

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, September 22, 1966.

The **SPEAKER** (Hon. L. G. Riches) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

LAW OF PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, intimated his assent to the Bill.

QUESTIONS

UNIVERSITY GRANTS.

Mr. HUDSON: This morning's *Advertiser* refers to an announcement made by Senator Gorton about the grants that would be made available to South Australian universities. Can the Minister of Education say whether the State Government will be able to match the announced grants for the University of Adelaide, the Flinders University of South Australia, and the South Australian Institute of Technology?

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: The Government wishes to continue the long established practice of reviewing annually the budget proposals of the two universities and the Institute of Technology, but at this stage it seems that it will be practicable to provide the State funds necessary to attract the grants at the levels proposed by the Commonwealth Government. For the Institute of Technology, with the new development of advanced education courses, it is more difficult to predict likely enrolments and probable financial requirements. The figures quoted in the press report include recurrent proposals for teaching hospitals and for residential colleges, and the State expects to be able to provide its share of funds for teaching hospitals. Of course, the Commonwealth Government provides an unmatched recurrent grant towards residential colleges.

The sums proposed represent nearly a 40 per cent increase in regard to recurrent expenses for the Adelaide university, the Flinders university and the Institute of Technology, over the figures for the previous triennium. The capital figures proposed represent about 30 per cent more than the capital provided for the three institutions in the 1964-66 triennium. Further, if the programmes now contemplated for the universities and other institutions of advanced education are considered together, South Australia's provisions for tertiary education in relation to population will remain favourable when compared with those of other States: they will remain above the average of all States.

MURRAY RIVER SALINITY.

Mr. CURREN: I refer to salinity in the Murray River and to possible means of alleviating the position. From time to time the theory has been advanced that the construction of the locks and their operation has had a marked effect on the salinity. As I know that the Director and Engineer-in-Chief has given much attention to the matter, has the Minister of Works a report?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: I understand that the honourable member asked a similar question last week during my absence. As a result, I have obtained the following report from the Director and Engineer-in-Chief:

From time to time it has been suggested that the locks and weirs in their present form cause an increase in salinity with depth. Certain tests have been carried out but these have not been conclusive. Although testing by means of models is a common and often very useful exercise, it is necessary to know the extent of the problem involved before resorting to model tests. Arrangements have been made to carry out a systematic programme of sampling and testing at selected parts along the river and, when this programme has been completed, it will be possible to decide whether some action should be taken. One important aspect to be borne in mind is that the weirs do not add to the total salt content of the water—in fact, the reverse is the case, for by maintaining heights they substantially reduce the volume of saline back-flow into the river. Any alterations to the weirs would not reduce the total quantity of salt in the river.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Mr. HUGHES: Yesterday, in reply to a question by the member for Unley regarding water reticulation and restrictions, the Minister of Works said that, provided we received the co-operation of the people, no water restrictions would be imposed. Could the Minister elaborate on this answer?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: Last year the press and radio stations helped the Government by appealing to the people to conserve water wherever possible. We received much co-operation from the people, with the result that our per capita consumption last year was less than that of the previous year. I plead with the people to conserve water. For example, if those engaged in commerce and industry were to turn off their automatic flushing systems over the weekend, wherever practicable, a tremendous quantity of water would be saved. As evidence of this, the Education Department has carried out such tests at schools that have this automatic flushing system and has found that the saving in water over a weekend as a result of turning off

these systems has been colossal. I do not advocate that people should starve their gardens, but I ask them to water with care and not over-water lawns as some people have done in the past. Other extravagant practices in the use of water are the washing by hose of motor cars on footpaths and cleaning dentures and shaving under a running tap. If these things are avoided, I am sure that a tremendous quantity of water can be saved. I am sure that if the people of South Australia think about it, they will realize that water is one of our most precious commodities, and by their saving of it they can help the economy greatly and aid the further development of the State.

Mr. BROOMHILL: Following the recent rains, can the Minister of Works say whether the department has been able to reconsider the question of pumping water from the Murray River? Also, can he indicate the current metropolitan reservoir holdings?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: The Government has decided that pumping must continue, for we believe it would be safe to discontinue pumping only when the reservoirs were filled, because if we took a chance on this matter we could find that we were pumping at peak period times and this would be very costly. Of course, pumping at off-peak times is less costly. Regarding the second part of the question, it is very gratifying to be able to report that the intake into metropolitan reservoirs for the 24 hours to 8.30 this morning was 648,000,000 gallons. The present holding of metropolitan reservoirs is 17,215,000,000, which is more than the quantity held at this time last year. The intake in the Warren reservoir for the previous 24 hours was 196,000,000 gallons and the last reading showed 1,394,000,000 gallons; its capacity is 1,401,000,000 gallons, and the latest report is that this reservoir is now full and overflowing into the South Para reservoir, which yesterday held 4,701,000,000 gallons of a total capacity of 11,300,000,000 gallons. The position is steadily improving and, with the intake continuing for a few days, I hope that next week I can give an even better report than I have given today.

HOLDEN HILL SCHOOL.

Mrs. BYRNE: As the Education Department owns land facing Riley Street, Holden Hill, can the Minister of Education say whether it is intended to erect a primary or secondary school on this site, and whether the department has immediate plans for the establishment of such a school?

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: I shall be pleased to get that information for the honourable member.

MARINO QUARRY.

Mr. HUDSON: Will the Minister of Lands obtain a further report from the Minister of Mines on the progress of dust prevention measures at the Linwood quarry at Marino?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes.

THE ESTIMATES.

(Continued from September 21. Page 1772.)

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS (Minister of Works) moved:

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

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): This afternoon I gave notice of a motion of no confidence to be debated next Tuesday.

The SPEAKER: The Leader cannot discuss that matter at this stage.

Mr. HALL: I assume that I can oppose the motion to go into Committee. I do so because there is an important motion to be finalized by this House which, I believe, transcends in importance anything that will be discussed prior to it. As the matter has been presented in a constitutional way, the Government's duty is to adjourn the House until the motion has been debated. This motion has serious implications for the Government of this State, as it concerns the Government's management, and no more serious motion can be moved in this House. This matter has not been sprung on the Government, as it will have a weekend to consider the full implications of the motion. Because of the importance of this motion, the Opposition has the right to ask that it be debated before any other business is dealt with; therefore I oppose the motion that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD (Gumeracha): The point taken by the Leader is valid. This is not the case where for some reason of political haste a motion is suddenly sprung on the Government. The Opposition desires that this motion should be properly considered and debated, and it believes that it has the right to submit it to the House. As there will be many matters debated today that will be the subject of the discussion next Tuesday, I believe that the Opposition has

every right to ask that the motion of no confidence take precedence of other business.

It is not as though the Opposition has been at all capricious in moving no-confidence motions. In fact, this is the first occasion in 18 months on which the Opposition has taken this action. No doubt, there have been many occasions when the Opposition could have set out to embarrass the Government or delay the House by a similar action, but that is not so in this case. Although the Opposition has strongly debated matters on which it has had definite views, this is still the first time that it has publicly set out to advance to the House reasons why the Government's policy is not working.

As it obviously involves the financial matters before members this afternoon, I believe the Ministers would be taking proper constitutional action if they gave expression to the Leader's request, and if other business were held over pending a decision on this matter. Members opposite may say that the decision is a foregone conclusion, but to say that would be an insult to the House. Every matter has to be decided in the House before the outcome is known. To assume that the decision is a foregone conclusion is not in accordance with Parliamentary procedure. The only thing that decides the issue is the vote in the Chamber.

In those circumstances, therefore, Ministers would not have the right to assume that the issue was a foregone conclusion; technically, they may claim that they have the numbers behind them, but the debate has not yet taken place. It would be an insult to the House to assume that any debate will be along particular lines. I strongly support the Leader of the Opposition in his request that the debate concerning the Estimates be held over, because that very matter is cognate with his motion. I believe the Minister in charge of the House would be complying with the best traditions of Parliamentary procedure if he gave his consent to the request made by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Attorney-General): I have heard of some extraordinary Parliamentary procedures in the last 14 years, but this is one of the most strange and novel. It is open to the Opposition at any time during the Budget debate to move a vote of no confidence in the Government by moving to reduce the amount of any line. The Opposition knows that full well. It has ample opportunity to move that without any notice to the Government. The whole history of the Opposition in

this House in the last 18 months has been one of delay, obstruction and irresponsible holding up of the business of the House.

Mr. Ryan: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Take just one look at the volumes of *Hansard* for the last session, and see what kind of obstruction this Government has had to face from the time-wasting attitude of the Opposition! The Opposition knowing there is no time limit on members' speeches, the most repetitive and idiotic speeches have been made, and the former Leader (the member for Gumeracha) has been responsible for many of them.

Mr. Coumbe: You should talk!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I have not wasted the time of this House. The honourable member knows perfectly well that, if there is one member in this House who tries to cut short his speeches, it is I.

Mr. Nankivell: Well, do it right away!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I shall be mercifully brief, Mr. Speaker.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: The history of the Opposition has been appalling.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Opposition has given notice this afternoon of a foolish motion for next week. It can be debated in due course.

Mr. Ryan: Not now.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The House is confident in this Government; it has every reason to be, and the Government knows it has the confidence of the House. We want to get on with the job. We have an enormous amount of vital legislation, which we promised the people of South Australia to introduce, but which has been held up and delayed by the time-wasting tactics of members opposite. We have much on the Notice Paper now and much more still to introduce. It is regrettable that the Government should have time wasted by members opposite simply saying, "We'll get out of the House and not do our jobs, because next week we are going to move a silly motion." Let the Opposition get on with the job now, and do what the people sent members here to do, namely, debate the business before the House!

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Alexandra): I support the Leader of the Opposition entirely in his move this afternoon—

Mr. Ryan: What is the move?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: We know that when a notice of motion of no confidence is hanging over the House we should not be debating the Budget. The Attorney-General knows that as well as anybody else. It is easy

to use many wild words such as "appalling time-wasting", but we know very well that the Government has earned the award of many other adjectives, including "arrogant" and "thin-skinned"—

Mr. Langley: Coming from your side, too!

Mr. Ryan: Crook! Poison in the hands of children!

The SPEAKER: Order! We shall have one speaker at a time. The member for Alexandra!

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Fancy these adjectives concerning delay and obstruction being thrown at us by members on the front bench opposite! This State is being led off the course; hence the motion of no-confidence of which we have given notice.

Mr. RYAN: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member for Alexandra is discussing a notice of motion of no confidence forecast by the Leader of the Opposition for a future date. I seek your ruling as to whether the honourable member is in order in discussing that motion today.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member would not be in order in discussing the subject matter of the motion of which notice has been given, but he is in order in speaking to the motion before the Chair: "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply."

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to refer to anything other than that motion. I am afraid that if we go into Committee we shall immediately be debating matters that should properly be debated next Tuesday. I think the correct thing is not to go ahead with the debate in Committee this afternoon. The Government has, of course, complete faith in the value of numbers. It does not need to worry about the arguments advanced; it can say, "We have the numbers and we can squash any motion, either today or on Tuesday."

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: We've got the numbers, and we also have the logic.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: It is wrong, indeed, to anticipate those numbers in the debate this afternoon. After all, the age of miracles may not have completely passed; somebody on the Government benches may one day wake up to the folly of the Government's actions.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga): I support the remarks of the Leader. When a Government has a no-confidence motion hanging over its head it is customary for other business

to be suspended until the motion is disposed of. In the 1938-41 Parliament, of which you, Sir, were a member, about 10 or 12 of these no-confidence motions were moved. On every occasion, as soon as such a motion was moved, it was dealt with before other business. The Hon. R. S. Richards (then Leader of the Opposition) was well versed in Parliamentary procedure. I believe we should adopt the policy followed then. The Government should give us at least some marks for placing this motion on the Notice Paper for next Tuesday so that we would not attack the Premier in his absence.

Mr. Ryan: What are you doing?

Mr. SHANNON: Obviously the Premier will be here on Tuesday.

Mr. Ryan: He isn't here today.

Mr. SHANNON: Obviously, and that is why we do not want to debate the matter today. I believe it would be inappropriate for us to attack the Premier in his absence, and we do not intend to do that. The Premier will be back by the time the motion is debated to speak for his Government, which I have no doubt he will do. It is not the usual practice in Parliament to deal with current financial problems while a no-confidence motion hangs over the Government's head.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide): I agree with the remarks of the member for Gumeracha that the Leader of the Opposition (or any member for that matter) has the right to give notice of a motion similar to that forecast by the Leader to be moved next Tuesday. Although previous Governments may have sniggered at such motions because they had the numbers, I hope supporters of the present Government will not treat such motions in that way: I hope the motion will be debated on its merits. The member for Onkaparinga said that the Opposition did not want to take advantage of the fact that the Premier was out of the State on vital business on behalf of the people of the State. However, the Opposition is taking advantage of the Premier's absence by its action this afternoon, not by the motion it has submitted to be dealt with Tuesday. On Tuesday of this week, when the allocations for the Electoral Department were before the Committee, the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of his Party, moved a motion of no confidence in the Government when he moved to delete a line providing for about \$70,000 in connection with bringing the electoral rolls of the Legislative Council up to date.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: Any move to delete a line is a vote of no confidence.

Mr. LAWN: I have no objection to the move to debate the motion on Tuesday. Opposition members say it is important to their motion that it should be debated before the finalization of the Estimates. However, the Estimates will not be finalized this afternoon. As I understand the position, after the matters with which the Minister of Social Welfare is concerned are finalized (and they are just about finalized), those matters concerning the Premier will be adjourned until he returns, and we will deal with matters affecting the Agriculture and Lands Departments this afternoon. The Estimates will not be finalized until after the Premier returns. Therefore, if the Opposition is concerned only about the Estimates being finalized before the debate on its motion can be dealt with, why should it attempt to hold up the business of the House this afternoon? Finally, I point out that this is not the first attempt this week to move a no-confidence motion in the Government.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River): I support the Leader in his motion. The motion of no confidence does not refer to only one line of the Estimates.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not be in order in referring to any details of the Leader's notice of motion.

Mr. HEASLIP: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Estimates, we are dealing with the finances of the State, and once the individual lines are passed we cannot go back to them: they are passed and that is the end of it. Because a motion of no confidence has been set down, we believe that all matters should be postponed temporarily until that motion is discussed, because it is important. To carry on with the Estimates before the motion is discussed would make the motion ineffective. The Attorney-General referred to by the vital legislation promised by the Government that was held up because of the obstruction of the Opposition. However, it is the Opposition's job to criticize and object, if such action is warranted. That is not obstruction: it is constructive criticism. The so-called vital legislation referred to by the Attorney is not vital at all: it is designed to alter laws that have existed in South Australia for years and have been found to be satisfactory. However, because of the policy of the new Government it seems that it must upset everything that has been found satisfactory in the past, and introduce this so-called vital legislation. I believe this is wasting the time of the House and half of the

matter in *Hansard* has been brought about by the Government's so-called vital legislation.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Half of the Bills have been amended by the Government itself.

Mr. HEASLIP: Rarely is a Bill introduced without its being amended before it is passed. That is why we are having this build-up in *Hansard* which, I believe, is unnecessary. It is caused by the half-baked, uncooked legislation introduced by the Government. The member for Adelaide referred to the line on the Estimates for \$70,000. However, the Leader's motion deals with all the lines, whereas the debate the other evening was on only one line and was therefore different.

Mr. Shannon: We gave a pair on that division.

Mr. HEASLIP: When a pair is given, the motion on which the division is called is not regarded as a no-confidence motion, and we gave a pair, although, I suppose, in part it was a no-confidence motion. That is only one line, and there are more important lines even than that.

Mr. Lawn: What would you have done if you had won on that line? Wouldn't you have claimed that that was a defeat of the Government?

Mr. HEASLIP: No, it would just have been wiped off; I am sure the Government would not have resigned on it. Members should face up to the facts. If it were defeated on this motion, it should resign.

Mr. Lawn: It doesn't matter whether or not it was on the first line.

Mr. HEASLIP: It was merely one line of the Estimates, and in the division on that we gave a pair. If the House does not adjourn now we will pass so many more lines that are also very important, and once they are passed we cannot come back to them. It is most important that this motion should take precedence, and the House should adjourn until the motion is moved and debated fully.

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY (Minister of Education): It is perfectly obvious that this is another delaying tactic on the part of the Opposition, and of course nothing could be more obstructive. The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) has already pointed out that much of the Estimates will have to be dealt with after the Premier returns. It is interesting to visualize what the Opposition would have said had it been in Government and we had done this sort of thing when the Premier was absent. I can imagine the sort of epithets that members of the Opposition would have

applied had the position been reversed. Of course, they know perfectly well that they could not do anything worse to embarrass the Premier on his mission to Canberra on what they themselves admit is something of such great importance to the State. They hear, heard yesterday when they heard he was going away, but now that he has gone they are doing their best to embarrass him in the eyes of the Prime Minister of Australia, because the news of this will get flashed over to Canberra immediately.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Before he meets the Prime Minister.

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: Yes. The Opposition pretends it is concerned about the question of natural gas being supplied in this State, and we have had a barrage of questions on this matter for weeks past. Now, as soon as the Premier goes away, we have this obstructive move that can do nothing but embarrass the Premier in his absence. Had we done this when we were in Opposition we would have been condemned hook, line and sinker, not only by members opposite but by the outside press. Members of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of themselves. They talk about decent Parliamentary tactics when they have not a shred of decency regarding Parliamentary tactics. They have sat there and insulted us time after time since we have been in Government. They seem to think that because the Government is a Labor Government almost any insult can be issued. This, of course, is a common tactic, one with which we have been very familiar over the years, but we are not going to stand any more of it without voicing our protest. On this occasion members of the Opposition have shown their form in no uncertain manner. They have deliberately picked this day when the Premier is absent on what has been described as one of the most important missions ever undertaken on behalf of the State.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I am sure we all regret very deeply the remarks that have just been made by the Minister of Education.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Torrens.

Mr. COUMBE: I am sure that, when he has time to consider, the Minister will also regret those remarks and the bitter tone in which they were made. The derisive comments made by the two Ministers who have spoken show that they do not appreciate the attitude of the Opposition in this matter. Let us get the record straight. Quite apart from the

merits of the motion, the Minister was correct in saying that this was done in a certain way. Let us be frank here: the Opposition supported the Premier in his move to go to Canberra.

Mr. Hurst: You don't. You have sabotaged him throughout.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I appeal to the House to maintain order. We are not getting anywhere this way.

Mr. COUMBE: I am saying these things only because of the derogatory remarks made by members of the Government front bench a few moments ago. A number of questions have been put by members on this side regarding natural gas.

Mr. Ryan: And now you want to stop it.

Mr. COUMBE: When the Premier announced yesterday that he was going to see the Prime Minister today members on both sides said, "Hear, Hear!" The Opposition decided to give notice of its motion, first, because we were acting constitutionally and, secondly, because the Premier was absent and it would have been completely discourteous to him to discuss this matter in his absence. In order to give the Government complete notice of this, an announcement was made today that this matter would be discussed on Tuesday. It could have been announced on Tuesday and the debate could have proceeded straight away.

But, Sir, the Opposition has played the game and done it the right way: it has given the Government plenty of notice, and it has done it so that this matter will not be discussed in the absence of the Premier. What thanks has the Opposition received for playing the game the right way? All that has happened is that we have had guffaws and derogatory remarks from the other side. Members of the Opposition feel so seriously about this matter that we have given notice today for the matter to be discussed on Tuesday, when a full debate can ensue. In such circumstances, we believe that this motion deserves the support of the whole of the House.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: What motion?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Flinders): I have only about two sentences to add to what has been said. Whether or not they may be sentences of death on the Government I do not know. There may be some doubt in the public mind why the Leader of the Opposition gave notice of his motion today and why we are drawing attention to it in this way, and

I want to tell the House and the public why we did it this way. For some months now the public mind has been disturbed about what is going on in Government circles and about the serious effects of the Government's actions.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Flinders would not be in order in discussing the subject matter of the notice of motion that has been given.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I did not think I was doing that, Mr. Speaker. However, I accept your reproof, and I will refrain from any further comment along those lines. An announcement this morning has made it necessary for us to draw public attention to a matter that is coming before the House in the Estimates, probably this afternoon. For that reason, and for that reason only, we sought the working of the time table in a certain way.

This objection to the motion to go into Committee is merely the means available constitutionally to the Opposition to draw attention to these matters; therefore we have adopted this procedure. I think there is no fairer way than the means we have adopted.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: What line are you referring to?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Minister knows to what matter I am referring, but the Speaker has requested me not to go into the matter, so I will not. However, if the Minister has read the *Advertiser* this morning (and no doubt he would do so with some discomfort), he knows precisely what I am talking about. I put this matter in plain terms to the Government and to the public: the course we have adopted is constitutional and eminently fair, for the Opposition has given the Government complete notice of what it will do. I have tried to explain the reasons why we are acting this way.

Mr. QUIRKE (Burra): I say to Government members, "Oh ye of little faith, why do you protest so much against something that you are confident you can overcome and over which you have the power?" This is merely Parliamentary procedure. Today, the Attorney-General gave his usual exhibition of the phenomenon of detonation: it was not an explosion. He is like fulminate of mercury, and he does not look his best when he is like that. If the Government is fully confident that it has the complete answer, why does it protest so much?

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (18).—Messrs. Broomhill and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Bywaters, Casey, Clark, Corcoran, Curren, Dunstan, Hudson,

Hughes, Hurst, Hutchens (teller), Langley, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, and Ryan.

Noes (16).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Coumbe, Ferguson, Freebairn, Hall (teller), Heaslip, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford, Messrs. Quirke, Rodda, and Shannon, Mrs. Steele, and Mr. Stott.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Jennings and Walsh. Noes—Messrs. Millhouse and Teusner.

Majority of 2 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried.

In Committee.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL, MINISTER OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, AND MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

Department of Social Welfare, \$2,747,487.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Auditor-General has referred in the only way possible to him, to the fact that the cost a child at institutions is excessive and should be examined, as he gives a detailed summary of the different institutions. I should be interested to know the cost to the department in respect of children placed out with foster mothers. I do not know what it has been in the last year or 18 months but, prior to that, it was probably not more than one-fifth of the cost of children held in institutions and subject to the control of the department. I accept the point that children in institutions are difficult and have psychological problems resulting from undesirable home backgrounds, and any comparison made is not valid in that respect. However, the difference in cost is enormous.

The Auditor-General's Report plainly shows that the costs of running these departmental homes are excessive and should be scrutinized closely. As the system of appointing administrators in large hospitals has proved extremely successful, will the Minister investigate the possibility of obtaining the services of someone with knowledge of economic administration, so that the high costs involved may be effectively reduced?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I shall obtain the figures being paid for children placed out at the moment. They differ, of course, according to age.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford: I think it is about \$8 a week.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: About that. Some increases have occurred in relation to children placed out during the last year, particularly those children committed to institutions other than departmental institutions where subsidies are being paid. Increases have been necessary through the increased costs of equipping children over the last year. We had to

make adjustments with foster parents over the year to be able to maintain children with suitable foster parents.

I do not think it would be satisfactory to us to spend money on obtaining an efficiency expert to go into the cost of maintaining children in departmental institutions. In fact, our ratio of staff to inmates is, on average, much lower than that in other States. In consequence, the costs in other States of normal maintenance of children in institutions tends to be higher than our costs. We have tried to cut our costs to the bone, while giving adequate service wherever we could. We have tried to keep the number of people in each institution up to the maximum so that full use is made of the staff available. That is not always possible, because of what happens with individual people in particular homes.

There was a stage when we sent groups of boys to Struan to increase the numbers there, and we had abscondings that reduced the number again and sent up the cost. At one of the girls' homes (an open home) an incident resulted in abscondings, and this again reduced the number of girls at the home for a period and sent up the cost per child, because we still had to have the same staff at the institution.

Mr. Hurford, a wellknown chartered accountant, is investigating the accounting systems of the department and is one of the people deputed by the Social Welfare Advisory Council to look into the running of the institutions. We have some expert advice on the financial side. However, in some institutions costs must go high. In the Boys Reformatory Institution, Magill, although the general ratio of staff to inmates in the institution is not high, the average cost of the institution is bumped up by the security block, which has a high ratio of staff to inmates. This makes the cost per child of the whole institution look much higher than it would be if separate costs were taken out in respect of the general institution apart from the security block. Under the Social Welfare Act all members are official visitors to the institutions of the department and I should welcome visits from members to institutions. I should be glad to make appointments for them and to listen to any suggestions they have on ways that costs could be confined while services were still adequately provided.

Mr. COUMBE: I have had the privilege of visiting the larger institutions of this State, and some institutions in Victoria and New South Wales in the company of the Public Works Committee. I should like the Minister to look

at the question of the laundry. I know that certain laundry work of the Social Welfare Department is now undertaken by the group laundry. Laundry work is a major facet of costs in these institutions, as I know from my experience of the Walkerville Boys' Home in my district. As the laundry at Islington develops, more and more of the work of the department may be undertaken there. I should be interested to know how much this would save in costs to the department.

Mrs. STEELE: The Boys Reformatory Institution, Magill, is in my district and I have often visited it. The allocation to this institution has been increased this year by about 27 per cent. The Minister referred to an increase in staff that was necessary because of the design of the building. Does the increased vote take into account the fact that the staff will have to be increased when the school is opened and the boys placed in it?

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: Yes.

Mrs. STEELE: The Auditor-General's Report shows that the cost per child at Magill has increased by \$848, which is a considerable increase, although the Auditor-General says that part of this is contributed to by the reduction in the number of boys accommodated. The Minister said that 11 supervisors were required for about three or four boys in the security block, and this must increase costs. I have seen the security block and it is a dreadful place in which to keep boys. The Auditor-General says that the average cost per child to Consolidated Revenue has increased considerably and draws attention to the high cost to the department of maintaining each child at certain institutions.

The Minister has also spoken of cottage homes. It is pleasing to see that the cost of keeping children at these homes has improved to such a considerable degree. I think most people agree that it is best for children to be kept in an environment which is as nearly as possible a home one, for that is conducive to their welfare. In a purely mercenary sense, of course, this is less expensive than keeping children in actual institutions. Will the increased cost result from the employment of more staff, and has the department in fact more staff in mind? Is it difficult to recruit that staff, and is it likely, as a result of difficulties in finding staff, that the expenditure will exceed the vote?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The substantial increase in salaries and wages for the Boys Reformatory Institution, Magill, is to cope with the increase in staff on the opening of the new buildings. We have difficulty in recruiting

qualified staff. One difficulty is that of bringing into the department people who are able and who are good at dealing with youngsters. It is not possible for us to do what the Victorian Social Welfare Department has been able to do in some of its institutions through its in service training scheme: to provide that each attendant at such an institution knows exactly what it is that the department is seeking to do with a particular child. I hope that we will be able to improve this situation rapidly.

We will not, however, be able soon to provide the kind of in service training that exists in Victoria. We have been able to support the sending of National Fitness Council people to some courses at that school. There is a recommendation of the Public Service Board for the appointment of a training officer in the department to supervise the whole training programme within the department. We have access to one scheme, but we are not overburdened with staff at the moment, therefore it is not easy to send staff away. It has not been easy to send our staff to the Victorian institution, although it has offered places to us if we can take them up.

Mrs. Steele: Is there much of a turnover in staff?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Unfortunately, yes. However, we will be able to recruit sufficient staff to open the institution. Some in service training has been going on. It is taking place either at "Kumanka" or Stuart House in North Adelaide, and a series of evening classes has been held there. Some classes have also been held at the Institute of Technology, and officers of the department have attended those classes. Also, we get the assistance of the university in running training courses. In fact, a seminar has just been announced by Prof. Cramond on the problems of illegitimate children, adoptions, and the like, and officers of the department will be attending. In fact, some officers are lecturing at the seminar.

The extra cost shown in the "Contingencies—General" line is for additional equipment for the opening of the new building at Magill. We will be involved in the provision of much extra equipment for the shops and the gymnasium. The honourable member will know there is a large and beautiful gymnasium to be provided at Magill. We have the Recreation Officer of the department (Mr. Hall) appointed to a special committee with the Superintendent of Physical Education (Mr. Mutton) preparing a programme for physical recreation activity

and general recreation activity for the children in all departmental institutions. One of their programmes specifically relates to Magill and additional equipment is being provided for this purpose. One of the major increases in the lines of the department is for Magill, so that we shall be able to open the new institution at an adequate standard.

Mr. QUIRKE: I am concerned about the steep increase in the number of children in institutions. Can the Minister give us any reason for this very steep increase in the number of people coming under the State?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The number of children in departmental institutions increased during the last year more than we had expected. With the improvement in these institutions, there is a feeling by the court that in some cases institutional treatment should now be given, whereas magistrates were previously reluctant to commit the children to such treatment. Now that we have Brookway Park, the junior boys institution, it is often much more advantageous to send a child for a period of institutional training than would have been the case if the only place to which he could have been committed was Magill, which had no segregation whatever. We have now found that Brookway Park is filled to capacity, whereas we had expected that it would have increased capacity this year. In fact, at times it contains more than the number of boys for which the present buildings were originally planned, and this is causing us grave concern because we foresee the time when this institution will be overloaded. In consequence, submissions have been made to the Public Buildings Department for new building programmes and development within the next three years.

At one stage children were sent to institutions only as a last resort, when a magistrate despaired of dealing with the child in any other way. Now a magistrate can see that there can be assistance to a child through institutional training in satisfactory circumstances, and this has increased the cost to the State, although ultimately it may reduce the cost to the State because that child, as a result of institutional training at this stage, may never get to the stage where we are having to pay the very high cost of his being in Yatala, or some similar institution. Recidivism of boys who have been under institutional training appears to be declining, but it is too early to come to a satisfactory conclusion. With the development of new

institutions, institutional training is having a sounder effect than it had previously.

As a result of the lack of stimulus to the economy from the Commonwealth Government, there has been an economic down-turn and more people require community assistance. Also, this Government has relaxed some portions of the means test for public relief. Its attitude was that it was wrong to continue with the previous policy that a person should be utterly destitute before getting public relief. These factors have increased the number of people obtaining assistance from the State.

Mr. McANANEY: An increase of \$77,000 in receipts on maintenance orders is small in relation to the large increase of the previous year. As the new Maintenance Act provides a better scheme for enforcing maintenance orders, can the Minister say why this small increase has occurred?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This is for the maintenance of children resulting from court orders by arrangements through the Treasury trust account, and there has been an increase in receipts. The department's rate of recovery for the maintenance system under the Social Welfare Act has been much higher than previously, but these relate to recoveries for deserted wives. However, I will get more information for the honourable member.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Can the Minister say how the projects will be set up and how they will function under the new lines "After-school activities" and "Youth activities (pilot project)"? Also, has he any information on the line "State Public Relief", particularly in relation to interim relief? Is there any basis for assessing a claim for reimbursement of this relief?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The promotion of social welfare within the community, a new line, is being supervised by the Recreation Officer of the department, Mr. Hall. As a result of a survey taken by the University Department of Social Science in Kensington and Norwood, we tried to set up a pilot community project for after-school activities, because many children needed community activity between the time they left school and the time their parents arrived home. We investigated the situation in New South Wales and set up committees to recommend specific projects.

A lengthy investigation was conducted as to the best way to set up after-school activities in Norwood, and several projects were examined. I understand we are currently in the final stages of negotiations for opening

such an activity for the remainder of this term in Norwood, with the assistance of local church bodies and the Young Women's Christian Association. From this activity we will be able to judge what further assistance should be given for its development, and within a fortnight I expect to announce the starting of this activity.

The second project is a casual drop-in club, on which we also have a committee working. Up to the present, we have been unable to find satisfactory premises for it, but we expect to be successful early next year. The third project was a long-range one for the development of a youth garden project (a sort of combination of the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen and the Canon Hill project in the Midlands in England). This project is proceeding, but it has to fit in with the redevelopment project for Norwood. The immediate work undertaken here is in relation to after-school and the drop-in club activities, for which nominal sums have been included to cover the basic costs in organization, advertising, and subsidies for equipment.

In addition to this, the officer concerned will be engaged in a wider survey of youth facilities in South Australia, in respect of which a further announcement is likely to be made within a fortnight. As I explained at the time the social welfare legislation was being considered, we wish to see that we have adequate co-ordination of youth and family welfare activities in South Australia, and that we are not duplicating expenditures unnecessarily.

The public relief equivalent system is still in operation; a deserted wife may often come to the department to ask for relief, and will sign an authorization to the department (which she is free to withdraw at any time) that from any maintenance money subsequently to be recovered on her behalf by the department a deduction may be made against the relief she has been advanced, if she receives maintenance in respect of that period for which she has already been paid relief. I desire to confine this system as much as I can, but we are faced with a problem in South Australia. Unlike most other States, we run a special service for deserted wives. In Victoria, a deserted woman wishing to enforce her maintenance rights can go not to the Social Welfare Department but to the local clerk of court to ask his advice on the kind of proceedings to be issued, which she must maintain herself.

The proceedings for maintenance enforcement are so complicated and technical that it is

unreasonable to expect a layman or laywoman to know all the various remedies available for that enforcement. With the services of a prosecution and enforcement branch for deserted wives, South Australia is much better off than Victoria. In Victoria, the Social Welfare Department does not run the public relief system; that department is therefore not faced with the problem here that if one branch in the department is recovering maintenance moneys and another branch is granting public relief, the accounts have to be co-ordinated in some way. In dealing with a family with a whole series of children supported by the department in some different way, the sorting out of the problem is extraordinarily difficult. I have asked the Social Welfare Advisory Council urgently to see whether it cannot come up with answers on this score. It has told me that it will take some time to do so. I discussed the matter with the Chairman, who is the Director of Social Welfare, only this morning, and was told that there would have to be an interim direction on public relief because the council could not give a short answer.

Mrs. STEELE: I should like to know whether much progress has been made in the provision of youth facilities, to which the Minister has referred. I remember reading a press report concerning a club in Norwood being run by a woman with some success, which had to be closed down because people were complaining about the noise. Can the Minister say whether that organization had the department's blessing?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The organization did not have the official blessing of the department.

Mrs. Steele: I think it was well run.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes. Mr. Hall and I visited the place. Undoubtedly, a real need in the area was being fulfilled. Indeed, when the club looked like closing down, there was extraordinary activity by teenagers who had been involved in it and who did everything they could to ensure that something of this kind would be available. However, no suitable premises could be obtained. It was a private organization run by a lady in the district, who had spent much money to establish it. The organization met in the basement of the institute but, unfortunately, the noise in the place, together with people tending to hang around outside, resulted in a severe falling off in the number of people using the institute library. As the institute committee is basically a library committee, it decided not to continue the

arrangement for the tenancy, because of the difficulties confronting it. Although the committee was sympathetic, it felt that the premises were not appropriate.

Mrs. Steele: Was the hall being used?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, it was in the basement which, although salt damp was present, had been decorated for the purpose. Unfortunately, with many shows of this kind it is not those that are orderly inside, but those that are not admitted and create difficulties outside that present problems. We look forward to getting premises next year, but the arrangements are not completed as yet. Undoubtedly this particular essay showed that there was a real need for activity of this kind in the area—for a drop-in club where teenagers could express themselves. This organization gave the opportunity to teenagers to get up and entertain each other, which most of them did.

Regarding the after-school project, when I made my previous statement I expected we would put temporary premises at one of the playground areas in Norwood. Certain difficulties developed about the necessity to remove other buildings or installations in order to establish these premises, and then the committee decided that, rather than go ahead with this idea, as it appeared we might be able to get more satisfactory permanent premises next year, it would be better in the meantime to proceed in a church hall as long as the staffing could be arranged. There was a hold-up on staffing because some voluntary organizations expressed interest but were not prepared to commit themselves until they went through their training programmes, which were completed at the end of the school holidays. We have now completed arrangements for staff, and within a fortnight I think an announcement can be made on this matter.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I refer to the case of a woman who lost her husband suddenly and was left with a family of young children and without cash resources. She went to the department and was granted assistance. Subsequently she received a settlement from her husband's estate which took much time to arrive and which, when it arrived, was only a nominal amount of \$400. She was then asked by the department to return at least some portion of the amount that had been granted. I think that had she paid in the proceeds of the will she would have then been again destitute. In any event, there was a severe problem about it. I am not certain of my facts, but could the Minister say that it is

not the policy of the department to take back something from the past in order to qualify a person for assistance in the future?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is certainly not the department's policy.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The provisions for salaries and wages for the Social Welfare Department are divided into two sections—General and Children's Welfare. I assume that the first section relates to headquarters expenditures and the second section to the figures for the various institutions. The allocation for the general section is increased by 20 per cent whereas the sum for the Children's Welfare section is increased by only about 10 per cent. This seems to show that there are greater administrative costs than institutional costs. I should have thought that the cost for institutions would tend to grow more rapidly. In other departments, the administrative expenditures have not tended to increase as much as the costs for institutions. As revenue will not increase by 20 per cent, is this increase for the general section of the department not rather extensive?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member is not correct in imagining that the general section covers only administrative staff at the head office: it covers the whole field branch of the department, including all officers in out-stations of the department. For instance, it includes Children's Welfare officers in the country. The Children's Welfare institution figures cover only institutions, and the institutions are listed in the Estimates. Field staff is included in the general section and there has been an expansion of this staff. In fact, the load on probation officers at the moment is far too high, and the Juvenile Court Magistrate has drawn attention to the fact that it is difficult to cover probation adequately with the staff available. This year we have placed a family welfare officer at Whyalla, where development has made this necessary. Now we will have to rent offices there, equip them, provide a car and the like.

The more highly qualified members of the staff come under the general section, and inevitably the increases in many of their salaries, as a result of adjustments, are far greater in total than is the case with the staff of institutions. Apart from the Deputy Superintendents at the institutions most members of the staff are without qualification to give them a margin above a weekly-paid rate. In consequence, we get a far bigger total increase in the "General" line because that is where the highly qualified personnel

are, and the increases to them are bigger, in effect, than the increases to those people who are on a weekly wage.

One feature of this year's budgeting has been that this next year includes 27 pay periods instead of the usual 26. When we add in the provision for the basic wage increase, the automatic increments, and the filling of vacant positions for the additional staff to meet the needs of the department (and this has been kept minimal), we face an increase this year of a considerable amount. It would be impossible to carry on the work of the department if I did not have that increase, and the vote has been cut to the bone.

Mr. RODDA: I notice from the Auditor-General's Report that the average number of inmates over the year at Struan Farm was 18. Last year the Minister visited Struan for two days and inspected this institution. The staff there under the Superintendent (Mr. Giles) is very good, and officers do their utmost to give these boys what they miss through not being in their own homes. It is imperative that the right type of boy be sent to this establishment. With the facilities there, the present staff could provide adequate training in agricultural pursuits for 30 boys. With Mr. Giles at the head, officers do their utmost to see that the boys are well cared for and that they are trained.

Another pleasing feature regarding Struan is that Mr. Giles can make three or four boys available to assist neighbours in their general farm work, when the boys' own work is up to date. I know there are difficulties in getting the right type of boy for Struan. However, I understand from the Minister that attempts are being made to get more boys there, and I appreciate that. I hope that the figure of 18 can be stepped up considerably.

Mrs. STEELE: When will the new building at the Boys Reformatory Institution, Magill, be opened?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: We have not had a definite date from the contractor.

Mrs. STEELE: Can the Minister say what crafts are provided to fit the boys for taking up jobs when they leave the reform school? To what extent are they employed in farm or agricultural pursuits? Is the purchase of livestock to build up the herd or stud at the institution?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The purchase of livestock relates to the purchase of one boar, two sows, and some poultry. We intend to buy irrigation equipment, and it is necessary to provide for the operating requirements of this equipment.

Mrs. Steele: Opportunities for agricultural and horticultural pursuits are fairly limited.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes, but there is a good piggery there. In addition, there is a dairy and a vegetable garden, and these provide milk, meat and vegetables not only for Magill but for other Government institutions as well. We have very good contra accounts on this score. We are able to supply some hospital institutions, as well as other institutions of the department, with things from Magill from time to time. There is a boot shop, a metal trades shop, and a carpenter's shop at Magill. In none of these trades are we so far able to provide training of apprenticeship standard. Part of the trouble is that the average term in Magill is only eight months, with the result that it is not possible to give a boy all-round training. What we can do is seek to interest him in a particular sphere and try to give him training that will lead to his obtaining a job outside. I am not satisfied that this has developed satisfactorily yet, and with the development of the new institution, with its new and well equipped shops, I am seeking from the Education Department a review of technical training to see whether we cannot better equip the older boys at Magill.

In addition to the equipment I mentioned, we also intend to purchase an electric organ for the chapel, a piano, and a lawnmower. Provision is made for materials and equipment for the new oval, and I shall be able to make an announcement next week about the new oval which I am sure will be interesting for the honourable member.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, \$218,814.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: The sum of \$32,500 is provided under the line "Grant to Law Society of South Australia for cost of administration in connection with legal assistance to poor persons". Can the Minister say whether that sum is considered adequate to meet the reasonable requirements of the Law Society in the administration of its scheme? I think the Minister would know that in more recent years there has been a considerable increase in the number of persons seeking legal aid from the Law Society. I think he would also appreciate that this scheme is supported wholeheartedly by practically all of the 358 members of the legal profession who are members of the society, and that the scheme is the envy of some of the other States.

The report of the Law Council of South Australia for the year ended June 30, 1966,

shows that, in 1963, 1,383 matters were assigned for handling by solicitors who were members of the society; in 1964, 1,416 matters were so assigned; in 1965, 1,664; and, in 1966, 1,713. Further, 141 matters were last year disposed of by the Secretary of the society. Of the 1,713 matters dealt with during the last financial year, 798 were concerned with divorce and matrimonial affairs; 485 with police and criminal court matters; 11 with tenancy matters; 123 with accident claims; and 296 with other matters.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is less than the Law Society asked for and its submission was reasonable, but it was provided in the light of the financial situation facing the State. A heavy burden on the scheme at present relates to matters of Commonwealth jurisdiction. The increase in divorce costs following the passing of the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act was almost 100 per cent, and that burden is being borne because many matrimonial cases require assistance from the Law Society. At the last meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, I told the Commonwealth Attorney-General that if the present situation continued and the State had to bear the cost of Commonwealth jurisdiction, I might be obliged to tell the South Australian Cabinet that this State would not subsidize Commonwealth jurisdiction matters. This was not treated as a serious threat, but we might have to reach that stage. Discussions have taken place concerning devices resorted to in other States to finance legal assistance schemes but, although I cannot discuss them publicly yet, this State may obtain substantial additional revenue, which would not be a burden on State revenues. In the circumstances, I hope the financial situation of the scheme next year will be brighter.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: No grant has been made to the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home. This surprises me, but perhaps it has not applied for a grant.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: We subsidize its building costs, but not its running costs. I am not aware of its applying for a maintenance grant.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Mount Barker Boys' Home has co-operated closely with the Welfare Department and has been helpful. I am pleased to see that its grant has been increased, and assume that it is for a building project.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This is for part-payment of a long-term building project.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Can the Minister say how money is being spent by the National Fitness Council of Australia for training youth leaders and for subsidizing the establishment of youth clubs? Port Lincoln has a problem with the lack of youth activities, but I commend the Police Department, the headmaster of the school at Kirton Point, and several other citizens for their assistance. Can the Minister say how they may seek assistance and what services would be available to help them establish a youth club? I presume the grant for the Young Men's Christian Association is for building purposes?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am distressed that we cannot provide more for the National Fitness Council, but it is impossible to do so. The council conducts a training course for youth leaders, and we have subsidized the seconding of youth leaders to a school in Victoria. Some subsidies on equipment are paid on the establishment of youth clubs by the National Fitness Council. Advice, too, is given by the council on establishment and organization. Local organizations should apply to the council, which will then give them all the assistance it can. The payment to the Young Men's Christian Association is for interest on capital expenditure for a proposed hostel at Whyalla. The Government has agreed to pay certain amounts to cover the interest payments. This money services the capital. They can get loans if they can cover the interest. Our contributions will decline after a period, when it is expected that the returns from the hostel will be able to service the loans. The establishment of a hostel will be useful in that area. It should be supported.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: I refer to the item "Salary of Judge in Insolvency, \$3,416". As the Minister knows, bankruptcy comes within the Commonwealth sphere, but there is still on the South Australian Statute Book legislation relating to insolvency. I think the old Act of 1886 has not been repealed. Can the Minister say whether the sum provided here relates to the exercise of judicial functions in respect of State or Commonwealth legislation? If it is the latter, is the amount recouped from the Commonwealth authorities?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Commonwealth Government under the present arrangement pays \$3,300 a year to the State Government, which is then paid into revenue.

Line passed.

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS (Minister of Works): I move:

That the lines "Premier's Department" to "Premier—Miscellaneous" be postponed and taken into consideration after "Minister of Local Government and Minister of Roads—Miscellaneous".

I do so because of the absence of the Treasurer. The Government desires that he be present to give the fullest possible details.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: Before the matter is put to the Committee, let me say that "Minister of Roads" is one of the items that I personally wish to comment on next Tuesday. The Government's policy on roads is strongly opposed by the Opposition. If the Minister of Works persists in bringing the Highways Department into the debate today, we shall be debating today matters that we would more properly be debating next Tuesday. In the circumstances, would it not be more appropriate to report progress?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: I assure the member for Gumeracha that we shall not be discussing roads today. We shall go on to the Lands Department, and at five o'clock I shall report progress.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: The Government's policy on lands affects adversely the financial policy of the State, as I shall clearly show next Tuesday. That is one of the reasons for the Government's being in its present difficulty.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (17).—Messrs Broomhill and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Bywaters, Casey, Clark, Corcoran, Curren, Dunstan, Hudson, Hughes, Hurst, Hutchens (teller), Langley, Loveday, McKee, and Ryan.

Noes (15).—Messrs. Bockelberg, Brookman, Coumbe, Ferguson, Freebairn, Hall (teller), Heaslip, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Pearson, Sir Thomas Playford, Messrs. Quirke, Rodda, and Shannon, and Mrs. Steele.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Jennings and Walsh. Noes—Messrs. Millhouse and Teusner.

Majority of 2 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried.

MINISTER OF LANDS, MINISTER OF REPATRIATION AND MINISTER OF IRRIGATION.

Department of Lands, \$3,081,794.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I refer to the first line, which deals with general administration. The policy of the Government in connection with this department is having a most adverse effect on the financial position

of the State and is one of the numerous reasons why the Treasurer is at present having difficulty in obtaining necessary revenues, while expenditure is so high. To substantiate that, I refer the Committee to page 140 of the Auditor-General's Report, which shows the net cost to the Budget of the administration of the department.

I say in fairness to the Minister that, despite the land wealth of the State, this department has always been rather inclined to cost the Budget revenue rather than provide it. The Minister will see that in the last financial year the amount decreased by about \$300,000, and the reason for this is given on the same page of the report. There was a substantial reduction (\$151,000) in the amount received from the sale of Crown lands.

That is not because people do not want to buy Crown land but because the Minister has decided that the conversion of perpetual leases to freehold tenure is no longer to be available. He will not exercise the power given in the Crown Lands Act and no perpetual leases may be freeholded in future. The receipts from land sales last year were about \$316,000 but only about \$190,000 will be received this year, so there will be a further reduction of about \$126,000.

The Minister will see that, as a result of his completely capricious decision, revenue of the State is being adversely affected. Although this has had a disconcerting effect on primary industry and has broken a long-established principle that the holder of a perpetual lease can have the satisfaction of freeholding, the Minister has announced this change. I think an exception was made to permit people who had already entered into agreements when the change was made. I am not sure what happened in regard to the returned soldiers. The net effect has been extremely adverse to revenue and has not given satisfaction to anyone except the Minister, who is indulging in what he considers to be a form of Socialism in relation to land.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have listened to the honourable member long enough to assure myself that he is not speaking to the lines in the Estimates. He is speaking on the general policy of the Government and the Minister, and I rule that he is out of order. The honourable member must speak to the particular line. The discussion in which he is indulging could have taken place on the first line of the Estimates.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: With respect, Mr. Chairman, I am dealing with the administration of the Lands Department.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member is also dealing with what is involved in legislation and the administration of legislation.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: During the whole afternoon, Mr. Chairman, you have allowed the Minister of Social Welfare to discuss the policy of the Social Welfare Department, and I am only discussing the policy of the Lands Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister was courteous enough to give members complete replies to the information they had sought. The member for Gumeracha.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: I shall put the matter in order. I ask the Minister of Lands how he justifies the present policy of the department in regard to Crown land, which policy is detrimental to the State's finances.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Lands): I am pleased that you, Mr. Chairman, drew the attention of the member for Gumeracha to the fact that he was criticizing the policy of the department and of the Government, although he had had an opportunity to do that during the debate on the first line. I did not hear the honourable member refer to this matter then.

It is well known that the Government, shortly after taking office, decided to implement the policy that a previous Labor Government had implemented. That was a policy of preventing the further freeholding of perpetual lease land. The reasons for doing this are well known. One of the matters that concerned this and the previous Labor Government was the aggregation of small holdings back into large holdings.

The member for Gumeracha knows as well as I that, when freehold land is being dealt with, no control can be exercised by the Government over the areas that can be held by an individual. He is aware that recently I introduced a Bill to change the limitation in the Crown Lands Act in connection with perpetual leases. Surely, if we are to be consistent in this matter, when we see fit to have a limitation in the Crown Lands Act on perpetual leases we should not put ourselves in the position of making land grants of perpetual leases in circumstances where we have no control over the area that people can purchase and use. The member for Gumeracha said that the changed policy had cost the Government \$300,000.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford: Not quite \$300,000.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The amount is \$240,000. I think the honourable member said that of that sum about \$190,000 was lost in land sales.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: What happens when it has all gone?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes, where do we go then? At least, while the perpetual lease obtains, we are gaining an annual rent and are able to control areas that can be held by one person in this State. I consider this an extremely important feature of landholding in South Australia, particularly with the present situation in which people, often eminently suited in every way to going on the land (for instance, farmers' sons), are continually crying out for more land. Once land on perpetual lease is allowed to become freehold, we have no further control over it.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: It will get into the hands of big companies.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: It has in the past. Just prior to the last election a great many applications for freeholding were received from people who, knowing about our policy on this matter, perhaps smelt victory in the wind for the Labor Party. By continuing this policy we maintain necessary control. It is not a stringent control; in fact, it is generous, as we shall show a little later. At least it permits some form of control over the land masses in this State which I consider to be so necessary, particularly at this stage of our development.

The Hon. Sir THOMAS PLAYFORD: We are now borrowing money at a much higher rate of interest than the revenue received from land that we are not selling. Economically, that is bad business. The Minister does not become at all concerned about borrowing money to meet the Budget's exigencies, but the interest on land not being sold is much lower than what will be received for the bond rate paid for borrowed money. I suppose he realizes that the Government's deficit will cost it a flat 9 per cent, which will be more than double the income received from the land. I understand that the Minister is at present refusing applications even for small parcels of land from which it may be necessary to build up a living area. Such applications are being capriciously refused to the detriment of our agricultural industries, and of the Government's revenues, as well as to the detriment of those things that revenues can do for the Government.

This is all brought about because the Minister desires to establish a policy, the only justification for which is that it was a policy of the previous Labor Government. I suggest that the Minister take a good look at the previous Labor Government's policy in this regard. If there is to be a limitation on holdings of land, let us deal with it as a legislative matter. As a matter of policy, the Minister has held up transfers, although returned soldiers received definite promises that they would have that right.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Government has said that, where a contractual agreement provides for the freeholding of land, it will be honoured. That, of course, refers to soldier settlers, so that under our policy any settler who applies to freehold his property may do so. It is not true to say that applications to complete a property, by transferring to freehold a small parcel of adjacent land on perpetual lease, will be refused. I have dealt with several cases in which land has been transferred from perpetual lease in order to complete a freeholding. Perhaps we are not receiving sufficient return for land held on perpetual lease, but I draw the honourable member's attention to the Auditor-General's reference to returns received by the Government from this land.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Can the Minister say whether, in evolving its policy of retaining Crown Lands for subdivision, the Government intends to retain lands for subdivision, or does it intend that these lands, or territorial lands, shall be retained as a means of annual revenue? The Minister said that the Auditor-General had pointed out that the interest in Crown lands was meagre. He also said that Cabinet had not considered any alterations to the Act at this stage. However, if Crown lands are to be used as a source of revenue, does he contemplate that in future there is some likelihood of revision of the Crown Lands Act in order to bring rentals, say, under a quinquennial form of assessment so that they would be brought into line with land tax? If the Government wants revenue, that would be the thing to do, although I should not like to do it.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: When a perpetual lease is granted now for the first time, it is granted at a realistic rent compared with the value of surrounding land. No doubt the same thing happened in the early days of the State. The problem that arises is that the Government has no power under the Act to increase rents, even when a transfer takes

place. The only power it has is to make a reduction.

Mr. Nankivell: Do you issue a new lease for a subdivision?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: If land is transferred from one person to another the Government has no power to increase the rent. If the Government looked at this as a means of raising revenue then it should do as the Auditor-General has suggested. Quite frankly, however, no consideration has been given to this matter by the Government or by me at this stage. The honourable member said he would not like to make alterations to the Act in this connection, and I know he realizes that many difficulties are associated with the matter.

At present we make sure that the rent is reasonable when new allotments are made, although we do not make it so high that the person taking the lease will not be able to make a living. We fix the rent on the basis of comparable rents on the surrounding country and in accordance with what people will be able to pay from working a property of the size involved. The honourable member referred to a quinquennial assessment but I should not think that an assessment would be necessary as often as that. Of course, when we dispose of land on a freehold basis we receive the benefit of the production, but the Crown has no further interest in the land.

Mr. Nankivell: It has the capital, which it can re-invest.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes, and, as the member for Gumeracha said, it costs us 9 per cent to handle it. If we look at Crown lands from the point of view of raising revenue (and I suppose, as a responsible Government, we should do that), then it could well be that we will have to investigate what the Auditor-General has suggested. I have thought about what the Auditor-General said but that does not mean

that anything will be done about it at this stage. However, when any comment on the department is made by the Auditor-General it is worth considering.

Mr. QUIRKE: When I was Minister, I found the same difficulty that the present Minister has: there are enormous areas of country in South Australia that no-one would want to freehold today because the rent on them is so minute that people get the land for practically nothing. I was amazed that on ancient leaseholds that were transferred the rental was nothing more than a peppercorn rental. This is not fair because, on sale, many of these leases would bring in colossal sums. The matter should be looked at in relation to land tax. I looked at it, and the Minister will find the same difficulties that I found.

No matter what the Auditor-General says, this is not a simple problem. I do not agree that people should have parcels of land which, to all intents and purposes, are free because they pay only a tiny bit of lease rent when the actual value of the land has increased to astronomical proportions compared with what was paid originally. In fairness to everybody, the matter should be examined. I cannot imagine anybody wanting to freehold land the cost of which in relation to its real value may be a fraction of 1 per cent; I do not agree with that at all. I had considerable difficulty in trying to do anything, hence I never tried to do anything.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

CAMBRAI AND SEDAN RAILWAY DISCONTINUANCE BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 27, at 2 p.m.