in America. I understand from the press statement that the cost of 1,000 gallons has been reduced materially to about 4s. Obviously, they have sources of power at prices that do not compare with ours. That may be the answer. If anything is to be gained from consulting this gentleman, will the Minister of Works make the necessary investigation, as South Australia has many areas capable of holding more stock but without the water to maintain them?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: As I have told the House on several occasions, I have taken a personal interest in developments in this field. I regret to have to say that up to the present I am unaware of any major breakthrough which would offer hope of either the

desalination of extremely salty water or the beneficiation of brackish water, or which could be used for substantial development. I saw the press report and noticed that this person, after a brief visit to this country, had returned to the United States. Therefore, the opportunity of discussing the matter with him has passed. So far as I am aware (and my information is up to date), there have been no important improvements in either processing or the mechanical devices that would reduce the cost substantially. The costs frequently quoted are not actual costs in terms of their application to Australian conditions. I do not think the question depends so much on the cost of power because our power costs are reasonable, even by world standards. I believe that, when these alleged costs are carefully analysed, it may be found that they do not include all the factors that would have to be included if we were to develop these processes. We intend to install a small plant at Coober Pedy to provide essential supplies when other supplies are not available. It will be much cheaper to provide water by that means than by carting it several hundred miles, but that is an extreme case and should not be taken as a pointer to other possible developments.

STURT HIGHWAY JUNCTION.

Mr. CURREN: Has the Minister of Works a report from his colleague, the Minister of Roads, about the traffic hazards at the junction of the Sturt Highway and the Morgan road?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Roads, presumes that the corner referred to is the junction of the Stoney Ridge district road with the Sturt Highway about three miles west of Barmera township. The Stoney Ridge approach to this junction, *i.e.*, the northern approach, takes the form of reverse curves, commencing to the right, followed by a short straight length of road which forms the junction with the Sturt Highway. The reverse curves could be eliminated by relatively costly land acquisition, but this would then leave the lay-out as a straight T-junction. This would probably not reduce the number of accidents occurring at this site, as the elimination of the reverse curve could give rise to higher approach speeds than at present. For that reason, it is considered undesirable to eliminate the reverse curves. The existing junction is adequately signed, being equipped with a reverse curve sign, followed by a "T-junction" sign, as well as a double-ended arrow positioned within the junction itself. The above signs refer to the northern approach only, and there are other signs warning Sturt Highway traffic of the presence of the junction. The junction of one road with another is always likely to create accidents. Unfortunately, this danger cannot be eliminated if motorists do not observe the warning signs.

ISLINGTON WORKSHOPS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the installation or the purchase of an electrical steel furnace at the Islington workshops?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: My colleague, the Minister of Railways, informs me that the matter of the installation or purchase of an electric steel furnace at the Islington workshops is still being investigated, and no decision has yet been reached.

COWIRRA TANK.

Mr. BYWATERS: Last week the Minister gave me a lengthy report relating to the water supply at Cowirra and Ponde, apparently known in the department as Neeta. The Minister stated that it was expected a great improvement could be brought about this year by having additional pumping facilities. I spoke to some of my constituents at Ponde (or Neeta) at the weekend and, although they were pleased to hear of this assurance, they drew to my attention the need for larger mains to come from this tank to the Neeta settlement. They consider that, because of the inadequacy of the mains, the additional pumping facilities will not be as beneficial as they would otherwise be, as only a certain quantity of water can go through mains of a limited size. Will the Minister of Irrigation ascertain whether the present mains are adequate or whether they need replacing?

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE: I will do that.

CORNSACKS.

Mr. NANKIVELL: I understand that the Minister of Agriculture has a reply to the question I asked last week on the availability of cornsacks for this season.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: A letter from the State Superintendent of the Wheat Board states:

I have for acknowledgment your letter of the 8th inst. regarding the availability of cornsacks for the forthcoming harvest and would advise that I have been in close contact with the management of the cornsack group during the season and feel confident that

growers should not experience any difficulty in obtaining the cornsacks they may require for this harvest for both wheat and barley. It is estimated that bulk storages available for wheat, plus shipping during the delivery period and deliveries to mills, could take care of approximately 39,000,000 to 40,000,000 bushels. This would leave a possible requirement of cornsacks for wheat equivalent of 15,000,000 bushels. These figures are based on a delivery to the board of approximately 54,000,000 bushels of wheat. I discussed this matter recently with the chairman of the cornsack group and am advised that it is considered that they have sufficient cornsacks for our wheat estimate, plus sufficient to cover a barley delivery of about 27,000,000 bushels, together with some margin.

DECLARED GOODS.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice):

1. What goods and services are declared goods and services pursuant to section 19 of the Prices Act, 1948-1962?

2. What orders, pursuant to section 21 of the said Act, are in force?

3. To which declared goods do they apply?

4. What is the maximum price fixed in each case for such declared goods?

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The replies are:

1. Goods and services declared pursuant to section 19 of the Prices Act, 1948-1962, have not altered since this time last year when they were outlined to the honourable member in reply to a question.

2 to 4. As regards these questions the member for Mitcham virtually requires full details of the department's activities on all prices fixed. Even if it were permissible to give a complete answer it would require the difficult task of extracting the information from the files of the department, as in many cases prices are issued to individual traders, *e.g.*, hundreds of differing country prices for bread, milk and cartage alone. Furthermore, many prices which are fixed on other than a retail basis are confidential other than to those directly concerned and this fact precludes their publication.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Mr. RYAN (on notice):

1. How many families who were housed in emergency dwellings have been transferred to Housing Trust rental houses?

2. How many emergency houses were in the Woodville North area?

3. How many trust rental houses are to be built during the current financial year in the same area?

4. What is the total number of rental houses proposed to be built in the Woodville North area?

5. How many £50-deposit houses are to be built by the trust in this area?

6. How many £50-deposit houses will be commenced by the trust in the Woodville North area this financial year?

7. How many £50-deposit houses will be completed by the trust in the metropolitan area this financial year?

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

1. 1,732.
2. 162.
3. 222.
4. 222.
5. 210.
6. 210.
7. About 300.

RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS.

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

That for the remainder of the session Government business take precedence over all other business except questions.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I ask the Premier to consider inserting, after "session", the words "this year". The motion would then read:

That for the remainder of the session this year Government business take precedence over all other business except questions.

I understand that the House will be sitting for a few weeks early next year and, if it is possible to consider private members' business then, the Government should agree to this suggestion.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I do not object to that suggestion. The special session will be called to deal with some important matters on the Notice Paper. Any matter raised by honourable members opposite after Christmas should be of an urgent nature. I do not disagree with the principle behind the Leader's suggestion, but I suggest that it would be better for me to withdraw this motion on the understanding that honourable members will not infringe on Government time this side of Christmas. I therefore ask leave to withdraw my motion.

Leave granted; motion withdrawn.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRODUCER REPRESENTATION).

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution: That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Marketing of Eggs Act, 1941-1963.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its main purpose is to make provision for the three members of the Egg Board who represent the producers to be elected by producers instead of being selected from a panel of names submitted to the Government. Under section 4 of the principal Act, the Egg Board consists of six members—a chairman, three members representing producers, and two members of whom one represents retailers of eggs and the other is a person experienced in the egg trade. All members are appointed by the Governor.

Representatives of various producer organizations have requested that the producer members be elected by the producers themselves, as is the case with some of the other marketing boards. The Government has agreed to this request. Clause 3 therefore adds to section 4 of the principal Act a new subsection which, in effect, will provide that, on and after a day to be fixed by the Governor, the three producers elected in accordance with the provisions of the Bill shall be appointed members of the Egg Board. A new section 4a (inserted by clause 4) makes provision for the elections. Under subsection (1) of the new section the State is divided into three electoral districts (specified in the Schedule to the Bill) and one producer member will be elected for each district. Under new subsections (5) and (6), a producer is qualified to vote at an election if, during the preceding financial year, he has delivered to the board or sold under the authority of an exemption granted by the board not less than 3,000 dozen eggs. Under new subsection (4) the board is responsible for compiling a roll of electors for each electoral district. In view of the vast amount of work involved in examining some 250,000 account sales to determine those producers who are qualified to vote, it is possible that some names will be missed. New subsection (7) therefore provides that the board, at the direction of the Minister, shall add to the roll the name of a producer who furnishes a statement, supported by statutory declaration, indicating that he is qualified to vote. In effect the board will prepare a roll of voters, but it can hardly be held responsible for all errors and omissions. If a person is entitled to vote, but his name does not appear on the roll, he may submit a statutory declaration and the Minister can direct that his name be added to the roll.

The actual elections will be conducted by the Assistant Returning Officer for the State, but at the expense of the board. This is provided for in new subsections (10) and (11). Subsection (8) requires the Assistant Returning Officer to conduct the first elections as soon as convenient after the Bill becomes law. This will be done as soon as the electoral rolls are prepared by the board. It is expected that this will be early next year. After the first elections the Governor will, in accordance with subsection (9), fix a convenient day upon which the three elected members will take office.

Clause 5 amends section 7 by adding new subsections (2) and (3) thereto. These are consequential transitional provisions which provide that when the first three elected members take office the three producer members of the existing board will vacate their offices, and that the term of office of the three new members will expire on March 31, 1967. They also provide that the amendments effected by the Bill do not affect the term of office of the three non-producer members; that is, the chairman and the two members representing the retailers of eggs. Their term of office will therefore expire in the ordinary course on March 31, 1966.

Clause 7 inserts three new paragraphs in section 34 of the principal Act so as to enable regulations to be made on matters incidental to an election and with respect to preparing the rolls of electors. The regulations will provide that for a specified time before the closing date of a poll in respect of a district, the board shall make available for inspection a copy of the roll of electors for that district. This will enable *bona fide* producers to ascertain whether or not they are listed on the roll and, in the event of their names being missed, they shall have time to take appropriate action before the poll is closed.

By section 23 (5) of the principal Act it is provided that the Act does not apply to eggs sold for hatching. It is extremely difficult

to police all sales of eggs to hatcheries and, in the opinion of the Egg Board, this exemption has been used by some producers as a means of avoiding levies and other dues under the Act. The benefits of the Act apply equally to producers of eggs for hatching as they do to producers of eggs for consumption. Clause 6 accordingly repeals section 23 (5). The effect of the repeal is that the exemption of hatchery eggs is removed. Clause 8 amends section 35 of the principal Act by extending the duration of the principal Act, and consequently the life of the Egg Board, until September 30, 1968. Honourable members will recall that recently a Bill was passed by this House to extend the life of the board for three years—until 1966. However, it is now considered advisable to provide for a further two-year extension, because in the past the board, owing to its limited life, has often experienced difficulties in suitably arranging its affairs and entering into contracts and other business transactions on the most advantageous and economical terms. As it is desirable that the provisions of this Bill be approved without delay, I thought that in the circumstances the House at the same time would approve this further extension of the board's life.

Clause 9 adds a schedule to the principal Act which sets out the three electoral districts for the purpose of the elections to be held for the three producer members of the board. The Bill has been discussed in detail with many people, and I think that in general it could be said that it has the approval of the main organizations connected with the industry.

Mr. BYWATERS secured the adjournment of the debate.

RAMCO HEIGHTS IRRIGATION AREA BILL.

The Hon. P. H. QUIRKE (Minister of Irrigation) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report received and read. Ordered that report be printed.

THE REPORT.

The Select Committee to which the House of Assembly referred the Ramco Heights Irrigation Area Bill on October 31, 1963, has the honour to report:

1. In the course of its inquiry, your committee met on two occasions and took evidence from the following persons:

Mr. H. A. Norman, Solicitor for Ramco Heights Proprietary Limited.
Mr. R. G. W. Coats, Chairman, Waikerie Lands Extension Committee.
Mr. R. L. Andrew, President of the Murray Citrus Growers' Co-operative Association.
Mr. J. B. Cox, Consulting engineer.
Mr. T. C. Miller, Chief Horticulturist, Department of Agriculture.
Dr. W. A. Wynes, Parliamentary Draftsman.

2. Advertisements inserted in the *Advertiser*, the *News* and the *Murray Pioneer* inviting persons to give evidence before the committee brought no response.

3. The committee is of the opinion that there is no opposition to the Bill and recommends that it be passed in its present form.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MENTAL HEALTH AND PRISONS) BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

MANNINGHAM RECREATION GROUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. JENNINGS (Enfield) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report received and read. Ordered that report be printed.

THE REPORT.

The Select Committee to which the House of Assembly referred the Manningham Recreation Ground Act Amendment Bill on November 6, 1963, has the honour to report:

1. In the course of its inquiry, your committee met on two occasions, inspected the area affected by the Bill, and took evidence from the following witnesses:

Dr. W. A. Wynes, Parliamentary Draftsman;
Mr. L. J. Lewis, Town Clerk of the City of Enfield; and
Mr. K. W. Hoffman, State Secretary of the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. (South Australian Branch) Inc.

2. Advertisements were inserted in the daily press inviting persons desirous of submitting evidence on the Bill to appear before the committee. There was no response to these advertisements.

3. Your committee is of the opinion that there is no objection to the Bill, and recommends that it be passed in its present form.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL (PUBLIC SERVANTS).

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution: That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the

Agent-General Act, 1901-1953, the Audit Act, 1921-1957, the Industrial Code, 1920-1960, the Public Service Arbitration Act, 1961, the Police Regulation Act, 1952-1955, and the Public Service Act, 1936-1958, and for other purposes.

Motion carried.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL (MEMBERS).

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution: That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1934-1961, the Payment of Members of Parliament Act, 1948-1958, and the Statutes Amendment (Public Salaries) Act, 1960, and for other purposes.

Motion carried.

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

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In asking Parliament to agree to an extension of the Prices Act for 12 months until the end of 1964, the Government is not only satisfied that it is in the best interests of the State that this legislation should be retained, but also proposes that its provisions should be extended to eliminate certain undesirable trading practices that have become increasingly prevalent in recent times.

The practices to which I refer and which it is proposed to make illegal by extending the provisions of the Prices Act are as follows: First, there is the practice of offering goods for sale by retail, usually at or below cost, with a limit on the number of goods which may be bought at a certain price. This practice is mainly engaged in by some larger selling organizations to attract customers to the store, and can operate to the detriment of smaller competitors whose finances do not permit them to match this form of selling. It is considered that legislation precluding traders from limiting the number of goods which they will supply at a certain price will largely eliminate the sale of goods at prices which are uneconomic and unfair to the smaller storekeeper. I amplify that statement by saying that this is now a familiar form of legislation in America with the same purpose for which this Bill is introduced. It has been adopted in several States in America, and has resulted in a smaller trader's not being placed in an unfair trading position compared with that of the larger business. I believe that it has had a significant influence in retaining in business the smaller trader who is so important to the community.

Mr. Hutchens: He is the only one who gives the service.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Yes, he gives individual service. Further, it has been found by experience that the gimmicks automatically cease after he has been eliminated. The gimmicks are used only until the small man is forced out. This legislation is not original. It has been successfully tried in the United States of America, which has always claimed to be the home of free enterprise. Therefore, this legislation cannot be regarded as unduly restrictive in its scope.

Secondly, there is the practice of advertising goods for sale which are either not possessed by the trader at all or are possessed in much smaller numbers than implied in the advertisement. It has been found that, although goods are advertised, when an officer of my department has been present at the opening of the store on the day when the advertisement appears the goods have not been there. Further, the goods cannot be shown, nor can a satisfactory account be given of what has happened to them, if they ever existed. That, I believe, is fraudulent advertising that is used only to attract people into the store with the object of selling them something else. This is something obviously warranting a restriction.

Thirdly, there is the practice of advertising goods where, to the knowledge of the person making the advertisement, the advertisement is misleading either by description or implication. These advertising practices have been responsible for numerous complaints from the public. Fourthly, some retailers obtain higher discounts or lower prices from manufacturers or wholesalers than those normally allowed, by using duress or similar tactics to gain an advantage. This practice mainly arises from pressure tactics brought to bear by some traders on manufacturers and wholesalers. They demand greater discounts or lower prices than are customary, coupled with the threat that they will otherwise either not sell the particular goods or will relegate them to a position in the store where they will attract little notice. The practice gives these traders an unfair

advantage over competitors who buy from the manufacturer or wholesaler on normal prices and terms, and places the manufacturer or wholesaler in a most unenviable position.

Fifthly, some retailers offer certain goods for sale, usually at well below cost price, on condition that a specified quantity or value of other goods, usually normally priced, are also purchased. This practice sometimes concerns the sale of butter. Retailers usually display a sign in the shop window advertising butter for sale at up to 1s. a pound below the normal retail price. Many customers do not realize until they enter the shop, and attempt to buy at the lower price, that before they can do so they are required to also purchase other goods often up to a cost of £1. It is considered that legislation making this type of practice illegal is in the interests of the buying public as well as of storekeepers generally.

I am sure all members will see the merit of the proposed additional legislation which the Government considers necessary in accordance with its policy of ensuring fair treatment and adequate protection for all sections of the community. Turning now to the principal Act and the reasons for the Government's decision to retain it, I propose to refer to a few facts and figures.

Throughout Australia, the period since 1961 has been one of relatively stable costs and prices. However, this State has fared better than any other State as the following figures which have been derived from the consumer price index show:

	Movement since June, 1961. s. d.
Adelaide	Decrease 3 9 a week
Melbourne	Decrease 1 0 a week
Hobart	Decrease 3 a week
Sydney	Increase 9 a week
Perth	Increase 9 a week
Brisbane	Increase 5 9 a week

During this period this State has improved its position by being 2s. 9d. better off than the next nearest State and by being 9s. 6d. better off than the State showing the highest increase. If members examine what this means to the average family man, they will realize that it is important.

Following the removal of sales tax from a fairly wide range of foodstuffs in August this year, the Prices Department took action to ensure that the resultant savings were passed on to consumers, despite the fact that most of the items concerned were no longer subject to control. As a result, consumers in this State benefited from substantial price reductions on a number of items which were mainly foodstuffs and which are so important in the housewife's budget. It is known that in other States, where there is no control, the benefit of the tax reduction was either wholly or at least partly retained by traders on a number of items.

South Australia is continuing to maintain its position as the State with the highest rate of housing development in Australia as the following figures (Commonwealth Statistician), which represent the number of houses and flats built for the year ended September 30, 1963, for each 10,000 head of population, show:

South Australia	105
Western Australia	93
Victoria	81
New South Wales	78
Tasmania	70
Queensland	65

Building costs in South Australia, which is the only State where building materials and services are controlled, are still well below those in any other State, and this fact undoubtedly contributes to the favourable building position in this State by enabling more houses to be built from funds available.

The necessity to maintain production costs of the primary producer at the lowest possible level and to afford him every consideration possible are still matters of paramount importance. In the last seven years savings to primary producers on superphosphate amounts to over £1,500,000—included in which are the more recent reductions of from 12s. to 13s. a ton on the new season's superphosphate prices, amounting to a saving of £280,000 per annum. In addition the primary producer in this State will benefit by a further saving of £1,350,000 resulting from the bounty of £3 a ton granted by the Commonwealth Government. In just over the last six years, State-wide savings on petroleum products resulting from reductions effected by the Prices Department exceed £16,500,000, and of this saving it is calculated that primary producers in this State have benefited by at least £5,250,000.

The department is continuing to carry out investigations into many important commodities and services on which some very worthwhile savings to the community have resulted. Numerous complaints, many involving exploitation, are still being dealt with, and very satisfactory results are being obtained in many cases. The department is also continually carrying out a number of special investigations in a most successful manner.

The recent marginal increases and wage adjustments throughout the country are matters which call for caution as regards future

price movements, and it will be necessary to ensure that prices are kept at reasonable levels. Resulting from these increases, one economist (Dr. Boehm of the Melbourne university) has already forecast an increase of £1 a week in the basic wage next year, and, whilst I have no desire to express an opinion, I believe that we will have to pay close attention to our price structure.

In concluding my remarks, I should like to refer briefly to implications made at times that price control could have a hampering influence on industry and commerce. In this respect I desire to quote the following figures, obtained from the Commonwealth Statistician, showing the percentage increase in actual employment (excluding rural industry, female private domestics and Defence Forces) in each State for the period of four years from April 30, 1959 (when South Australia was registered as having the lowest level of unemployment of any State) to April 30, 1963 (latest employment figures available). The respective percentage employment increases over these four years have been:

	Per cent.
S.A.	9.19
N.S.W.	8.26
W.A.	7.82
Vic.	7.24
Tas.	4.25
Qld.	2.35

If a period of 10 years is taken, South Australia has increased its employment by 25.2 per cent, the next highest State being Victoria with 23.2 per cent. As South Australia has, over this period, been the only State where effective control has been maintained throughout, I believe that members will agree that the figures I have quoted amply illustrate the manner in which industry and commerce are expanding in this State. For the above reasons I ask members to vote in favour of an extension of the Prices Act for a further 12 months until the end of 1964, and to accept the amendments put forward.

Members may ask why provisions relating to unfair trade practices should be included in legislation that is extended annually. These provisions are experimental: we have not had this type of legislation previously, so it is appropriate to include it in legislation that is automatically reviewed every year. If next year it can be shown that these provisions have been detrimental to storekeepers or to the general public, then the position can be reviewed. The Government believes that our prices legislation is well administered because it is reviewed annually. The fact that the legislation is considered annually has resulted in its being beneficial. It has not got out of touch with realities, nor has it become autocratic or dictatorial. On the other hand, I believe that nearly every honourable member knows that if there is any problem on any matter relating to commercial enterprise the Prices Commissioner is willing—and has been able—to look into the matter and to see that a fair deal is given to everyone.

Mr. Jennings: That is one of the best features of it, really.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: This has applied particularly to the hire-purchase agreements legislation, which is always subject to misunderstandings and under which high-pressure salesmanship is sometimes indulged in. I know from letters I have received from members on both sides of the House that not only they but their constituents have appreciated the opportunity to have someone who will review a transaction and with whom they may discuss it with the object of getting a fair adjustment if such proves to be necessary. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (DIAMOND TURNS).

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal object of the Bill, which is based upon and follows very closely the form of legislation in force in the Eastern States, is to impose a charge for road maintenance upon the owners of commercial goods vehicles. Clause 5 accordingly provides that the owners of such vehicles shall pay a charge at a rate of one-third of a penny a ton on the sum of the tare weight and 40 per cent of the load capacity of the vehicle a mile of public road along which the vehicle travels in South Australia. Clause 9, which is a most important clause, provides that the charge is to be paid to the Commissioner of Highways, who is required to pay it to the credit of a special account to be called the Roads Maintenance Account. Moneys to the credit of that account are to be applied only on the maintenance of public roads (including grants to municipal or district councils for that purpose). The charge is made as a charge towards compensation for

wear and tear caused to the public roads in the State. These are the essentials of the Bill.

Clauses 6, 7 and 8 provide for machinery matters, such as owners being required to keep accurate daily records of journeys and make monthly returns to the Commissioner, while clauses 10 to 13 deal with offences and penalties, recovery of contributions, procedure and evidence.

I refer particularly to clause 4, paragraph (*a*) of which excepts vehicles with a load capacity of not more than eight tons, and paragraph (*b*) of which exempts vehicles being used solely for certain purposes specified in the first schedule. These purposes are the carriage of berries, soft fruits, unprocessed market garden and orchard products (other than potatoes and onions) milk, cream, butter, eggs, meat, fish or flowers, and, on a return trip, empty containers. The schedule also exempts vehicles being used solely for the carriage of livestock to or from agricultural shows or exhibitions or from farm to farm. I would refer honourable members to the definition of "commercial goods vehicle" in clause 3, and to the definition of "load capacity".

The only material departures from the standard pattern of legislation which has been upheld in the other States by the High Court are the variation of the exemption from four to eight tons and a slightly narrower class of exemptions in the first schedule to the Bill.

The Government regards it as anomalous that carriers of goods in heavy vehicles should enjoy the use of the public roads of the State without making an adequate contribution to the wear and tear occasioned by those vehicles. It is unnecessary for me to do more than refer to the very heavy maintenance costs which fall upon the State. It is not expected that the total cost will be met by the proposed charges; in fact, it is expected that the gross amount which the new charge is expected to realize is of the order of £150,000 to £200,000. This will meet at least some portion of the outlay. The total expenditure on our roads this year will be about £12,500,000, so I do not think any honourable member could consider the proposed charge excessive; in fact, the proceeds will meet only a small portion of the cost of road maintenance. The person who is paying the most tax in relation to his use of the road is the private motorist who, by using his car on the road perhaps only a couple of times to go to a sporting fixture or on some outing on a Sunday, is paying a full registration fee for what, after all, is a limited mileage.

The last clause deals with another but not unrelated matter. As members know, the Road and Railway Transport Act provides for the issue of licences by the Transport Control Board for the carriage of goods or passengers or both on controlled routes and for the payment of charges for such licences. The Act also empowers the board to grant special permits in relation to controlled routes. In view of the main provisions of the Bill which will require the owners of commercial motor vehicles exceeding a load capacity of eight tons to pay charges for road maintenance, it is provided by new section 39 (*c*) of the Act, inserted by clause 14, that when the Bill comes into force no further fees will be payable for licences or permits for the carriage of goods on controlled routes. The new section also provides that no new licences for the carriage of goods are to be granted but that existing licences will remain in force until the last licence on a particular controlled route expires. When that happens the provisions of the Road and Railway Transport Act relating to the operation of vehicles for the carriage of goods on controlled routes will cease to apply; in other words, the road will cease to be a controlled route so far as the carriage of goods is concerned. (New section 39 (*b*) of the Road and Railway Transport Act excepts, from the automatic renewal of licences, licences covering a radius of 25 miles from the General Post Office, the reason for this being that under a recent order made by the board these licences will be no longer required as from April 1 next year.)

I stress the desirability of considering the provisions of the Bill concerning road charges as they stand. It is essential that we do not depart from the form of legislation that has been upheld by the High Court, and for this reason the Bill has been drafted along lines almost identical to those operating in the States of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GOVERNOR'S SALARY).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for all the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It contains only one clause, which raises the salary of His Excellency the Governor from the present £5,000 to £7,500, with effect from July 1, 1963. As members are aware, increases in their own salaries as well as those paid within all branches of the Public Service have been made over the years; indeed, I have already given notice of three Bills designed to raise the salaries of the judiciary, members and the holders of statutory offices. Although from time to time the allowances granted to His Excellency have been raised, nothing has been done in regard to salary for many years.

I think that members last considered the salary of the Governor in 1922, so it is a considerable time since the matter was before the House. I am sure that members, who all appreciate the work His Excellency does in this State, will welcome this legislation. I am sure that no member would desire His Excellency to be out of pocket, and, as I know that for some years Governors have received insufficient remuneration to cover their expenses, I do not doubt that members will welcome the Bill.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY (INDUSTRIES) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 24. Page 1253.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I am as much in favour of encouraging decentralization of industry as is the Premier and, on numerous occasions, I have set forth detailed reasons why we should encourage it in this State and thus foster balanced development. When decentralization was before this House on an earlier occasion, members opposite pointed out very strongly that electricity charges formed only a very small proportion of the total costs of production of an industry and therefore the variations of electricity tariffs did not substantially influence the establishment or otherwise of a decentralized industry.

On this occasion, however, the Premier has adopted the opposite approach; he considers that the trust should be given the power to grant preferential treatment to some of its customers outside a 39-mile radius of the General Post Office, Adelaide. This preferential treatment is emphasized in clause 4 (*b*), which provides that the trust is not obliged to supply electricity at comparable rates to all consumers in a particular area; it must supply at comparable rates only to the consumer classified as an "approved industry". I am convinced that the Electricity Trust has the power to determine what tariffs are to be charged in various areas; this is borne out by the various tariff schedules that apply in different areas. Members opposite are well aware that there are various schedules of tariffs applying within particular zones; for example, a large industrial or commercial consumer receives very substantial reductions as compared with ordinary domestic consumers. It has been argued that additional generation costs are small when compared with standing fixed charges and that therefore large consumers should receive substantial tariff concessions compared with small consumers. Up to a point, I accept this argument; therefore, I do not oppose the suggestion that large consumers should be charged reduced tariffs. This is in accord with section 16 of the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company's Act, which provides:

> Where a supply of electricity is provided in any part of an area (or part of a town) for private purposes, every company or person within that part of an area (part of a town) shall, on application, be entitled to a supply of electricity on the same terms on which any other company or person in such part of an area (part of a town) is entitled under similar circumstances to a corresponding supply.

This section is in accord with my views, for I believe comparable classes of consumer should receive the same treatment from the Electricity Trust.

Members opposite will no doubt recall that in 1961 my Party moved that the tariff charges for country areas be reduced to those operating in the metropolitan area. Our case was borne out by the fact that there was a surplus of earnings over expenditure of the trust at that time, which would have more than compensated the trust for the amount involved in providing for a reduced tariff in the country areas without increasing the metropolitan supply tariffs. However, members opposite were strongly opposed to our suggested improvement, which was rejected. The last report of the trust indicated that it made a considerable surplus.

Mr. Casey: It was about £137,000.

Mr. FRANK WALSH: I know it was substantial. In his second reading explanation on this occasion the Premier said:

> There are, however, a few cases where the amount of electricity involved is such that special consideration in terms of this Act might be the factor which would permit an industry to proceed with its plans.

I believe we can agree that, whilst it may sound beneficial to have this type of legislation, it is not good legislation to cater for

exceptions. Further, the trust already has power to grant concessions to large consumers on a comparable basis. I do not intend to delay the passage of the Bill; I support the second reading.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER (Angas): Like other members, I welcome this legislation. Since the 1940's, especially since Philips Electrical Industries Proprietary Limited became established in South Australia, this State has had established within its confines large and small industries, and anything that can be done to induce the establishment of further industries, particularly in rural areas, should be done. Legislation promoting such moves should be welcome. The Bill provides that the Electricity Trust may grant concessions on charges for the supply of electricity to secondary industry, provided that such industry is established or intends to expand in country areas. The area is defined in clause 3, which provides that only an industry that proposes to establish or expand outside a radius of 39 miles from the General Post Office may qualify as an approved industry. Under that section the Treasurer may, on obtaining advice and after consulting the trust, declare an industry to be an approved industry. Once an industry has been declared an approved industry it will qualify under clause 4 for special treatment in respect of charges for electricity supplied by the trust.

I have one objection to clause 3: I consider that the radius of 39 miles from the G.P.O. is too large. The main purpose of the Government in introducing this legislation is to promote or encourage the establishment or expansion of industry in country areas. It is generally conceded that the metropolitan area may extend to a radius of about 25 miles from the post office, and I consider that, if an industry intends to establish beyond the radius of, say, 26 miles from the G.P.O., it should be regarded as an industry establishing or expanding in a country area. Consequently, I have placed an amendment on the file that will limit the radius to 26 miles. At this stage, I do not intend to debate the question, but I consider that industries beyond a 26-mile radius should come within the ambit of this legislation. The report of the Electricity Trust, which has become available only within the last day or so to the Minister of Works, states that at present in no part of South Australia does there operate a tariff in excess of 10 per cent above the metropolitan tariff.

Mr. Corcoran: That is the trust's supply only, not private supply.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: I am referring to the trust's customers. The maximum country tariff is only 10 per cent above the metropolitan tariff. New consumers in the past year total 15,396 and the total number of consumers is 312,503. As stated by the Leader of the Opposition, the trust had a surplus in the last financial year of £137,000 on a turnover of £15,400,000.

Mr. Shannon: That would not be such a handsome return on that capital.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: No, but we welcome these figures. I believe that a considerable surplus has been made by the trust over the past 14 years and tariffs have remained stable over the last 11 years. As there has been such a surplus, the trust should be able to meet the reasonable future concession that is implicit in this legislation in respect of an approved industry. The legislation is designed principally to attract new industries to the country areas of this State, thereby decentralizing industry. I wholeheartedly favour the Bill and am certain that other honourable members will support it.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray): I, too, support the second reading, but will consider certain provisions in Committee. I noticed that in the Premier's second reading explanation he stated that the radius of 39 miles from the G.P.O. had been chosen so that areas on the River Murray at Murray Bridge and Mannum would come within the ambit of the legislation. That is a significant statement, because it is something for which I have been agitating for a considerable time. I have often said that country industries are at a disadvantage compared with their counterparts in the metropolitan area. If we are going to encourage decentralization we should remove the difficulties as much as possible. I am sure honourable members would agree with that statement. I consider that we are all genuinely concerned with this problem of establishing industries in country areas. Further, we are concerned that some industries already established in country areas are affected adversely by their having to pay costs greater than those of industries in the metropolitan area. David Shearer Limited, an industry established many years ago in Mannum, is an excellent example. It produces farm machinery and competes favourably with any company in Australia. Although it has strong competition in this field, it sells its machinery throughout Australia. This emphasizes the skill of its tradesmen and the keen business ability of the company. It also provides continuity of employment for many

people, and this has been a great asset to Mannum. One problem this company has had to overcome is increased costs, not only of electricity but of freight and other charges, but it has offset these charges to such an extent that it is still a successful undertaking. Apparently this legislation will not apply to established industries unless they are expanding. Some country industries have been producing for many years. They have grown by taking on other work—as Shearers has done with contract work—but I doubt whether that would qualify as expansion.

The Premier has claimed that electricity charges do not represent a big factor in the establishment of industry. Trust officers have said that if I can mention a country industry that is at a disadvantage compared with a metropolitan industry on the score of electricity charges, they will prove that it is not. However, this Bill tends to indicate that country industries are at some disadvantage because this legislation is designed to enable them to compete more with metropolitan industries. Electricity charges would not be a big factor for small industries, but they can represent an important factor to a big industry. The member for Angas knows of a cement works in his district. With the amount of power it uses it could be at a disadvantage of £10,000 compared with a similar industry in the city. This is a big factor.

It is significant that the Premier should specifically mention towns that I represent, but I believe—and I may be wrong—that the reason for the introduction of this legislation is concerned with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited at Whyalla. In the past that company has supplied its own electricity as well as power for the township of Whyalla, but it will not do so when the Electricity Trust extends its operations to that area. This Bill may be of advantage to the company, and I suspect that is one reason for its introduction.

It has been claimed—as it is claimed in the trust's report—that country users enjoy an electricity charge within 10 per cent of the metropolitan area charge. Members will recall that the Opposition introduced legislation to provide that the same charges should apply throughout the State, but it was then suggested that that would curtail country extensions. We claimed that most of the extensions were effected with Loan moneys and that the new consumers had to pay a standing charge to offset the costs of the extensions. We believed that such a proposal was practicable, particularly as last year the trust made a profit of about £400,000. This year its profit has decreased to £136,928. Some of this decrease can be accounted for probably through the curtailment of pumping from the Mannum pipeline. The same result could be obtained next year if pumping is reduced this year, as we hope.

I have made calculations based on my last electricity account to determine whether my charges are within 10 per cent of those applying in the metropolitan area. Last quarter I used 40 units at 7.25d., 90 units at 3.4d. and 3,120 units at 2d., for a total charge of £28 9s. 8d.

The Hon. B. H. Teusner: What industry have you?

Mr. BYWATERS: This account is for my private home. I believe in comfort for my wife and have provided her with electric radiators, which save me chopping wood. I do not mind paying for the power I use—I expect to pay for it.

Mr. Clark: You might be better off on the single-meter tariff.

Mr. BYWATERS: I am on the single-meter tariff. If my arithmetic is correct, in the metropolitan area the charge for the first 40 units is 6.6d. (£1 1s. 8d.), for the next 90 units, 3.3d. (£1 4s. 4½d.), and for the remaining 3,120 units 1.9d. (£22 16s.)—a total charge of £25 2s. 0½d. Adding 10 per cent to that would give a total of £27 19s., so I am paying 10s. 8d. above the estimated 10 per cent. I am not complaining about that, but I am trying to prove that country charges are not within the 10 per cent claimed by the Government. I am in No. 2 zone, so zones 3 and 4 would be paying more than what I pay.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: Why do you say that? You haven't the figures!

Mr. BYWATERS: Their costs are higher than mine.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: I do not think you are correct.

Mr. BYWATERS: I should like to be convinced by the Minister that I am not correct. Zone 3 pays the same for the first 40 units but pays 3.6d. for the next 90 units and 2.1d. for the additional units, so the charge is higher.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: I do not think so, although I have not the figures. I am probably in the most expensive zone in the State and I know that my account has been cut in half.

Mr. BYWATERS: I do not dispute that. What I am saying is that the charge is more than 10 per cent above the metropolitan

charge. If I am wrong I shall stand corrected. Zone 4 would be the zone in which the Minister lives and the unit charges in that zone are exactly the same as for zone 3. Incidentally, this is not the first account I have worked out to see whether my charge is within 10 per cent of that applying in the metropolitan area. It is not much more than 10 per cent, but it is more than what is claimed. We are discussing now the trust's own consumers, but there are country people who believed the Bill would apply to all consumers. Some people get power from undertakings apart from the trust, and they believed they would get the 10 per cent, but that is not so. They work on a 20 per cent subsidy, and in this way receive a reduction.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: The honourable member will find that the subsidy is based on the highest subsidy paid.

Mr. BYWATERS: I will not dispute that. The trust claims that it is the cheapest supplier of all the States, except Tasmania, to outside areas, but I do not know whether the trust refers to other than its own consumers.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: The subsidy to the local supplier is based on the highest subsidy paid.

Mr. BYWATERS: That could be so and I do not dispute it, but many people believed that they would get the reduction of 10 per cent. I refer particularly to Kimba, which district I visited during the Grey by-election campaign. The matter has been brought to my notice frequently and it is one of the grouches of local residents, because they thought the proposal would bring them nearer to the metropolitan area rate. They get a reduction under the subsidy, but not what they expected. Because the operations of the trust are stretching farther out into country areas, these people will eventually get the full benefit. I do not think anyone has criticized the trust's operations. It has done a remarkable job. Its sales have increased by more than 100,000,000 kilowatt-hours over the previous year and were three times the quantity sold 10 years ago. Without the trust the increase would not have been possible.

Mr. Harding: Do you suggest an increase in the rate for the metropolitan area?

Mr. BYWATERS: No. We have suggested an equalization of prices, but not that the metropolitan price should be increased. For many years there has been no increase in that price, which is to the credit of the trust.

The Hon. B. H. Teusner: It has been 11 years.

Mr. BYWATERS: It is all to the credit of the trust in these times of rising prices. No-one can complain about the charge in the metropolitan area. Country people are pleased to get power under any circumstances. The power they get from the trust gives them advantages over what they get from lighting plants. Some people have installed plants of 240 volts, but they have not given power comparable to the power supplied by the trust. Frequently we hear criticism of Government enterprise but here we have a Government enterprise which has proved its worth, and where performance is far better than anything private enterprise can do. The Adelaide Electric Supply Company could not have taken power to the country as the Government undertaking has done. This is a good argument in favour of more Government enterprise. Some people say that we should not have that, and the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) opposes Government enterprise with sheer doggedness, because he wants private enterprise.

Mr. Clark: It is pure cussedness.

Mr. BYWATERS: Yes. All people associated with the Government enterprise agree that the power could not have been taken to the country by private enterprise. I support the Bill because it will improve conditions, although I suggest it will favour one company more than another. I hope that the industries already established, particularly the larger ones, will share in the cheaper tariffs. They have keen competition from other States and many obstacles to overcome. We should encourage industries to stay in the country, as well as encourage new industries to be established there. This is a matter that may have been overlooked in the drafting of the Bill, but in Committee that position may be clarified.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa): I wholeheartedly support the Bill and believe that anything we can do to facilitate industry in rural areas should be done. The Bill enables the trust to provide power at special terms in order to encourage the establishment and expansion of industry in rural areas, and the move is to be highly commended. The Bill will do three things: assist existing industry; encourage expansion of industry in rural areas; and attract industries to South Australia instead of allowing them to go to other States. I refer particularly to the following words at the end of the Minister's second reading explanation:

It will mean that we will be able to offer conditions to a proposed industry which it might find difficult to match elsewhere in Australia and this might well result in the establishment of important decentralized industry in this State.

At present, with every State keen to attract industries, it behoves us to have the best possible conditions available for the attraction of industries to South Australia. We should not encourage concentration of industry in the metropolitan area: it should be distributed throughout the State in places where there are natural advantages, such as a water supply and raw materials. We should firmly encourage the establishment of industries in country areas. The only way decentralization can be achieved is through the monetary returns of industry to the person engaged in a given industry. As far as I can see, we must ensure that industry has equal and possibly better chances of making a profit in a rural setting. If we can achieve to that for certain industries, those industries will tend to leave the densely populated areas and go where that very important commodity—the money—might be.

Mr. Ryan: Remind me and I will send you a copy of my Party's platform.

Mr. LAUCKE: I am concerned—as you are, Mr. Deputy Speaker—regarding the stipulation of a 39-mile radius from the General Post Office within which these concessions will not apply. I am not at all happy about that provision, and I favour the proposed amendment of the member for Angas (Hon. B. H. Teusner) in this matter to provide that the distance shall be 26 miles from the G.P.O.

Mr. Ryan: How far away is the Barossa Valley?

Mr. LAUCKE: That is a pertinent question. We have in the Barossa Valley some excellent heavy industry, and I should be most perturbed to know that, because of a radius provided, this important industry would not be eligible to be considered under the Bill.

Mr. Coumbe: The area would have many liquid assets.

Mr. LAUCKE: That is true. The Barossa Valley has assets of every description, including important liquid ones. Included in the other assets are important mineral deposits. I support the Bill and look forward to supporting the amendment of the member for Angas.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga): I associate myself with this forward move by the Government in attempting to assist country industries. I consider it would be wise to look closely at the position of certain existing country industries in order to make sure that they will not wither away and finally fall into disuse, which has happened with some industries in various country areas, where the opportunity for the employment of local labour has thus vanished. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to see the words "or maintenance" added after the word "expansion" in clause 3. I think the maintaining of country industries is at least as important as the establishing of the industries. An industry that is established and is reasonably assured of a market for its commodity may find that competition is getting savage, as it does in industries these days. That industry may find that because of its cost structure it is difficult to maintain that little margin of profit which the member for Barossa (Mr. Laucke) has so rightly pointed out is so essential in industry, and it could just quietly fade out. I consider that industries in that position should be eligible, under the authority of the Treasurer, for consideration by the Electricity Trust. For instance, that would take care of the problem at Mannum referred to by the member for Murray. The firm of Shearers is now fairly well established and, in fact, is the backbone of Mannum, and it would be a sin to permit that industry to suffer from competition made possible by cheaper power and closer markets elsewhere. Actually, the fundamental thing in the establishment of an industry is the availability of markets, and, after that, the provision of power (which we are now discussing), water, transport and labour is important.

The stability of labour has ensured the success of some small industries in certain country areas, especially where those industries have been able to use a modicum of female labour, which stabilizes the labour force. As a result, everybody who is looking for a job has a chance to live and work in his own town, and that is an important factor in the success of industry in country areas.

Mr. Nankivell: The provision of female labour is important.

Mr. SHANNON: Yes, it is just as important as it is in the city. In fact, in some country towns the lack of opportunity for female labour leaves parents in the unhappy position of having to decide whether or not to let their daughters go to the city to work and possibly live with strangers, which is not the best thing, especially for teenage girls. I have no criticism to offer of the trust's policy; despite what has been said by certain members, it is obviously working on a shoe string. The member for Murray referred to the profit of

£400,000 which the trust made in the year in which the equalization of tariffs was sought, but, after all, that amount is only about 2½ per cent on its turnover, and at the moment it is working on about ¾ per cent. No undertaking could get down much finer than that and still continue in business, unless it had the Treasury behind it, because it does not leave any margin for error at all. The trust members themselves have done a magnificent job. I consider that Sir Fred Drew, the Chairman, has been a tower of strength to the financial structure of the trust; he has kept it within proper realms of finance, and that is most important. With all due respect to my friends opposite, who would like to say that this is a straightout Government-run show, fortunately it is not. Luckily for the trust, it has no strings which members of Parliament can pull. We can put up cases to the trust, and we do so, for extensions into country areas, some of which are listened to and some are not, depending on whether the propositions are reasonable. I have had some propositions rejected and some accepted, while some at a later stage have been accepted because certain further developments that had taken place have made it possible for the trust to agree to a further extension. Every case I have put before the trust for country extensions has been sympathetically received, and if the trust has refused the request it has in most instances been able to give valid reasons for its action, reasons that I as a businessman could not disregard.

The trust is not first and foremost a money spinner seeking to make as much as it can: by and large it is a service department, and when members realize the fine margin on which it is running I think they will agree that it could not cut its prices very much. Spread over all the consumers in South Australia, £135,000 or £140,000 would not mean much to an individual consumer; if it were done on a consumption basis, the major beneficiaries would be the big consumers. It would mean such a small saving to the average householder that he would not know he had had it. I do not want the trust to put aside too much money from profits each year. It has no need to do this. As all members know, money for the trust is raised on a semi-governmental basis or from Loan funds; mainly, however, it is provided on a semi-governmental basis. About £150,000,000 will be spent within the next few years on the Torrens Island power station, the site of which the Public Works Committee visited recently. The committee saw that access roads had been completed, that the temporary bridge was in position, and that there was no doubt that the project would go forward. I should not like to see the trust make enough profits over 10, 12 or 15 years to try to pay for this project. I would prefer to see the money amortized over the life of the new plant to be established, which I believe is the basis on which the trust operates. It does not want this generation to take care of the problem for future generations; it will leave some of the burden of this operation for future generations.

It is a pleasure to me to see that the Government is doing all within its power to encourage people in country areas to set up industries if there is a chance for them to do so. I hope the suggestion I have made to extend the operations of this legislation to maintaining existing industries will be considered. I am not concerned that a flourishing industry will be made still fatter by getting cheaper electricity. After all, these concerns will have to be approved and go through the routine of having their affairs examined by the Treasurer before a reduction will be granted, which I think will be a sufficient safeguard. I hope my suggestion will be accepted when this Bill is considered in Committee.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): My support for this Bill is along two main lines. First, it is designed specifically to assist industry generally, and any Bill that does this is, I think, important. Many Bills come before the House to assist primary industry, but not so many Bills assist secondary industries. I think it is extremely important that we support a measure to assit secondary industry, as it employs more people than are employed in any other type of industry in this State. Any assistance that can be given to it is extremely important to industry, and it is important to the State from an economic point of view.

My second reason for supporting the Bill is that, as a metropolitan member, I believe it will support and encourage some decentralization in that it provides that it will in no way benefit the majority of industries in this State. Whether it will apply within a 39-mile radius or in a 26-mile radius (as will be contained in a foreshadowed amendment), the metropolitan area as we know it or an extended metropolitan area will be completely excluded, which I think is correct. I do not think any member would suggest that certain industries in the metropolitan area should be selected for special assistance.

As I understand the measure, it gives certain benefits regarding electricity charges to industries outside a 39-mile radius, and it will apply to rural areas, including provincial cities and industrial towns. I do not suggest that it will be a sweeping or revolutionary measure: I surmise that there may be only half a dozen or so industries to which its provisions will apply. However, I hope it can have a more general application. I believe this is the first step or the beginning of the wedge towards giving wider reductions to industries in rural areas.

As this Bill supports decentralization, and as I am a metropolitan member, I support the measure. When considered realistically, this is good business from the trust's point of view. Many commercial undertakings grant concessions to people in the country, although some charges have to be higher because of higher freight charges. That is what the trust is doing in this case for certain industries put before the Treasurer, so it is embarking on good business practice. Benefits under this Bill will accrue only to certain types of country industries, which provision I support. Certain industries outside the metropolitan area will get benefits which otherwise they would not get. As the measure could assist to develop industries, maintain and increase employment, and foster decentralization, and as it is good business practice that will benefit a certain type of person in this State, I support it.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie): I rise to put the record straight. I notice that Government members have risen in their places to take the credit for this legislation. Although I do not think its provisions are good enough, I point out that my Party has advocated similar legislation for a long time—at least ever since I have been a member of this House. It therefore annoyed me to hear Government members taking to themselves the credit for introducing the Bill. Clause 4 provides:

> Notwithstanding any other Act or law—
> (*a*) the trust, in addition to its other statutory and general powers, may supply or agree to supply electricity to or for the purposes of any approved industry on such general or special terms as the trust thinks fit.
> (*b*) a person (whether carrying on or intending to carry on an approved industry or not) shall not be entitled as of right under this Act or any other Act or law to a supply of electricity on the same or similar terms on which an approved industry is receiving or entitled to receive supply pursuant to this Act.

I suppose it would be difficult for the Treasurer to refuse various types of industries, but that could occur under the provisions of the Bill. My Party has advocated the equalization of electricity charges to all country consumers. I think that, when members read the report of the profit made by the trust, they will agree that there is a case for an adjustment. No doubt this will assist decentralization. I remember that when the late Mick O'Halloran was in this House Labor members strongly advocated this. Government members are out of order when they stand up, pat themselves on the back, and take the credit; but I support the Bill as far as it goes.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

Mr. SHANNON: I move:

After "expansion" to insert "or maintenance".

The member for Murray (Mr. Bywaters) said that this provision would help stabilize country industries, but without the insertion of these words there may be doubt whether the trust will be empowered under this Bill to maintain a country industry already established. You have mentioned that in your electoral district, Mr. Chairman, there is an established industry that may require support at some time. It is just as important (if not more important) to maintain an existing industry as it is to try to establish a new one that may or may not be successful. We do know where we are going with an established industry.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works): I do not quite appreciate the honourable member's purpose in moving his amendment. I understand he wishes to insert "or maintenance" after "expansion". I can conceive that there may be a case of an industry that has been prosperous but has fallen on hard times because of certain circumstances that have arisen.

Mr. Shannon: Lack of competition.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I do not know about lack of competition, but because of changed circumstances or perhaps lack of raw materials, without which production cannot be kept at an economic level. I do not know whether the honourable member wants us to prop up bad management or an industry whose prospects of success have diminished to a certain extent.

Mr. Shannon: Assistance will have to be approved.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: It will come under the scrutiny of the authority. Some approved assistance could be given. If that is the position, I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment carried.

Mr. CURREN: The Bill refers to undertakings that will be serviced by the Electricity Trust itself. What is the position where an industry is proposed to be established in an area serviced by a local government authority that reticulates electricity purchased in bulk from the Electricity Trust? Will the provisions of this Bill apply?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: As I read it, the title of the Bill does not encompass what the honourable member suggests. This is a Bill to enable the Electricity Trust of South Australia to do certain things. If an industry is not a customer of the trust, then the trust will not be able to extend its supplies to it. During the debate the question of supply to country towns by authorities other than the trust was raised. They have been subsidized enabling them to bring down their costs substantially, thus reducing costs to the consumers. I point out that that has been done by finance not from the trust but from the Treasury and, if assistance were to be given to industries on the basis of their electricity costs in areas not supplied by the trust, then it would come not within the ambit of the trust but within the ambit of the Industries Development Committee or some other authority to give assistance. This Bill makes no such provision.

Mr. Curren: My point is that the trust supplies the power to the local government authority, which purchases in bulk from the Electricity Trust.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I am not clear what the position is where a township authority buys in bulk from the trust. There may be some complication there because a township authority does not know who the consumer will be. The price is fixed by the distributing authority; the trust does not fix the price. I am prepared to look at this matter as far as it can be guaranteed that the concession that is intended to reach them does in fact reach them. If satisfactory arrangements could be made, the Bill would apply.

Mr. CURREN: The three authorities in Chaffey—the Renmark Corporation, the Renmark Irrigation Trust and the Berri District Council—are all bulk purchasers from the trust.

Mr. LAUCKE: On your behalf, Mr. Chairman, I move:

To strike out "thirty-nine" and insert "twenty-six".

This amendment reduces the radius from the General Post Office at Adelaide from 39 miles to 26 miles. This will enable heavy industry within the Chairman's district to be eligible for consideration to receive the benefits of the scheme. Not to have it within the ambit of consideration for concessional prices for power would, indeed, be wrong.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Government has no objection to this amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 5. Page 1469.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I support the second reading. As I consider that every man is worthy of his hire, I believe that a primary producer should receive an adequate return for labour and other costs and that his employee should receive an adequate wage. During the Second World War orderly marketing was a great innovation in our marketing procedure at a time when we had to have centralized control and a guaranteed return for the producer. This legislation has operated for many years and certain discussions have recently been held between Commonwealth and State authorities regarding its continuation. The legislation guarantees a price for the next five seasons for 150,000,000 bushels of wheat exported from Australia. That represents an increase of 50,000,000 bushels in the quantity in respect of which a guaranteed price applies. Legislation introduced earlier this afternoon will have a bearing on primary industry and will be an integral part of its cost structure.

Although I do not wish to become involved in the controversy over primary-producing costs, I ask members to consider the hours and conditions of employees in primary industry. Until a different approach is adopted by members opposite (particularly members interested in this legislation) on a minimum wage for employees in rural industry, I shall fight on behalf of such employees. This legislation must be considered in respect of the price that is guaranteed to the producer. It may be suggested that some individual growers do all their own work, but at some time they must

employ labour and this cost should be included in determining production costs. I believe that the Industrial Code should be amended to enable rural employees to have an award for their industry. It should not be suggested that a producer has to pay £17 or £20 a week and provide amenities for his employees; the wages and conditions should be determined by the court. If we are to determine true production costs—and wages are part of such costs—then an industrial award should prescribe the wages and conditions of rural employees.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River): I support the Bill, which deals with our most important agricultural industry. Wheatgrowing is second only to wool production in our primary industries. This legislation affords stability not only to the wheatgrower but to the industry as a whole. The Leader of the Opposition claims that every man is worthy of his hire. I could not agree more, but wheatgrowing is a complex industry and the income derived therefrom is so variable that it is extremely difficult to determine actual costs. Costs of production can be calculated only after averaging receipts and expenditure for many years. The wage that the farmer pays his employees is included in his production costs. As a producer I cannot understand why this industry should come under the provisions of the Industrial Code. If the employees engaged in rural industries were covered by the Industrial Code they would not be receiving the wages they are getting today.

Mr. Frank Walsh: Probably not: they would be much better off.

Mr. HEASLIP: A wage of £17, plus living quarters and other amenities, would be extremely low for a rural worker. Most employees are paid more than £17 a week. A producer must have confidence in a man to trust him with machinery worth £5,000; and the operator of that machinery must have a good mechanical knowledge. Agricultural employees receive £20 and more a week and have their living quarters and other amenities supplied. This legislation was first enacted in 1948. I was in Canberra then and participated in the conferences leading to this legislation. Producers are grateful for the legislation, which is renewed every five years.

Mr. Jennings: Who introduced the legislation? Are you grateful to Mr. Pollard?

Mr. HEASLIP: Mr. Pollard was the Minister in charge at that time. I am not going to have a go at him: he made mistakes, but he was in charge of the legislation which had to be passed not only by the Commonwealth Parliament but by all State Parliaments. Every five years since then the legislation has been renewed. This time we are renewing the legislation and varying it slightly. The guaranteed price, which was 15s. 10d. last year, has been reduced to 14s. 5d. All costs have been increasing, and it is a tribute to the man on the land that his cost of producing wheat has decreased by 1s. 5d. a bushel. That reduction in production costs must have an effect on bread prices. Although the price of bread has not been reduced, the lower costs of producing wheat have enabled bread prices to remain stationary. Another feature of this legislation is that the stabilization fund, which originally was built up by the producers and which was not to exceed £20,000,000, is now to be increased to £30,000,000. That is to say that until the amount paid in by primary producers reaches £30,000,000 they cannot take out any money. Producers are not objecting to that at all; nor are they objecting to the drop in the price of wheat. It is only because of the scientific advances in production and the increased yield to the acre that they have been able to produce wheat and sell it at this reduced price. In the past producers were guaranteed the price on 100,000,000 bushels for export, but now the Government, in its wisdom, has increased that quantity to 150,000,000 bushels, which for the next five years can be exported at a guaranteed price.

In the early 1950's Australia was producing only about 150,000,000 bushels, of which about 50,000,000 bushels was sold locally at the guaranteed price and the other 100,000,000 bushels exported at the guaranteed price. Any excess wheat had to be sold on the world markets and the owners had to accept the world parity price. Today Australia is producing twice as much wheat: last year 310,000,000 bushels was produced.

Mr. Hutchens: That is the Australian production?

Mr. HEASLIP: Yes, and this year it will probably be more. The Australian consumption is between 60,000,000 and 70,000,000 bushels. Under the Act, with only 100,000,000 bushels guaranteed, about 140,000,000 bushels would be left for export and would have to be sold on the world market at the world parity price. Even today, the world parity price is not an economic price to the man on the land therefore the increase in the quantity of wheat for export under guarantee is essential and much appreciated by wheatgrowers. I support the Bill wholeheartedly.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh): In common with the member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip), I wish briefly to support the second reading. I agree with the honourable member when he says that wheat is second only to wool in primary production in Australia and in South Australia. Although I appreciate the value of secondary industries, I am convinced that the economy of this country still largely depends on our primary industries and their ability to produce. I believe it is essential for all Parliaments in the Commonwealth to see that the primary producer is able to plan economic production. The South Australian wheat industry has much to be proud of. Indeed, I believe we have the best primary producers in the Commonwealth. In other States primary production is somewhat easier because of the climate, whereas the South Australian producer must contend with indifferent seasons and plan accordingly.

Mr. Jennings: You have had a fair share of wheat producing, yourself.

Mr. HUTCHENS: I have used the plough and the harrow and sat in the dust, but today that is not done. I appreciate the honourable member's interjection because many years ago I helped, in a limited way, on a farm in the north of the State. Recently I returned to the area and I was amazed at the difference in the capital cost of farming: it is colossal by comparison with that of many years ago. Many farmers have to buy their essential plant on overdraft and no farmer can reasonably be expected, in the State's as well as in his own interest, to invest unless he has security and is assured of a guaranteed price.

The stabilization scheme began in 1948 and, although I do not wish to reflect on any other Party, I say without hesitation that the stabilization of primary production is the policy of the Australian Labor Party. Wheat does much for the country and for the peace of the world because people all over the world must eat. The member for Rocky River said that the farmer could not produce wheat economically if he was forced to sell at world parity prices. I agree with him and I am pleased to see that the primary producers are organized. You, Mr. Speaker, know about this as you played no small part in seeing that primary producers were organized and were able to speak with an organized voice in the right quarters.

I remember that this was not always the case and recall how primary producers were exploited. I am convinced that no member of this House would wish to see that exploitation again. Under organized marketing the primary producer has been able to plan, buy equipment and adopt scientific methods that might have been denied him had he had no security. His security has enabled him to increase considerably the average yield in South Australia. In 1949-50, about 14 bushels an acre was produced; in 1958-59, 22 bushels an acre; and in 1960-61 (the latest figures available), 23 bushels an acre. Primary producers deserve congratulations on their great determination and willingness to accept the advice of those who have studied scientific farming. This type of legislation provides the encouragement farmers need to work energetically. Sometimes they must take great risks and I am sure most members opposite will agree that many farmers have taken an overdraft and, metaphorically, put a millstone around their necks. This could be done only by men of courage but their efforts have been made possible by the encouragement provided by the stabilization plan. With these few remarks I wholeheartedly support the Bill. I am confident it will have the unanimous support of the House.

Mr. LAUCKE (Barossa): The wheat stabilization plan has come before us for ratification and I have pleasure in supporting its acceptance. Looking back, I note that the Wheat Board has been in existence for 27 years. We are currently handling pool No. 26 and the incoming harvest will be pool No. 27, so we have had 27 years of progressive direction of the wheat industry. I believe the board has done a magnificent work in receiving and marketing Australian wheat crops in those 27 years. Under a Commonwealth Act the board continues, and with the acquiescence of the States a new stabilization plan will be adopted to cover the wheat industry for the next five years. There are two major alterations in the plan. One is an increase of 50,000,000 bushels on the hitherto 100,000,000 bushels for export at the guaranteed home consumption price. The other is an increased contribution by the growers to the stabilization fund, which contribution is to be collected by means of an export tax equal to the excess of export returns over guaranteed returns, with a maximum tax of 1s. 6d., a bushel. The stabilization fund is a growers' contribution towards financing the guarantee. The fund is to be raised from £20,000,000 to £30,000,000. In this one can see the preparedness of the wheatgrowers to play their part in ensuring that we have a system of marketing their

product that could be well followed by other primary industries. Actually, the wheat industry is operating under a system that is the envy of most other primary industries.

In recent years, through better husbandry, a better knowledge of soil requirements, and a greater use of clovers, we have increased the yield per acre to a point where the wheat index committee agreed that the divisor should be increased from 15.5 bushels to 17 bushels an acre. This will have the effect of reducing the price of wheat by 1s. 5d. a bushel but the guaranteed home consumption price for the 50,000,000 bushels ensures to the farmer a reasonable basic yield an acre for the price of his product. There will be the ability to export another 50,000,000 bushels, and sell 60,000,000 bushels for home consumption and stock feed purposes.

I pay a tribute to the people who have been so instrumental in ensuring the continued stability of this vital and important primary industry. We have on the board, as representatives of the State, Mr. Tom Shanahan of Freeling and Mr. Max Saint of Maitland. I admire these two gentlemen greatly for the time they spend in the interests of the industry. I also pay a tribute to the executive of the organization of the wheat and woolgrowers in this State, which body had representation on the index committee in the recent discussions on the quantity of wheat to be guaranteed in connection with overseas sales, the local price and the export guaranteed price for the ensuing year.

I commend you, Mr. Speaker, for the part you have played over many years in ensuring our having a stable wheat industry. Recently you, as representative of the wheatgrowers, Mr. Miller, representing the State Agriculture Ministers, and the Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, did great work and undertook intensive research into what should be the new price. It was an onerous task and I compliment you, and the other members of the committee, on making recommendations which have been accepted and which will undoubtedly ensure the welfare of the wheat industry for the next five years. In connection with the increased quantity of wheat for export at the home consumption price, I understand that forward sellings are at a satisfactory figure, and it would appear that the Australian taxpayers will not be called on to pay anything in the next 12 months. If they have to pay anything it will be only a small amount.

The buoyancy of the markets overseas is good to see, and when we have an industry that is prepared to put £30,000,000 into a reserve fund to be called on when prices fall below a certain figure we have a general solidarity in the industry. With the acceptance of the new plan by the growers great things have been achieved. The sales effected by the board in recent years are commendable. We have a board that is prepared to go out and sell. Recently there were sales of 54,000,000 bushels of wheat and wheat for flour to Russia, plus sales to mainland China and to the Middle East. Throughout the world we have salesmen. Mr. Perrett, the previous General Manager of the board, is to be highly commended for his part in introducing a system of going out and selling. It has resulted in the favourable situation that we have today. Despite the huge production of about 8,684,000,000 bushels in the world, Australia can place its wheat favourably, and that is good. At present, a ship is loading at Port Adelaide 10,000 tons of flour, as a result of sales by the board, which is active, effective and realistic. With the situation such as it is, we have the foundation of prosperity in the industry, as well as general prosperity for the whole nation. I am happy indeed to support the Bill.

Mr. HUGHES (Wallaroo): As the Minister is anxious to have the Bill passed soon, I will not speak at length. The wheat stabilization plan has worked satisfactorily for all concerned over the last 15 years. The member for Barossa, who has just resumed his seat, has given much credit to various people for this scheme, but I remind him and other members that the primary producers of Australia owe a great debt to the late Ben Chifley, whose Government introduced it.

Mr. Hall: In the first place, it was by vote of the farmers.

Mr. HUGHES: It does not matter about the farmers: the man who put it into operation should get credit.

Mr. Loveday: Conservative farmers were the biggest obstacle to it.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. I do not wish to get into an argument on this matter this afternoon. All the primary producers in this House today should feel grateful to whomsoever it was that introduced the scheme, and seeing that it came into operation during the time of the Chifley Government I think members must be fair and give some credit to that Government. The system has stood the test of time, and it is continued today. Next to wool, wheat is one of the biggest sources of income in this country. Wheat growing is an industry that is most uncertain in its return, for producers have to

contend with dry years and with the vagaries of the weather. Only this year the remarkably good rains early in the year established good crops of wheat, but then we had a dry spell and had it not been for the rain a few weeks ago the yield for this State would have been down millions of bushels. We are all thankful that that rain came, because there will now be added to our crop this year a considerable number of bushels, even though the rain came late.

When it was suggested originally that the Government ensure a guaranteed price for an additional 50,000,000 bushels of wheat, many people (some of them associated with various Parliaments) opposed the idea because they maintained that the economy of the country could not stand it. However, I am pleased to know that you, Mr. Speaker, and your organization stood wholeheartedly behind the scheme; no doubt the experts that you had at your disposal looked closely at the economy of our grain-growing industry. I compliment you, Sir, on the work that your organization—and you in particular—did in establishing the scheme. I attended many gatherings of the Wheat and Woolgrowers Association, and I know that the various speakers at the meetings I attended urged all members of Parliament to support the scheme; I intimated at that time that I would support it, because I had enough confidence in you, Sir, and your organization to know that it would be of great benefit to the primary producers and to the Commonwealth of Australia as a whole.

This afternoon I offer sincere thanks to the men who are responsible for the sale of our grain in other countries. Had it not been for their good business acumen, some sales that have taken place only recently would not have taken place, and perhaps we would have had a large carry-over. As a member for a grain-growing district, I express my appreciation to those men who went overseas and arranged huge sales of the coming grain harvest. I express appreciation to you, Sir, as the General Secretary of the Association, for the part you have played in this matter.

Mr. FREEBAIRN (Light): I support this Bill, relating to the stabilization of the wheat industry. The Bill marks 15 years of the wheat stabilization plan, which has been extended for periods of five years at a time since 1948.

Mr. Ryan: It was introduced by a Labor Government.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: I concede that, and I give that Government some credit for introducing it. But, Sir, we must recognize that the Australian Labor Party was the Government in power in Canberra at that time, and that it introduced the scheme following the pattern set by the Country Party in Queensland. I believe that it was after the first five years of its operation that the Cain Labor Government in Victoria did its best to disrupt the continuation of the wheat stabilization scheme. I do not think I need remind members that it was during the regime of the Labor Government in Canberra that a certain deal took place with New Zealand. Under political pressure applied by the wheat-growers' organizations, the deficit in the wheat-growers' returns was made up by the Australian taxpayer.

Mr. Ryan: Do you believe in selling wheat to Red China?

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Yes, I do; I consider that withholding food from starving people would be inviting war, and I can see no more certain way of inviting hostilities than to withhold food surpluses.

Mr. Fred Walsh: You don't subscribe to the views of the new President of the West German Republic?

Mr. FREEBAIRN: The member for West Torrens is trying to drag me out into deep water. I acknowledge the contribution that you yourself, Sir, made to the formation of the initial wheat stabilization plan. I believe that it was in my maiden speech in this House that I stated that you had made the greatest contribution of any Australian to the wheat industry, and I do not think your efforts in that regard need amplifying. I know that the wheatgrowers today appreciate very much the great contribution that you made towards this plan. The basic feature of this stabilization plan and the Australian Wheat Board's function is that it allows the marketing of wheat to remain in the hands of the wheat-growers' representatives. The grower members on the Australian Wheat Board have a big majority on the board, and as a result those of us who are wheatgrowers are allowed to market our own product through our own elected representatives. We then have the bargaining power which can come only from a collective organization such as the pool. I compliment the South Australian grower representatives on the Australian Wheat Board (Messrs. Shanahan and Saint) who have done and are doing a fine job for the wheat industry. I believe that each of these gentlemen has made at least one trip abroad for the sole purpose of selling our wheat overseas.

The important point for this House to consider is the contribution the State Parliament

makes to this wheat stabilization plan. Because the State can control prices, our contribution to this scheme will be to control the local price. The Australian Wheat Board is a Commonwealth organization, so it is a simple matter for the Commonwealth Government to add stabilizing features to the plan.

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

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Before the dinner adjournment I had spoken about the contribution made by the Commonwealth Government and this Parliament towards wheat stabilization. Perhaps no post-war legislation has given more benefit to the man on the land than has legislation dealing with wheat stabilization.

Mr. Hughes: Thanks to the Labor Party.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Yes, and thanks to all those who forced the Labor Government in 1948 to do something about wheat stabilization. This legislation has been a big factor in maintaining the peace of mind and security of farming families in Australia.

Mr. HALL (Gouger): I am pleased to support this Bill and to know that the legislation is not now a political measure; that we can all agree to it and recognize the merit of such legislation. It was not always so, as you, Mr. Speaker, well know. During the formation of the early plans, certain views that were not popular with the farming community were put forward. I think it was in 1945 that the first scheme was put forward for a price of, I think, 5s. 2d. a bushel. Older members of the House will remember that scheme. A great uproar was caused in agricultural circles over this price, as the export price at the time was far in excess of 5s. 2d. Eventually the farmers were given a vote, and they rejected the scheme put forward by a Labor Government for 5s. 2d. Eventually, they obtained a scheme that gave them far greater justice. It is well to remember that in such sample years as 1944-45 the home consumption price was 3s. 11¼d. and the export price 6s.; and in 1945-46 the home consumption price was still 3s. 11¼d. and the export price was 9s. 11d. The disparity went on until in 1947-48 the home consumption price was just over 6s. and the export price was 17s. 6d. I hope this will not happen again to the scheme.

We have a reduced home consumption price compared with other years, and an export guarantee. The reduced home consumption price is brought about by a new divisor and an increased yield; many factors could be responsible for the increased yield, including the fact that land that has not been cropped heavily has recently been brought back into production. This may be a temporary benefit in some respects to the increased yield divisor. The reduction in costs that is supposed to have taken place is not very evident to the practical farmer. I think all members realize that there has been a steady progression of prices for goods and machinery used by a farmer to produce from his property. I believe there should be a separate price for home consumption compared with the export guarantee. We know from the practical side that this year the price of wheat to the Australian consumer may be reduced, but have any goods or equipment used on an agricultural property been reduced in price? A report appeared in a newspaper today that a study would be made of the tariff on imports of motor vehicle parts, an item that greatly influences farmers' costs.

Mr. Millhouse: On the other hand, didn't you hear the statement made by the Premier?

Mr. HALL: I am not sure what the honourable member is referring to.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford: He is just trying to trick you.

Mr. HALL: Maybe; I have been tricked before. In the profits that a wheatgrower is supposed to be making now, a reduction in costs is not at all evident; despite the reduction in price for Australian wheat, he is faced with increased costs. As Australian secondary industries operate behind a tariff wall, I see no reason why agricultural producers should not participate in some protection in relation to goods sold in Australia. I do not say that this should apply in relation to export earnings, but I do believe it should in relation to goods sold within Australia. It is well to remember that the export price of wheat is steadily rising; I believe the price obtained for export wheat is well over 14s. 5d. In this rising export market, it may well be that the Australian wheatgrower is once again subsidizing the Australian economy. We must remember that he does this without a margin of profit in the calculation of the wheat price.

I know that anything I say now can have no influence on the formulation of this plan, which wheatgrowers are pleased to receive. They know that before the last war marketing conditions for wheat and grain were chaotic. Through the efforts of our representatives on the Wheat Board and of you, Mr. Speaker, the position has been improved. I hope to see included in the price of wheat some margin for growers.

Mr. BYWATERS (Murray): I support this Bill, which I think all members on both sides

of the House are anxious to see passed. It has been interesting to hear other members speak on this matter and to hear the history of the legislation. We all favour wheat stabilization. I believe that all members opposite will support what this Bill contemplates, regardless of the fact that in the main their policy does not lend itself this way. It has been said—and quite generously said—by members opposite that it was in the Chifley régime that this legislation was first introduced, but I think we can go back even further than that—and you, Mr. Speaker, will be aware of this. In the bad old days when wheat was sold for as little as 1s. 3d. a bushel, some people in the Commonwealth Government claimed that 2s. 6d. was ample; the late Archie Cameron claimed that. A deputation was taken to Mr. Curtin, who was then Leader of the Opposition. But the writing was on the wall with the falling out between the Country Party and the Liberal Party in Canberra. It was evident that the war was causing a good deal of concern and the Liberal Party at that time did not have the courage to carry on.

Mr. Shannon: That was during Coles's time.

Mr. BYWATERS: Yes, during the time of Wilson and Coles, who supported the Government, but that position was altered when the next election came along; but all this was before Curtin was Prime Minister. He was approached because people realized that there would soon be a change of Government, as people realize it now. They went to him and asked him what the situation would be if he were Prime Minister. He said, "What would your cost of production be?" They replied, "3s. 6d. a bushel." He further asked them, "Can you pay employees the basic wage on that figure?" They replied, "No, we cannot; we have never been used to paying the basic wage." Labour costs were down below that. On this particular issue the future Prime Minister said, "You come back again when you can fix prices that will pay the basic wage." So they met and went into their figures; then they came back with a price of 4s. 1½d. John Curtin said, "If I am Prime Minister that will be the price I will guarantee," and that was guaranteed. Thenceforward we found a greater degree of stabilization not only in the wheat industry but in other industries too. Throughout the war years most primary producers were guaranteed the cost of production, including enough to pay a satisfactory wage in their industries.

The history of this is interesting and, because of that, we have experienced this stabilization of wheat marketing. We are proud to keep it going from year to year. Whenever there has been a need to ratify the agreement by State and Commonwealth legislation, this has been done by a unanimous vote in every Parliament in Australia. So the principle of stabilization is a real one in primary industry. By way of interjection we had a question answered this afternoon by the member for Light (Mr. Freebairn) in favour of supplying wheat to Red China. It was not long ago that the Government members took strong exception to doing that, but now we find that another deal has been made with Russia, which was welcomed by the Wheat Board and the fact that they have won this market has been well received by farmers generally. So, as the member for Light said this afternoon, it is far better to supply people with food than to foster another war. With those few words and knowing that the farmers generally are waiting for this legislation to be put into effect so that they can carry on the good work done in former years, I support the second reading.

Mr. NANKIVELL (Albert): Very briefly I support this Bill. I mean "very briefly" because the people I represent are mainly wheatgrowers and they have not a stabilization scheme with which to continue (because this scheme takes effect from October 1) until such time as the Bill is passed. Therefore, there is nothing to be gained at this juncture by our debating an issue with which we should associate ourselves fully and unequivocally.

One of the big problems for the wheat industry is the disposal of surpluses. I pay a tribute to the Wheat Board for the manner in which it has effected sales. No matter to whom it has sold, it has sold wheat. I commend you, Sir, and the Wheatgrowers' Federation for the manner in which the case was put for the wheatgrowers. Price stabilization has meant much to the farming community, and it has been reflected throughout other industries. Since 1958 we have seen an increase of 5,000,000 acres of wheat sown in Australia. The only way in which we can regard that is as a tribute to stabilization. Apart from the growing of wheat under stabilization, there is the fact that wheat prices have been favourable compared with wool prices. Also, we have had a run of good seasons, which have had a good effect upon the divisor. The fact that wool prices have not been so favourable means that most of this country that has grown wool and has not grown wheat for many years has come back to wheat production. Bordertown and Tatiara are in that respect two of the

wealthiest parts of this State. During the wool boom they were able to grow wool and diversify production, while recently they have grown wheat in increasing quantities. This has been assisted by mechanization. There was a time when one could not determine at short notice in which areas one was to grow wheat. Wheat had to be grown on fallow and fallow had to be prepared in advance. Horses were called for until tractors came into use. With horses, one had to break up in advance; with tractors one can break up grassland quickly and change one's ideas of sowing almost at the drop of a hat. One can switch from barley to wheat, as has been happening. Many areas in the State have switched from barley to wheat because of the price variation in those two commodities. Stability comes to us through this legislation. It is this Act that has enabled farmers to change their minds and get the maximum production and return from their farms—as I say, almost at the drop of a hat, depending upon the set of circumstances and taking advantage of the circumstances as they arise. Therefore, I support the second reading of this Bill and hope it passes its remaining stages rapidly.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 passed.

Clause 8—"Powers of board."

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Subclause (1) (*a*) reads:

. . . purchase wheat, wheaten flour, semolina, corn sacks, jute or jute products.

Perhaps it is a little unfair of me to ask the Minister of Agriculture a question without notice but can he say whether cornsacks are still purchased by the Australian Wheat Board? Perhaps I should amplify that by saying that in recent years private merchants have been handling cornsacks.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture): I do not know who handles them but I do know there are plenty about.

Mr. SHANNON: At this stage the merchants are responsible for the importation and distribution of cornsacks. Whether or not this is a wise provision I am not arguing. I understand that the group of merchants responsible for supplying cornsacks, unless something rather remarkable happens in the weather pattern, has more than enough cornsacks for the coming harvest. At this stage the supplying of cornsacks is not a function of the Wheat Board. I do not know whether it would be wise to allow the board to import cornsacks and take the risks that are known to anyone who has anything to do with the jute trade. Sometimes a substantial carryover is incurred because the expected State harvest falls a million or so bushels short, resulting in the oversupply of cornsacks, which have to be held in store. That is not unusual; indeed it is normal to have a few extra on hand. Whether the Wheat Board would act as favourably towards wheatgrowers as the trade is doing at the moment is a matter for the wheatgrower to decide.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: I am grateful to the member for Onkaparinga for that information.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (9 to 23) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1514.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): In 1956, the Weeds Act was passed and superseded the Noxious Weeds Act, 1931-1939, which had been found to be ineffective in checking the spread of noxious weeds in this State. Obviously the effective control of weeds rests with the owner or occupier of the land in the vicinity. The big difficulty is that many councillors on local councils are the major landowners in the district and often are the main offenders because they omit to clear the weeds from their properties. The authorized officers or inspectors are appointed by the local councils, and they would be in a difficult position if they reported to the council that several councillors were not paying sufficient attention to the clearing of dangerous or noxious weeds from their properties. However, section 20 of the principal Act gives the Minister very wide powers if the councils concerned do not carry out the requirements of the Act. Section 20 (1) states:

If the Minister has reason to believe that any council has failed or is failing strictly to carry out or enforce within its area the provisions of this Act as to the destruction or control of proclaimed weeds, he may cause an inspection to be made of the area by an authorized officer.

Subsection (4) of the same section states:

If any such council fails to comply with such a notice the Minister may himself strictly carry out and enforce within its area the provisions of this Act as to the destruction or control of proclaimed weeds, and may recover from the council by action in any court of competent jurisdiction the cost of so doing, and, without limiting the right to recover as aforesaid, may withhold Government grants of any description or any subsidy which the council is entitled to be paid under any Act.

These are very strong provisions, but even so a survey that was carried out in July of this year (I assume by competent officers of the Agriculture Department) and referred to by the Minister of Agriculture, showed that 28 district councils are now rated as active. Those councils are carrying out every phase of weed control needed in their districts; 57 councils are carrying out weed control, but their programme is at present considered inadequate; and 15 councils have been rated as inactive. From the foregoing extracts that I have quoted from the principal Act, together with the survey to which I referred, apparently the Government has not insisted upon legislation that this House passed in 1956.

In rural areas, just as in the urban areas, we have good property owners as well as bad, and the good property owners control weeds in and around their property whether they are forced to or not. I agree with the Minister that local councils are taking more interest now than they did previously in the control of weeds, but we still have a long way to go. Therefore I believe that we should encourage the councils that are prepared to co-operate with the Government in the effective control of weeds. Clause 4 provides for the enactment of a new section of the principal Act whereby up to 50 per cent of the cost of the wages and salaries paid to local authorized officers whose duties are directly concerned with weed eradication, will be subsidized by the Government, but after five years these authorized officers will be obliged to hold a recognized certificate relating to weed control unless the Minister gives written approval waiving this condition.

Clause 5 is a machinery provision extending the time a council may render an account for weed clearing from one to three months. This is a practical improvement because in the past it must have been very difficult to establish within one month whether the programme had been effective or not. Section 19 of the principal Act deals with the assessing of contributions by owners and occupiers of land towards the cost of destroying weeds on abutting roads. Because of the administrative difficulties involved these contributions were restricted to district council areas. However, in practice, the Government found that this excluded the corporation of the town of Renmark which is responsible for the control of large areas of primary production land, and it was precluded from recovering expenses associated with weed eradication from the respective landholders. Clause 5 (*b*) rectifies this anomaly.

Clause 6 removes another anomaly from the principal Act. Previously the cost of weed eradication on roads abutting Crown lands was borne by the respective councils whereas now it is proposed that the Minister may pay the council for the expense incurred. This seems a reasonable approach. We are all aware of the financial threat to our primary producers if noxious weeds are neglected. In recent years much reference has been made to the noogoora burr, which is a serious threat to our wool industry if it is not eradicated, and there are many other weeds which are causing serious concern to the officers of the Agriculture Department. This Bill is aimed at encouraging the co-operative councils to conduct an even more intensive campaign to eradicate noxious weeds from the State and, as the most effective control of weeds must come from the co-operation of the people in the local areas through their respective councils in order to be successful, I support the second reading of this Bill.

I often wonder whether weeds are permitted to grow too high before an attempt is made to eradicate them. One frequently sees weeds at the seeding stage—the time when they are propagated—yet no attempt is being made to control them. If local councils are not prepared to expend money to eradicate weeds and the Government has to intervene, has the Government sufficient manpower to ensure that the work is done? Noxious weeds are a big problem. Much of our good land is not being used, and weeds are gaining control of it. This is most apparent in our northern areas. Those people who hold land out of production should take steps to control and eradicate weeds growing thereon.

Mr. NANKIVELL (Albert): I support the second reading. As the Minister incorporated me in the committee that founded this Bill, I feel obliged to contribute to the debate. Actually, I have better reason for speaking to the Bill. First, I pay a tribute to the weeds control officers of the Agriculture Department, particularly Mr. Tideman, who have been responsible for convincing councils of their obligations to carry out their duties under the Weeds Act. As has been said by the Leader, councils were often reluctant to carry out the provisions of this Act, because frequently councillors themselves were offenders with noxious and dangerous weeds. However, the position has changed in recent years, and councils—particularly those in my district—are conscious of their responsibility and employ full-time inspectors.

Mr. McKee: Have you noogoora burr in your district?

Mr. NANKIVELL: No, we have skeleton weed. The Bill sets out to enable councils to finance the work undertaken by legitimate and authorized weeds inspectors employed by them. The need for this provision was brought home to me today when I was reading the minutes of the Coonalpyn Downs District Council in which attention was drawn to the problem of skeleton weed. It was contended that if something were to be done to control this dangerous weed the council would need to employ additional inspectors. This need has arisen through the apathy of landholders who argue that they have weeds and must live with them, but who forget that the weeds can affect other people. Inspectors draw attention to the fact that the weeds must be dealt with in the interests of the community. In order to ensure that they are dealt with, the Act must be policed, and it can be policed only by authorized officers. That can impose a heavy burden on councils, and this Bill goes a long way towards ensuring that the Act is policed and that the Government does what it can to assist councils in carrying out their duties of enforcing this necessary Act.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga): I should like to praise some councils that have been active in trying to protect ratepayers from the infestation of noxious and dangerous weeds on road sides. I asked the Minister whether the term "council" included also "corporation" or "municipal body". He assures me that it does so I am happy about that. I know that the Mitcham and Burnside councils have been most active on the highways leading to the hills. We had an infestation, new to our area, of African daisy, which is one of our most dangerous weeds. It is not fully recognized by most people who have not seen what effect it can have on grazing land. It is difficult and costly to eradicate once it becomes firmly established. This year the Stirling District Council has imposed a special rate of 2d. on all ratepayers. This will raise £3,000, which is to be spent on eradicating noxious weeds on district roads. This rate was imposed long before this legislation was foreshadowed. It was a gesture on the part of the council, and it arose primarily from a talk that Mr. O'Neil gave to a group of hills councillors—representing about seven or eight councils—on the methods to be adopted in eradicating noxious weeds, including African daisy. The council took his words to heart and imposed this special rate.

I have had the pleasure of introducing a deputation to the Minister and I have heard his statement to it. The Minister had Mr. Strickland and Mr. Tideman with him and I believe that deputation resulted in good being done. I believe that the people who attended considered that the Government was in earnest about this problem and would help wherever possible. The Minister did not give a definite assurance on that occasion but he said that the matter was being examined, and the Bill before us is the result of that examination. I compliment the Minister on the way he has handled the problem. He has approached it realistically and this Bill will receive the goodwill of the councils who are faced with these problems. Highways are becoming places for the distribution of various types of weed from other States that were not seen here before the days of interstate hauliers. When the infestation of these weeds is examined it is obvious that traffic has brought them. No other answer is possible because these weeds are found on the roadside and not in the paddocks, although it is not long before they can be seen in the paddocks as well. The Minister's action will be applauded by the councils with which I have come into contact and this Bill will greatly benefit the State generally.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River): I support the Bill and compliment the Minister on the way it has been introduced. The legislation was introduced originally in 1956.

Mr. Frank Walsh: If the property owners were as enthusiastic as the Minister everything would be all right.

Mr. HEASLIP: I believe they will take notice of this measure, not necessarily enthusiastically, but they will be forced under the Bill to do the right thing on their properties. The Minister and his officers have adopted the attitude that these weeds, which have accumulated over 100 years, cannot be eradicated in a few years, but that they can be controlled, and that is all-important. Two or three years ago I was nicknamed "noogoora burr" in this House for drawing the Minister's attention to the danger of this weed. The officers of the department took action and it is now controlled in South Australia. If it had not been, it would probably have spread throughout the State and thousands of acres would have been infested and the wool clip would have been depreciated. There are many noxious weeds, some dangerous, some not. Salvation jane, a noxious weed, is one of the best fodders in this State. It is a nuisance in the better class of country, but

in the drier parts of the State its eradication would never be thought of because it is valuable as fodder in dry years. I give the Bill my full support and compliment the Minister and his officers on the way it has been introduced.

Mr. HARDING (Victoria): I, too, support the second reading. Only 4 per cent of South Australia's area enjoys a rainfall of over 20in. and half that area is in the South-East. Over the last few years there has been an outbreak of many types of noxious weed. I congratulate the councils on the strict measures they are taking to control these weeds. Honourable members may not know that noogoora burr has been found recently in the South-East. It was discovered in a school ground at Lucindale. One of the boys from the school had been playing hide-and-seek in high grass and burrs had become attached to his socks. He was picking them out and throwing them from the window of the school bus. This shows how easily a weed such as noogoora burr can be spread. It represents far too much risk in country that has a 20-inch rainfall. The councils in the South-East are aware of the great danger of these weeds which are found mainly on the highways and in the drainage area, where the councils are being very particular. In fact, if the landholders do not try to get rid of these weeds the councils will appoint men to go on to private property and charge the landholder for any work done.

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

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Works) moved:

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution: That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Highways Act, 1926-1960.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes three amendments of substance to the principal Act. Section 26 of the principal Act deals with the powers of the Commissioner of Highways to construct and repair roads or works connected therewith. Clause 3 inserts five new subsections into this section. The new provisions will enable the Commissioner to close roads or works which, by reason of floods, landslides and the like, have become dangerous to vehicles or pedestrians. Under new subsection (3d) the Commissioner is required to notify the local council as soon as practicable, and under new subsection (3e) he is required to display such notices, lights and other warning devices as public safety demands. New subsection (3f) provides that a road may be closed to pedestrians, to all vehicles or vehicles of a certain weight or type. New subsection (3g) provides for an offence if a person contravenes any such notice or removes any fence, notice, light or other warning device erected by the Commissioner.

In the second place, clause 4 repeals subsection (4) of section 26c of the principal Act. That subsection imposes a limit of £5,000 on moneys which the Commissioner may expend in any year on lighting the Port Road, Anzac Highway and other approved roads. The effect of the repeal is to remove this restriction. (The cost of lighting these roads in the past has exceeded £5,000 and the balance has been met from other funds.)

Thirdly, clause 5 inserts new section 26ea into the principal Act. The new section empowers the Commissioner, with the approval of the Minister, to light rural intersections, structures for which the Commissioner is responsible (and which are outside municipalities and townships) and any ferry or the approach thereto.

Recently the local councils concerned were asked whether they would be prepared to meet the cost of lighting ferries and approaches on the River Murray. Most of the councils were not prepared to meet the cost. As the cost involved is small, it is considered that in the interests of public safety it should be borne by the Commissioner. Another example is the Bower Road causeway at Port Adelaide, which is in course of construction and, when completed, will require lighting. It is not within the City of Port Adelaide boundaries and so the council would, no doubt, be unwilling to bear the cost.

Clause 6 inserts new section 27f into the principal Act providing that authorized officers may enter upon private land for the purpose of examining the site of proposed deviations or realignments of roads, and performing other incidental powers. Only infrequently is permission to enter in such cases withheld, but it is considered desirable that authorized officers should have an absolute right of entry. Subsection (3) provides for notice in writing to be given to the owner or occupier. Subsections (4) and (5) provide that in the

event of any loss or damage an owner or occupier may recover compensation to be determined under the Compulsory Acquisition of Land Act. Clauses 7 and 8 make minor drafting amendments to the principal Act.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for all the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 7. Page 1566.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): As has been explained by the Minister, this Bill increases the salaries of the Chief Justice and the other judges of the Supreme Court. Members of the Public Service generally have received salary increases, and this Bill provides increases for the judges, which can be provided only by Parliament.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. FRANK WALSH moved:

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the Whole House on the Bill that it have power to consider amendments relating to the powers of the Master.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I move to insert the following new clauses:

2a. Section 2 of the principal Act is amended by striking out the words "Officers of the court" and inserting in lieu thereof the words "The Master and Officers of the court".

3a. Subsection (1) of section 72 of the principal Act is amended—

(*a*) by striking out the words "sitting in chambers" in the last line of paragraph IV thereof; and

(*b*) by inserting after paragraph IV thereof the following paragraph:—

IVa. For regulating any matters relating to the business, authority and jurisdiction that may be transacted or exercised by the Master.

3b. Part VI of the principal Act is amended by inserting before the word "Officers" in the heading thereof the words "The Master and".

We should make the best possible use of our judges' time. The Premier indicated last year that there was some value in permitting the Master of the court to deal with certain matters. Undefended divorce actions could well be heard by the Master, thus allowing the judges to attend to the heavy list of civil cases.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I rise only because there is some information in my possession that may be of use to certain members who may later be considering this matter in another place, and it might be useful if that information was given so that later questions would not arise which otherwise would be obviated. Last year when this amendment was before Parliament there was general agreement that it would be useful from the court's point of view to be able to delegate certain matters to the Master, who is a very responsible authority. In fact, the present Master is a man whose capabilities are admired by all who know him.

The Premier had one or two worries about the possibility of our doing what we propose doing in our amendment, particularly in the jurisdiction given to the State court under the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act, and he asked Parliament not to proceed with the amendment last year so that he might ascertain whether the Commonwealth Attorney-General would be prepared to make the necessary alterations in the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act and Rules to allow the Master to do what we contemplated his doing. The Premier wrote to and received a reply from the Commonwealth Attorney-General, and he kindly furnished me with copies of those letters. In his reply the Attorney-General does not point out that in fact there are any amendments which need to be made to the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act and Rules, and that is not very surprising because in fact a perusal of the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act and Rules and two decisions —one of the High Court (a Commonwealth court) and one of our own State Supreme Court (a judgment of Mr. Justice Chamberlain on May 7 last year in the case of Nicholls *v.* Nicholls)—show that in fact the Commonwealth has to take our court as it finds it, and that no alteration in the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act or Rules is required to enable the Master to proceed. A previous opinion given by the Commonwealth Attorney-General subscribes to that point of view: it is up to us to determine the structure of our court, and if he invests it with the Commonwealth jurisdiction he invests the court as we make the court. The Commonwealth Attorney-General did, however, raise with the Premier certain objections to the course of action we propose, not on grounds of legal difficulty but

because he did not think that the Master should sit in the kinds of matter we contemplated he would sit in, and this is what he had to say:

Truly, I could not recommend amendment of the Act or Rules along the lines proposed. I take the view that the judges should hear undefended divorce cases as well as defended. It is clearly judicial work, and the importance of the community interest and of the need to safeguard the welfare of the children remains whether there is or is not a contest between the parties. In this jurisdiction failure to defend cannot be given the same significance as in other litigation. Regarding maintenance and custody applications, I think it would be common experience that disputes in this area would often be at the very heart of the litigation of the parties, and might present as much or even more difficulty than the dissolution of the marriage itself. I am sorry that I am unable to support the suggestion you have put to me in your letter.

The Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act and Rules have presented State courts with much more work in putting cases through the court than was the case under the old State Act and Rules: our original State procedure was much more streamlined and effective than the present Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act procedure. Unfortunately, I think the Commonwealth Attorney-General himself was not particularly well versed in this jurisdiction, for his own practice at the bar had not been in the divorce jurisdiction to any great extent and he seems unaware of the fact that already in South Australia the Masters deal with maintenance and custody matters and their right to do so has already been upheld by our court; in fact, they already deal with those matters which the Commonwealth Attorney-General says they should not deal with, in his view, and it has been found in South Australia that they can deal with them effectively, expeditiously, and to the benefit of the parties. In those circumstances I think it is not up to the Commonwealth Attorney-General to determine how our court is constituted: it is not his court but ours, and it is for us to determine. As I think this amendment is sensible, I commend it to the Committee.

New clauses inserted.

Mr. FRANK WALSH moved to insert the following new clause:

3c. Section 83 of the principal Act is amended—

(*a*) by striking out the words "sitting in chambers" wherever they appear in that section; and

(*b*) by adding at the end thereof the following subsection (the preceding portion of the section being designated as subsection (1)) thereof:—

(2) The Master, when engaged in the exercise of any jurisdiction conferred upon him by this or any other Act shall be deemed to have and to exercise the jurisdiction of the court.

New clause inserted.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUCCESSION DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 24. Page 1251.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh): I support the second reading of this Bill, which does not require much debate. It appears that clause 3 closes a loophole through which the payment of succession duties, particularly in relation to large estates, can be avoided with resulting serious loss of revenue to the State. I think every member will agree that this should not be allowed and that the clause is therefore desirable. Clause 4 raises from £50 to £200 the value of certain classes of gifts exempted from duty where the donors die within 12 months of his making the gifts. The second reading explanation states that the exemption figure of £50 has stood for 40 years, during which time the decrease in the value of money has been colossal. This provision is long overdue.

Clause 5 amends the schedules to the Act, and I have some concern about this provision. Where the value of a property derived by a widow or child under 21 years of age does not exceed £3,500, no duty is now payable; this clause increases that sum to £4,500. Members of my Party think that this is not sufficient and that the limit should be raised. A property valued at £6,000 is often no more than a suburban house. I live in a humble cottage that I purchased only four years ago for £4,500. Although it was a fair property, it had no footpaths and no made garden. Because of the improvements I have made, I believe I could now get £6,000 for it, so it will be seen that a minimum of £6,000 would be reasonable.

Where the person deriving the property is a widower, a descendant (other than a child under the age of 21 years) or an ascendant of the person from whom the property is derived, at present no duty is payable where the property does not exceed £1,500 in value. There may be good reasons for the variations between the two schedules, but the members of my Party who have had experience of farming (minute though it may be compared with the

experience of members opposite) know that many sons have worked on farms for their fathers for many years and have received only small allowances. By doing this they have improved their fathers' properties, which they have done in the hope and belief, encouraged by their parents, that some day they would inherit the property. We sincerely believe that £6,000 in this case would be a reasonable limit, though we are not quite so adamant about this as we are in regard to the first schedule. We appreciate from the second reading explanation that this will cost the State some £200,000, but nevertheless it should be supported for the sake of the continuation of the sons of primary producers being encouraged to stay on the land where in many cases the holdings are not big enough to be divided up. Often the owner of a property is not in a position to divide it up or to buy his son another property. The need for developing our primary industries should compel this House to encourage it. More can be said about this in Committee. I content myself at this stage by supporting the second reading

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide): I support the member for Hindmarsh. About two years ago the Premier introduced a Bill in this House to amend the Land Tax Act by reducing the land tax on large landholders by ½d. in the £. The Bill provided for over £100,000 in value and it reduced the land tax by ½d. in the £. We supported the Bill, but the reason given by the Premier for it on that occasion was inflated land values. The same position exists here. Members of my Party and I can cite cases of people who bought a block of land for as little as £10 on which to build a house—say £50, if you like. I bought one for just over £10. My house cost me £720 to build. The fencing cost £52 10s.—£782 10s. altogether. The Minister of Works values my property today at £4,300. Is not that inflated land values? I bought the land in 1940 and I built the house in 1941, for £782 10s. It is now valued at £4,300. Also, there is £800 to £1,000 worth of furniture in this house; and I have a used motor car. There are plenty of people like me. Are we any different from the large landholders? Are not we, the smaller people, entitled to the same consideration here as the bigger people who own large areas of land? Land tax was reduced by ½d. in the £ because of inflated land values. The same principle applies to the matter now under consideration. All we ask this Government to do is to agree to the principle that was agreed to two years ago in respect of land tax. There is no doubt that the people who bought property years ago and built houses in the early years of the Second World War have properties that today have inflated values out of all proportion to their original values. So we suggest that the amount in the schedule should be increased from £4,500 to £6,000.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5—"Amendment of principal Act, second schedule."

Mr. HUTCHENS: I move:

In paragraph (*a*) to strike out "£4,500" wherever occurring and insert "£6,000".

I pointed out in my speech on second reading that £6,000 was seldom more than the value of a suburban house and its contents. We believe that the changing value of money warrants this increase.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer): I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. Probably members do not appreciate the ramifications involved. Indeed, it is difficult to understand them fully because they depend to a certain extent upon the sizes of the estates. Honourable members know that in South Australia we have a system of succession duties, not of estate duties. The honourable member who moved the amendment obviously considered he was dealing with estate duties. If the amendment is carried, it will completely upset the Budget that has passed through Parliament and will drastically affect the expenditures upon social services. For instance, it would be possible under the amendment for a succession of £20,000 to escape completely any duty whatsoever if the disposition of the property was made in a particular way. Also, it would mean that in joint tenancies £12,000 would be a common amount that would completely escape duty.

This matter has been carefully considered by the Government. It is not long since we amended the Act and increased the exempt figure to £3,500. It has not been left in abeyance for a long time: it was increased to £3,500 in 1954. The amount of £4,500 is the absolute limit to which we can go unless we are seriously to disrupt the expenditures upon social services and other items provided for in the Budget. As I see it, there is no justification for the amendment. I assure the honourable member we have examined the position carefully. It was merely a few years ago that the amount of exemption was only £500.

We have raised it progressively until now it is £4,500. I hope that what I have said is sufficient to induce the Committee not to support the amendment.

Mr. LAWN: How out of step is the Premier of this State? The Prime Minister is on television tonight putting over his election speech. Two months ago he introduced social service legislation, and now he is competing with the incoming Prime Minister of Australia on his proposals for social services. The Prime Minister is telling the people that he can increase the benefits he brought down recently because Mr. Calwell promised increased social service benefits for the people of Australia. The Prime Minister said the other day that it would cost £56,000,000 to buy bombers from America. Where is the money coming from? It shows that it can be obtained if it is wanted. The Premier said earlier that if we carried the amendment the Budget would be upset, yet the Prime Minister tonight is upsetting his own Budget passed in the Commonwealth Parliament two months ago. It is only two years ago that a Bill was introduced in this Parliament to reduce land tax for large landholders by a ½d. in the £, and we agreed to it. The Labor Party asked then for the tax to be reduced on properties valued at under £5,000. The Premier refused because he had the numbers. I do not know whether he has the numbers tonight. We asked that the rate be reduced by ¼d. in the £, which would be some relief to the small landholders who have had inflated values placed on their properties, and this request was refused. It was no different from the request that the Premier made a couple of years ago regarding large landholders. Surely if the Prime Minister can change his policy to win an election then this Parliament can do it when there is no election involved in the issue before the Committee.

Mr. HUTCHENS: I rise to correct one or two things said by the Premier. First, I knew that this was a succession duty and not an estate duty. I know full well that it is impossible to understand all the ramifications of Government finance if one is not in the Government.

Mr. Hall: It is no manipulation if there are three children in the family.

Mr. HUTCHENS: I hope that the honourable member will bear with me for a while. It seems to be an admission of weakness for a Government, that has been in office for 25 years, to say that it has not tidied up the escape clauses.

Mr. Lawn: The Liberal Party has been in office for 33 years.

Mr. HUTCHENS: I am talking about the Government.

Mr. Lawn: That is 33 years too long!

Mr. HUTCHENS: It is possible, if the amendment is not carried, for a widow with a humble suburban cottage to be subjected to succession duties, and that is not desirable. I do not wish to talk about primary producers now. I hope the Committee will see the wisdom of the amendment and support it.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Apparently the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) does not realize that the greatest benefits from this amendment would go not to the small person, but to the wealthy person. The honourable member has the matter completely wrong. I think the Committee knows the issue and I do not intend to take up any further time.

The Committee divided on the amendment:

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

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

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Casey. No—Mr. Nankivell.

The CHAIRMAN: There are 18 Ayes and 18 Noes: there being an equality of votes, I give my decision in favour of the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived; clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GENERAL).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 5. Page 1468.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Leader of the Opposition): I believe that this Bill should have been introduced much earlier. The Government contends that local government is close to the people. It is such a vital matter that legislation to amend the principal Act should be one of the first measures introduced in any session of Parliament. For many years we have been promised that the Local Government Act would be completely

overhauled and much of the dead wood eliminated. However, I doubt the Government's sincerity in this regard.

This is essentially a Committee Bill. Clause 5 refers to the question of how-to-vote cards. I believe that as people have complete freedom to vote at council elections, they should also have complete freedom in handing out how-to-vote cards within a reasonable distance of the polling booth—similar to what is done now during State or Commonwealth elections. I believe this would add colour and interest to council elections. At present no payment of more than £20 by a committee of a council is valid unless afterwards ratified by council. Clause 6 increases this sum to £200. Clause 12 will enable councils to contribute towards the cost of home-help services to assist in the care and wellbeing of children. At present the District and Bush Nursing Society renders valuable service in this regard in helping make easier the lives of aged and infirm people. I know that the Meals on Wheels organization is anxious to provide an effective domestic service and that the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department has some such service, but with the assistance rendered by councils the present position will be materially improved.

I believe that clause 13 is of considerable importance. It relates to the application of parking meter revenue to car parks. When parking meters were first introduced into the city, I did not object. However, I believe that their installation has now got almost out of hand. Many parking meters have been erected unnecessarily within the city boundaries. Parking meters may have been needed but there was a need for discretion in this matter. I supported the installation of parking meters but I believe that too many have been installed in the city. The legislation authorizes the inauguration of a special fund so that parking meter revenue may be used on off-street parking space. I have an amendment on the file because I believe that if fees are to be collected in this way the money should not go into the general revenue of a council but should be used exclusively for off-street parking facilities. It should be mandatory on the council to spend such money only in this way. Other States have provided parking facilities in multi-storey buildings and it is time we grew up in our ideas on off-street parking space.

Motorists seem to be a good target as a revenue-producing body today. Registration fees are more than adequate and third-party insurance premiums have been increased. Further, there are comprehensive insurance premiums. Parking space is inadequate in the city so the councils have found there is a good way of collecting revenue through the parking meters or through fines for parking in prohibited spaces. Such revenue should be used only to provide off-street parking facilities whether such facilities be provided at ground level or in multi-storey buildings. Money taken from the motorist should be used in his interests and not on other lines of expenditure. I will therefore move my amendment in Committee.

Regarding roadmaking, the provisions of the legislation are important. Although I do not intend to move an amendment, I believe that the Town Planning Act should be used to control the allocation of costs for roadmaking. Large bodies such as the Housing Trust buy land to subdivide and they are obliged to provide for roads in those areas. The standard and specification of such roads could be improved and the relevant provision of the Town Planning Act should be reviewed as it affects local councils. The cost of roadmaking is charged to the people who buy the land on which to build homes. For instance, the Housing Trust sometimes makes its own road and sometimes has the road made by contractors. The road is made but section 319 of the Local Government Act provides that the all-inclusive charge shall provide for the road kerbing and water table to the limit of 10s. a foot. That sum, however, will not cover the cost of all this road work and as much as £3 a foot can be spent on roads in new areas. As most blocks will be 60ft. or 70ft. wide, moiety of 30s. a foot could easily mean an imposition of £90 on a block of land or a house. That sum must be paid for over the term of discharge of the mortgage.

The Local Government Act provides that because a council has not previously charged for roadmaking it may charge for any kerbing and water table subsequently provided, up to 10s. a foot. If the average cost of kerbing and water tabling today is 8s. 6d. a foot, only 1s. 6d. less than the maximum is charged. This is not good enough when the relevant provision of the Town Planning Act is considered. I point out that most of the people who must pay this charge are young couples with families and they tackle no mean task today. These are all added costs to the individual. The provision regarding roadmaking in the Town Planning Act should be overhauled. I was successful once in having the charges separated, but because of road widening in certain areas there was a howl and a scream about

it and the Minister had to re-introduce the matter for the purpose of restoring the present all-inclusive charge of 10s. a linear foot. This is a wrong charge, because it imposes a hardship on young married people endeavouring to establish a home.

Another provision deals with postal voting at council elections. From recent press reports, following City of Adelaide council elections, it appears that there is a controversy about postal voting. If a voter will be absent from the council area for various reasons on polling day there should be provision for his casting a postal vote. In recent City of Adelaide elections some voters may have been in their offices until 5 p.m. and then did not want to cast votes at the booth up to about 7 p.m., so claimed postal votes. If they were not absent from the district or sick it could be asked whether they were honest in their claims for postal votes. Such votes should be available readily for aged and infirm people. If they wanted postal votes I am sure we would readily agree to it, but these other people had the opportunity to vote between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. The Minister said that this was primarily a Committee Bill, and I agree. I support the second reading .

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): This important Bill merits serious consideration. It consists of 47 clauses, which is the largest amendment of the mammoth Local Government Act that we have had recently. Since I have been here there have been two piecemeal efforts to amend the Act, dealing with several clauses each time. We are now considering requests to bring it up to date. Local government is an integral part of our governmental structure and because of that it is important to give serious thought to all matters placed before us. Many clauses are of a minor and drafting nature to improve the reading and working of the Act. It may surprise members to know just how many people are affected by amendments to it. Not only town and district clerks but thousands of people in council areas are affected by the alteration of only one word, so we must be careful in what we do.

It is essentially a Committee Bill and it seems that we shall have some discussion on a number of clauses. The Bill covers a wide variety of subjects and I doubt whether we could have another Bill that deals with so many subjects of wide and varied interest. It covers such matters as hospitals, parking meters, roads, footpaths, moieties, protection of buildings, voters' rolls, and so on. I will speak on only one or two of those matters. Parking meters will undoubtedly be discussed fully in Committee. The member for Gouger (Mr. Hall) will talk about them, and as he knows more about the subject than I do I shall leave it in his capable hands.

Clauses 22 and 23 are important because they deal with the borrowing powers of councils, and some have been in difficulties in this matter. The Woodville corporation, one of the largest municipalities in the metropolitan area, has been in trouble because it has been unable to borrow money on the security of general rates. The member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Hutchens) knows all about this matter. The corporation had to raise a loan on the security of special rates, and as a ratepayer in the area I felt its effects. The two clauses permit the corporation to use the security of general rates, which I believe amount to between £300,000 and £400,000 a year. This amendment will overcome the difficulty that has caused the corporation to delay important work, and it has happened to other councils.

Clause 9 is important, for it deals with assessments, particularly assessments in the metropolitan area based on annual rental values. When this clause first appeared in the Bill in another place it was in a different form from what it is in now, because in its wisdom the Legislative Council saw fit to amend it. One amendment which pleased me was the insertion of the word "may" in the provision for altering the assessment. Many councils today use the waterworks assessment as the basis of their council assessment and subsequent rating; by resolution of the council that can be done. A council applies to the Minister and he agrees that it can have the facilities of the Waterworks Department regarding the assessment, and the waterworks assessment then becomes the council assessment. This saves the council a terrific amount of work, the ratepayers get the same assessment as the taxpayers, and many anomalies are thereby removed.

Mr. Fred Walsh: It is a very good thing for the councils, too.

Mr. COUMBE: It saves councils much work and expense, and in some instances they gain considerably. I can say from experience that it irons out many anomalies. The right is still there for the ratepayer to appeal each year to the assessment revision committee of his council if he so desires. What has happened is that when any householder has made improvements the council has been notified by the Engineering and Water Supply Department and it has been compelled to alter its assessment book right through the year as

these variations are received from the department. This happens at a time when the council has closed its assessment book for the year and the assessment revision committee of the council has heard appeals and has finished its sittings. That has caused a terrific amount of work in many councils, especially the larger ones that are growing all the time, and it has played havoc with the assessments and the budgeting of the councils. The Legislative Council altered that provision by inserting a new subsection to provide that a council may alter its assessment. I think that is a very wise implementation. What will happen is that councils will simply store up these assessment variations which they receive from the department until the end of the year and then incorporate the variations in the new assessment, thus reducing their work by a considerable amount. Incidentally, the ratepayer concerned will receive some benefit in that he may not have to pay anything extra by way of rates until the subsequent year. I consider that those amendments in clauses 8 and 9 are extremely valuable.

In clause 38 we see an attempt to modernize the provisions concerning the facilities for protecting the general public against falling debris from buildings that are being demolished or erected. In the case of a modern building of 10 or 12 storeys being erected in Rundle Street, for instance, all the contractor had to do under the old provisions was put a wooden protection over the footpath where people would be walking and slope it towards the street so that anything falling would fall on the road. The new provision prescribes a more adequate protective device for not only pedestrians but motorists using the road. Under the old provisions I think we could have some pretty serious accidents from falling masonry or steel. Clauses 39 to 42 relate to the by-law-making powers of councils. Anyone who took the trouble to look at the Act to see the long list of by-law-making provisions would be appalled; many on the list are out of date, and the list now provided tends to bring this part of the Act more in keeping with the way that local government is working today. I consider that this is an important addition to the Bill.

One of the early clauses deals with rating of the Adelaide Children's Hospital. As I said, by accident this happens to be in the district of Torrens, but it is a State hospital for children, and it does a mighty job.

Mr. Shannon: It is not a Government hospital.

Mr. COUMBE: No; by "State" I meant that it was a State-wide hospital. I believe that a move was made some years ago to change the name to the South Australian Children's Hospital, but that did not eventuate. This hospital has some very fine officers and to think that it is being imposed upon with rating, where it does not collect more than a certain amount of its revenue from fees, is rather an anachronism, especially as what it pays out in rates to the Adelaide City Council it receives from the Government in grants. This new provision will tend to remove that anomaly and relieve some of the burden.

Many other matters are dealt with in the Bill, such as smartening up the voters' roll and allowing how-to-vote cards to be used, a matter on which there has been much controversy in recent years. It deals also with parking meters, a subject that I have already mentioned. The question of the provision of roads and footpaths has caused arguments for years, and probably there will always be arguments so long as councils are building roads and footpaths and while moieties are being charged. We must be realistic and acknowledge that without moieties many footpaths would not be built.

Mr. Fred Walsh: They are not built now in many places.

Mr. COUMBE: It all depends on whether one lives in a progressive municipality. I consider that one of the contentious matters that has caused trouble in the past has been removed. In my opinion local government is an important part of our community, for it is an integral part of our tri-partite system of government. This Bill merits the attention that I know every member will give to it, especially in Committee.

Mr. HALL (Gouger): I join with the previous speakers in supporting this Bill. As the previous speaker said, I think we are all impressed with the miscellaneous character of this Bill and the many items on which it touches in the framework of local government. I am sure that we can all see in it the hand of our local government associations, whose meetings we as members attend each year or twice yearly, depending on how busy we are. We appreciate the work done for our local government bodies by the citizens of our State, and this is exemplified in these half-yearly and yearly meetings of our local government associations. Looking at this and other such Bills that come before us from year to year we can see the hand of these local government associations in the decisions that they take at their

meetings. I am pleased that this Bill has been introduced to meet many of the requests of local government.

I believe that clause 13, which enacts a new section to give power to councils to accumulate revenue from parking meters to provide and improve car parks, parking stations, etc., is a very good move, as we are not making it compulsory for councils to accumulate parking meter funds; we are merely giving them permission to do so. However, I believe the provision goes too far in one respect; new section 290d(4) provides an escape outlet for the use of the funds that may be accumulated. The essence of this new subsection is that a fund set up to establish car parks and for other purposes can be dissolved by resolution of the council and the moneys can be used for any purposes for which council revenues may be expended. I think that is too easy an outlet for funds that may have been accumulated for parking purposes alone. Although we do not mistrust councils, once these funds have been accumulated I think it only reasonable that they should be expended for the purposes for which they have been collected; a council should not be allowed to dissolve such a fund.

Mr. Fred Walsh: How do you suggest that any moneys left in the fund should be disposed of?

Mr. HALL: With the increasing use of motor traffic, the problem associated with providing car parking, garages, and associated things will never be overcome. I cannot imagine that there will ever be a fund that could not be spent for this purpose. If new section 290d (4) is deleted, there will be no escape clause in the legislation, and funds voluntarily collected will have to be spent according to the purposes of the fund. I believe that the Leader's proposed amendment to delete the word "may" in several places—

The SPEAKER: The honourable member will be out of order if he discusses amendments that have not been moved.

Mr. HALL: Very well, Sir. When this clause is discussed in Committee, I believe it will be better to remove new section 290d (4) as an indication that the money must be used only for the purposes mentioned in the section. We should not in any part of the new section direct local government more than is necessary to achieve its purpose. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. FRANK WALSH moved:

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the Whole House on the Bill that it have power to consider amendments relating to the remission of rates and other amounts payable in respect of ratable property.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 12 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.58 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, November 13, at 2 p.m.