

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, November 3, 1966.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Audit Act Amendment,
 Branding of Pigs Act Amendment,
 Flinders University of South Australia Act
 Amendment,
 State Lotteries.

QUESTIONS

BUS PASSENGERS.

Mr. HALL: I refer the Premier to the September, 1966, issue of the *Quarterly Extract of South Australian Statistics*, which gives the number of passengers carried by buses and trams in the metropolitan area. This report shows that in 1965-66 passengers carried by Municipal Tramways Trust vehicles totalled 49,000,000, compared with 58,000,000 in 1962-63. This is a drop of more than 8,000,000 passengers, or about a 16 per cent drop in patronage. At the same time, the number of passengers carried by private buses since 1960 has varied only slightly, although in both instances the mileage operated has been practically the same. Can the Premier say what significant factor gives the private bus services a fairly constant passenger patronage while the Tramways Trust has had a significantly reduced patronage over those years?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I do not intend to deal with the many factors associated with this question. However, now that the Leader has raised the matter I will obtain a report and ascertain whether there is some valid reason for this variation.

WATER RATES.

Mr. JENNINGS: During the last couple of days I have received a number of complaints from tenants of Housing Trust houses at Mansfield Park and Angle Park about excess water rates. These people are not used to receiving water rate accounts because mostly their rate is covered in the ordinary rental they pay, and, as a consequence, I believe a mistake may have been made. If I give the Minister of Works one letter which is representative of many, will he have investigations made to see whether a mistake could possibly have been made?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: The honourable member states that a number of people have made complaints, and I hardly think there could be an error in the readings on a number of properties, although errors have occurred regarding excess water used by individuals. If I may trespass a little on the province of the Minister of Housing, I will say that we are getting queries from people in Housing Trust houses because they are being charged for excess water, possibly for the first time, by the Housing Trust. Many people in my district occupy Housing Trust houses, and I have always found the trust most reasonable and most considerate. It invariably invites tenants to show cause why they should not make payments, and then it investigates, perhaps for leaking pipes, faulty meters, and that type of thing. If the honourable member gives me particulars of the case he has referred to I will have the matter investigated, but I assure him that there is little possibility of a mistake having been made in a number of cases.

DIABETES.

Mrs. STEELE: Has the Premier a reply to a question I asked last week regarding a diabetic survey?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: In 1965, the National Health and Medical Research Council supported two pilot surveys for detection of diabetes on a community basis. The aims were to develop appropriate survey methods for application in Australia, to discover the prevalence of unsuspected diabetes in representative Australian communities, and to bring the people found to have diabetes under appropriate treatment. The communities chosen were Toowoomba, Queensland, and Goulburn, New South Wales. Interim reports of these surveys are expected to be presented to the National Health and Medical Research Council meeting in Canberra this week. South Australia is represented at the meeting. Experience gained in these pilot surveys will be studied in formulating proposals regarding similar work in South Australia. Use will also be made of any information becoming available from similar work in Western Australia.

BARLEY ADVANCE.

The Hon. T. C. STOTT: Can the Minister of Agriculture say why the announcement of the first barley advance this year by the Australian Barley Board will have to be delayed for a fortnight even though the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry has

already announced the first advance on wheat, as both these advances are through the same bank, namely, the Commonwealth Reserve Bank?

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: The Secretary of the Australian Barley Board (Mr. G. Lander) said in Adelaide today that the announcement regarding the rates of the first advance on barley of the No. 28 pool, season 1966-67, will be delayed for about two weeks, compared with last year. It is believed that the rates of the first advance will be equal to those paid on barley of the No. 27 pool, season 1965-66, but it is possible by delaying the announcement for about a fortnight that a slightly higher rate than last year may be obtained. This is being done in the interests of growers, and it is expected that the date of announcement will not be later than November 30, 1966. Payments to growers will begin in the first week in December as previously.

PORT PIRIE OFFICES.

Mr. McKEE: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question about the erection of a new office block for the Engineering and Water Supply Department at Port Pirie?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: The Director and Engineer-in-Chief states that a firm of architects has been engaged to design and supervise the construction of the Port Pirie office and amenities block. The preliminary designs have been submitted and accepted and final plans and specifications are now being prepared. It is expected that tenders will be called in about three weeks, and that a tender will be let so that work can commence early in 1967.

ABDUCTION PENALTIES.

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my recent question about the penalties fixed for offences relating to the abduction of children?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, I have not yet had all the comments I sought on this matter. As soon as I have an answer for the honourable member I will notify him.

CLOVERCREST LAND.

Mrs. BYRNE: On August 16, the Minister of Education informed me that the Education Department was negotiating for sites for both primary and secondary schools in the area on the northern side of Montague Road, Clovercrest. Can the Minister say whether land has now been acquired for this purpose and, if it has, what is the exact location of the land?

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: A 10-acre site for a primary school at Modbury North has been purchased and is located in section 1583, hundred of Yatala, adjacent to Milne Road. Settlement is expected to be reached shortly for a further primary school at Modbury North-West, situated in section 2121, hundred of Yatala, fronting Michelle Street. In addition, negotiations are being undertaken by the Education Department for the purchase of primary school sites at Pedare and Para Heights, and a high school site at Modbury Heights.

BLACKWOOD BUTCHERS.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I think the Premier is familiar with the butchering trade at Blackwood and surrounds, because he comes up every week and buys his meat at one of the shops in Blackwood, and I may say the district is proud that he does so. This week I have been approached by two of the butchers in business at Blackwood expressing perturbation at the opening of a new store just outside my district across the Sturt River, in an area where the meat does not have to be inspected—

Mr. McKee: Who opened it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: —nor does the shop have to conform with the provisions of the Early Closing Act. This, of course, gives this shop and other shops outside the area a considerable advantage over butchers who are trading within the metropolitan area, even though they are quite close. Although neither of the butchers who have spoken to me objects to competition, this competition is, of course, rather weighted against them. I therefore ask the Premier, as this is a matter of policy, whether the Government has considered the problem which arises because of the spread of the metropolitan area in this way, and the fact that businesses of this nature are now operating outside the strict bounds of the abattoirs area and the area covered by the Early Closing Act, and whether the Government intends either to extend those areas or to relax the provisions under the Abattoirs Act and the Early Closing Act so that competition in the circumstances I have outlined may be fair to all?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I did not think it was necessary to ventilate my private business in this House.

Mr. Millhouse: I said we were proud.

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: Consequently, I do not intend to accept the supposedly generous remarks made. In fact, I consider that I am a free citizen at times, and I should like the freedom other citizens enjoy. I think

the honourable member could have been better informed if he was referring to what I think he was. Concerning the question that is agitating his mind, I think he should ask the Leader of the Opposition the reason why he went out to open this shop.

Mr. Millhouse: It isn't that shop at all.

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: Well, the other shops associated with it. The Government is particularly concerned about the abuses that have occurred and is trying to ascertain what can be done in the interests of the health of the people, particularly in relation to where some meat has been prepared for human consumption. However, some retailers who are obtaining their meat supplies from the metropolitan abattoirs are selling it outside normal trading hours. The Government is mindful of the problem and is trying to keep trading within normal trading hours. Certain matters associated with it are beyond our control at present, but we will continue to see what can be done in the interests of most people.

BUS STOPS.

Mr. LANGLEY: For many years there has been a private bus service traversing Winston Avenue, Edwardstown, and East Avenue, Black Forest, to and from the city. Several bus stops on this route are alongside intersections, and sometimes at peak periods two buses run very close to each other. I have had several complaints from householders who, although they have willingly taken down obstacles in their gardens to give a clearer vision at these intersections, maintain that their efforts are nullified by these bus stops. Will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Roads to consider placing the bus stops a reasonable distance away from intersections so that a clear view will be enjoyed by traffic travelling along these busy roads, the flow of traffic improved, and the roads made safer? An illustration is the intersection of Avenue Road and Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to ask my colleague to investigate this matter for the honourable member, and I shall bring down a report soon.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE STEPS.

Mr. QUIRKE: My question is to you, Sir, and, as the difficulty to which you previously referred has been removed, can you say what authority controls the front steps of Parliament House, and is that place recognized as a public place?

The SPEAKER: According to newspaper reports, the courts have held that the steps of Parliament House is a public place within the meaning of certain Acts, at any rate.

Mr. Quirke: Who controls it?

The SPEAKER: There is a difference of opinion on that matter, and I am unable to give a considered ruling at this stage. In relation to the other matter raised by the honourable member, cases are still pending and, until they have been decided, the matter, as far as this House is concerned, is *sub judice*.

ROSEWORTHY COLLEGE.

Mr. HURST: In view of the importance of the Roseworthy Agricultural College to agriculture in South Australia, and following the announcement by the Premier some time ago concerning the proposed agricultural engineering and science buildings, can the Minister of Agriculture say how many students attend this college; what progress has been made on the engineering building; and what progress has been made on the new science block?

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: The honourable member was good enough to tell me that he intended to ask this question, and I am pleased to see his undoubted interest in agriculture. The number of students attending the college in the first year of the Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture is 40; in second year, 32; and in third year, 19, with 8 students in the oenology course, a total of 99 students. The area has been cleared for the agricultural engineering building and at present pilot holes are being sunk to test for foundation work. A contract for the building has been let to E. F. Marshall & Sons Proprietary Limited. Plans are nearing completion for the science block, and a tender is to be advertised shortly.

AUDITORS' CERTIFICATES.

Mr. McANANEY: Will the Minister of Education ask the Minister of Local Government how many local government auditors' certificates have been revoked in each of the last five years?

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: I shall be pleased to pass that question on to my colleague.

TRANSPORT DRIVERS.

Mr. HALL: I have previously asked the Premier questions about United Kingdom migrants who, being strange to this country, are not able to use a particular vehicle in order to obtain the necessary licence qualifications. Although the Premier previously said

that the difficulties for a migrant were technically no different from those for an existing resident in this State, can he say whether it is the Police Department's policy to attend for the purpose of conducting a licence examination a place at which a particular vehicle may be available for that examination? For instance, does the department visit the place of employment or prospective employment at which an applicant may be able to use the vehicle when he may be unable to have it taken elsewhere for an examination? If that is not the departments' policy, will the Premier ascertain whether it will implement such a policy with a view to overcoming the difficulty experienced by migrants in this regard?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I will obtain a further report as soon as possible.

SOUTH-WESTERN HOSPITAL.

Mr. BROOMHILL: Can the Minister of Works say what progress has been made on the South-Western Districts Hospital project?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: Land having been purchased, as the Premier has reported previously, the Director of the Public Buildings Department has informed me that preliminary plans are progressing and that, with the co-operation of the Hospitals Department, it is hoped that the plans to be submitted to the Public Works Committee will be ready soon.

WATER RATES.

Mr. RODDA: An enterprising gentleman in Naracoorte, who has erected four flats on a block of land, has this year received his water rates in four separate accounts. Indeed, I noticed in yesterday's *News* that a similar situation had also arisen in the city. Can the Minister of Works say whether this practice will continue or whether it has simply crept in through the use of computers?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: No, it has not crept in through the use of computers; this practice has existed for a long time, until certain people have been caught up with. Such people, who apply for a water supply to be installed in several flats without notifying the Engineering and Water Supply Department of that fact, are eventually detected. Wherever there is a separate consumer there is also a separate rate—

Mr. Rodda: And separate meters?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: —and there should be separate meters.

COUNCIL RATES.

Mrs. BYRNE: The Attorney-General will be aware that in the outer suburban section of the district I represent there has been much speculative home building by estate developers, the houses being sold under bridging finance terms pending bank loans being granted, at which time the properties are legally transferred to the purchasers. It has been the practice of some such estate developers to pay the council rates on these properties, but in other instances the home purchasers are rated by the local council and the accounts sent direct to the purchasers in their names. Can the Attorney-General say whether such home purchasers are liable for the council rates?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Speaking from memory, the occupants of ratable property are liable, as are the owners, and rates may be enforced by individual action or against the property itself. Therefore, I believe that in the circumstances referred to, the occupants would be liable, and, if they find that estate developers have failed and that the council is charging them for the rates, they will be faced with possible action by the council in respect of the property itself.

CITRUS INDUSTRY.

Mr. RODDA: My question concerns the judgment delivered yesterday by Justice Travers concerning the Citrus Industry Organization Act. I notice that His Honor said that the Act should be amended to state clearly whether it was intended to authorize the committee to deprive some sections of the industry of their livelihood. I am concerned about the casemakers now that a regulation has allowed the Bruce box to be used in the export trade. As this matter affects my district and other members' districts, will the Minister of Agriculture, if the Act is to be amended, consider those people who have heavy capital commitments in the form of factories and mills and who are making cases from locally grown timber?

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: I have now received a copy of the judgment but I have not had a chance to study it fully. I intend to discuss the matter in Cabinet as early as possible and to see just what is required.

POLICE SALARIES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I understand that it has been announced in the last few hours that Victorian police officers have been granted a substantial salary increase. Can the Premier

say whether police officers in this State have applied for salary increases and, if they have, whether the application will be dealt with expeditiously?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I have no information on the matter.

RAILWAY CONTRACT.

Mr. RODDA: I noticed yesterday that the Islington railways workshop had won the contract to build a substantial number of rolling stock. Last session I raised with the Minister the question of modern sleeping car accommodation for the Blue Lake Express on the South-East line. Has the Premier a statement to make on the general subject of rolling stock on the line I have referred to?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: The Railways Commissioner reports:

The two sleeping cars used on the Mount Gambier service are the only broad gauge cars wholly owned by the South Australian Railways. There is a number of non-air-conditioned sleeping cars owned jointly by the Victorian and South Australian Railways which are used intermittently on the Overland, but I am advised that their condition is not as good as that of the Angas and the Finnis—the two cars running on the Mount Gambier Service. It would not be possible to release any of our joint stock air-conditioned sleeping cars and use them on a hire basis for regular use on the Mount Gambier track.

I will see whether I can obtain further information on the honourable member's question. The value of contracts won by the Islington railway workshops would exceed \$3,000,000 for work on the standardization of rolling stock.

Mr. COUMBE: As my district adjoins that in which the workshops are located, I was pleased to hear the announcement that the workshops had won this contract. Will the winning of this contract lead to a significant increase in the labour force at the workshops?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I will obtain a comprehensive report including details of the labour force. However, I can say now that the labour force required for the type of contract that has been won would be needed in the steel car workshop rather than in the workshops generally, as would be the case in respect of sleeping cars for the Mount Gambier line.

Mr. HALL: When I addressed a large gathering at Peterborough on Tuesday evening I discovered that some residents there were very much concerned about employment in the district. Can the Premier say whether the railway workshops at Peterborough are sufficiently wide in scope to undertake some of the

work involved in the construction of this rolling stock?

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: The honourable member for Frome (Mr. Casey) has made continual representations to the Government regarding railways in the Peterborough Division.

Mr. Millhouse: Apparently without success.

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: Incidentally, the question of the work involved in the pre-fabrication section has already been considered by the department at Islington. Regarding the interjection by the member for Mitcham, it is not my function or business to know whether or not the representations were associated with the work referred to. The plain facts are that the railway workshops at Peterborough will still continue to receive from the Railways Department as much work as possible and, in addition, the Government will not lose any opportunity, as a result not only of the question today but also of the representations of the member for the district, to do all it can in this regard.

LUCINDALE LAND.

Mr. RODDA: Inquiries were made last year about an area west of Lucindale, and there is still much interest in this tract of country which, I understand, was held in case it was needed to bolster any weak soldier settlement holdings in that area. Can the Minister of Lands say what is likely to be done with this land?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I have had inquiries in my department about this land, and I know that the honourable member has inquired previously about its likely future use. The department intended to cut up this area and allocate it to interested applicants on a perpetual lease basis, but more recently representations have been made regarding setting the area aside as a wild life reserve, and this matter is currently being considered. Therefore, no decision has yet been made. However, when the necessary inspection has been carried out and a report received on its possibilities as a wild life reserve, I shall be able to tell the honourable member exactly what is to happen to this land.

CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My question concerns the pay of Government employees who are members of the Citizen Military Forces. I raised this matter on August 23, when I asked a question on notice, and as I had not received a reply I followed it up on October 6, when the Premier, in reply to my question, said:

Although some matters are still awaiting consideration, Cabinet desires to finalize this matter as soon as possible. When a report is available I shall notify the honourable member.

As nearly a month has elapsed since the Premier undertook to get a report and notify me, I am sure the report must be to hand and that the honourable gentleman must simply have omitted to notify me of it. I ask him now whether he can express to this House the Government's policy on the question of pay to Government employees who are members of the C.M.F.

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I shall see whether a reply is ready and, if it is, I will let the honourable member know.

EYRE PENINSULA WATER SUPPLY.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: It has come to my knowledge in the last few days that with the onset of a few warmer days some water supply problems are developing on Eyre Peninsula. When the people affected have inquired they have been told that the District Engineer is doing his best to cope with the problems. These problems are not great, and relate mainly to minor reconstruction problems or improvement of supply. I understand that the engineer has available to him only one gang for this work for the whole of his district and that he finds it impossible to meet deadlines for work to be finished in time to meet the requirements of summer flows. Will the Minister of Works inquire whether I am correctly informed and, if I am, whether it would be possible, as a matter of urgency, to find sufficient funds to employ, for a short period, another gang (even if those men would not be required later in the season) just to tackle the problems of summer flows?

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: I heard the honourable member's question with some concern. I assure him that I am really concerned that an adequate water supply should be available for all consumers during the summer. The honourable member did not give any location. If he will give me this information, I will see whether the department can provide extra labour to meet the demands if it considers that is warranted.

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (TOW-TRUCKS).

The Hon. FRANK WALSH (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959-1964. Read a first time.

The Hon. FRANK WALSH: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It amends the Motor Vehicles Act and provides for the licensing and control of tow-truck operators. There has to date been a complete lack of control over the activities of such persons and this lack of control has given rise to numerous suspect and reprehensible practices by these operators, particularly at the scene of accidents. The police and certain bodies, such as the Royal Automobile Association and the South Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, have received many complaints from members of the public in regard to the activities of these persons. The proposals contained in this Bill are therefore primarily designed to give a measure of protection to members of the public who, owing to involvement in a road accident, have to make use of the services of these towing organizations.

Experience in the operation of this proposed legislation will show whether the ambit thereof is sufficiently wide or whether it should be extended to cover the licensing of owners of towing services and, perhaps, their premises. However, it will be observed in clause 6 that the scope of this proposed legislation has been geographically restricted to an area that lies within a radius of 20 miles from the General Post Office, Adelaide. The reason for this is that the practices complained of occur almost exclusively within what may be loosely described as the outer and inner metropolitan area. By drawing an arc from Adelaide, a 20-mile radius would take in Port Gawler, Mount Torrens, Nairne, Meadows and Noarlunga. This area of operation has been discussed with and agreed to by the police, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, the R.A.A. and the S.A. Automobile Chamber of Commerce as being the area of operation most affected by the malpractices and irregularities that I have mentioned.

This proposed legislation is restrictive in another sense also. Provisions affecting the lifting, carrying or towing of a vehicle and the repair of that vehicle apply only to a vehicle damaged in an accident. They do not extend to a vehicle suffering a mechanical breakdown. The Government considers that to so extend the provisions would impose unnecessarily burdensome restrictions on the motoring public. The principal amendments proposed by this Bill provide for:

- (a) a definition of "tow-truck";
- (b) a prohibition against the use of trader's plates on tow-trucks except where allowed by section 68 of the principal Act;

- (c) a prohibition on any person from driving and operating a tow-truck unless such person is in possession of a valid certificate issued by the Registrar authorizing him to drive and operate a tow-truck;
- (d) a requirement that a driver of a tow-truck shall at all times carry with him the certificate issued by the Registrar authorizing him to drive and operate a tow-truck;
- (e) a requirement that a driver of a tow-truck shall not, by means of that tow-truck, lift, carry or tow any motor vehicle on a road unless he is in possession of an authority in the prescribed form signed by the owner, driver or person in charge of that vehicle or, in certain circumstances in the absence of any such person, the authority of a police officer attending the scene of an accident in which that vehicle is involved;
- (f) a requirement that any contract or authority for the repair of a vehicle damaged in an accident is unenforceable unless certain conditions are complied with;
- (g) penalty provisions designed to deter and punish many of the suspect and reprehensible practices of persons engaged in the industry at the scene of an accident; and
- (h) exemptions from the operation of the proposed legislation of certain persons and bodies within the area who lift, carry or tow their own vehicles damaged in an accident and, most importantly, a provision that exempts any person from the operation of this legislation who is not a driver of a tow-truck working for hire or reward from towing any vehicle by means of his vehicle.

Clause 3 defines a "tow-truck" as being a motor vehicle designed or intended to be used for the lifting, carrying or towing of motor vehicles damaged in an accident and includes any motor vehicle to which is attached, whether temporarily or otherwise, a device or trailer designed or intended to be used for the lifting, carrying or towing of motor vehicles damaged in an accident. The definition is drafted in fairly wide terms. The difficulty in reaching a satisfactory definition of a "tow-truck" is that if one pitches the definition too widely it includes in its ambit vehicles that it is not intended

to control but if, on the other hand, the definition is pitched in too restrictive a manner an opportunity is given to tow-truck operators to evade the legislation by using a vehicle, for example a utility vehicle, in towing operations that is not a "tow-truck" within the definition.

The Australian Motor Vehicle Standing Committee has, as a matter of interest, included in the definition it has adopted the concept of a vehicle fitted with a crane or other similar lifting device. It is true that a tow-truck does, in its ordinary meaning, connote a vehicle fitted with such a crane or lifting device. However, it is felt that these words introduce a restriction in the definition which might enable tow-truck operators to evade the whole operation of this legislation. As a result this concept has been excluded from the definition. An attempt has therefore been made to restrict the definition of "tow-truck" to apply to a motor vehicle designed or intended to be used for the lifting, carrying or towing of motor vehicles "damaged in an accident" and so on. This definition is in accord with the Government's intention that the legislation should apply only to vehicles damaged in an accident and not to vehicles suffering from a mechanical breakdown.

Clause 4 which inserts a new section 69a in the principal Act prohibits a person from driving or operating on a road a tow-truck bearing trader's plates. The police have experienced considerable difficulty in tracing tow-trucks that have been concerned in the towing and so on of a damaged vehicle away from the scene of an accident. In many cases this difficulty has been brought about by the use by tow-truck operators of trader's plates on their tow-trucks and by the switching of such plates from one tow-truck to another. It was never the intention of the parts of the Motor Vehicles Act dealing with trader's plates that trader's plates should be used on vehicles which were employed solely in the business of towing services. The intention of this legislation dealing with trader's plates was primarily to facilitate the movement of unregistered vehicles by firms and persons concerned in the business of manufacturing, repairing, or dealing in motor vehicles. Some owners of towing services are able to acquire trader's plates by virtue of the fact that they carry on the business of repairing motor vehicles. This clause will have the effect of preventing on a road the use of tow-trucks bearing trader's plates. A penalty of \$100 is provided. Tow-trucks will, it may be remarked, in future be required to be fully

registered under the Act. It will be noted, however, that tow-trucks will still be able to carry trader's plates for the purposes described in subsection (1) of section 68 of the principal Act.

Clause 5 amends section 72 of the principal Act and is designed to make it clear that the holder of a Class A or B licence is not entitled merely by reason of holding such a licence to drive and operate a tow-truck. Clause 6 inserts a new section 74a. in the principal Act, and provides that a person shall not drive or operate a tow-truck on a road within the area unless he is in possession of a certificate in the prescribed form issued by the Registrar authorizing him to drive and operate a tow-truck. A penalty of \$100 is provided. Reference has already been made to what is meant by the term "the area" defined in subsection (1) of this new section. Subsection (3) of this new section provides that the Registrar may, upon written application by the holder of a valid driver's licence, issue upon payment of such fee as may be prescribed, a certificate authorizing such holder to drive and operate a tow-truck, if the Registrar is satisfied that such holder is over 21 years of age, of good character, proficient in driving and operating a tow-truck and has not been convicted of an offence that would in the Registrar's opinion render him unfit to be issued with a licence. Subsection (4) enables the Registrar to require an applicant to undergo such tests to test the proficiency of an applicant in driving and operating a tow-truck.

Subsection (5) provides that the Registrar may at any time cancel the certificate authorizing a person to drive and operate a tow-truck if he is satisfied that such person has been convicted of an offence or guilty of such conduct that in the Registrar's opinion renders him unfit to hold that certificate. It is considered by the Government reasonable to insist that tow-truck drivers should be required to meet the qualifications mentioned in subsection (2) of this section as to age, character, and proficiency in the driving of a tow-truck, if only because a special responsibility is placed on such a driver in the discharge of his duties, for example, the duty to take proper care of another person's vehicle and any valuables that may be left in a damaged vehicle. It must also be borne in mind that tow-truck operators need to be mature persons since, apart from anything else, they will, by virtue of the "authority to repair" provisions, be entering into legal relationships with owners, etc., of

damaged vehicles. In this connection also it may be remarked that there are numerous persons at present engaged in the towing service business who, to say the least, have not particularly reputable characters. This has become apparent in certain prosecutions that have taken place recently in the local court. It is with this consideration in mind that power has been conferred upon the Registrar to cancel a certificate where he is satisfied that a person has been convicted of an offence or guilty of such conduct that would make him unfit to hold such certificate. This is not a new or an unusual power conferred upon the Registrar. He has a similar power under section 98a of the principal Act with regard to motor driving instructors' licences.

The new section 74b appearing in this clause provides that a person, while driving or operating a tow-truck on a road within the area, shall at all times carry with him the certificate referred to in subsection (3) of section 74a of this Bill, and upon being requested by a member of the Police Force to produce this certificate he shall forthwith comply with that request. Upon failure so to do he is liable to a penalty not exceeding \$100. The new section 74c is designed to discourage the driver of a tow-truck who is the holder of a certificate as is referred to in subsection (3) of section 74a from making illegal use of radio to intercept calls made to the Royal Automobile Association, the police, and St. John Ambulance when an accident has occurred. The effect of this section is that the Registrar may cancel the certificate where such person has been convicted of an offence under the Wireless Telegraphy Act of the Commonwealth. Illegal use of radio is a very common practice among towing service organizations and the police would like to see much more stringent provision in this regard but, since this is a field that is covered exclusively by Commonwealth legislation, this State cannot under the Constitution legislate in respect thereof.

New section 74d provides that where the driver's licence of any person to whom a certificate has been issued by the Registrar is cancelled or suspended under or by virtue of any Act or such person for any other reason ceases to hold a driver's licence, the certificate shall automatically be cancelled. Clause 7 amends section 83 of the principal Act and provides for an appeal against a refusal to issue a certificate or the cancellation of a certificate. Clause 8 inserts a new section 83a in the principal Act and provides that a driver of a tow-truck shall not, by means of

that tow-truck, lift, carry or tow any motor vehicle damaged in an accident within the area unless he is in possession of an authority in the prescribed form signed by the owner, driver, etc., of that motor vehicle and has handed a duplicate of that authority to the signatory thereof. A penalty of \$100 is provided.

Subsection (2) of this new section lays down the particulars that are to be included in an authority under this section. Subsection (3) enables a police officer present at the scene of an accident to direct that even though an authority has been signed by the owner or driver of the damaged vehicle it shall not be taken away if he is satisfied that all the particulars referred to in subsection (2) of this section have not been correctly entered on such authority or have been obtained in contravention of the provisions of this Act. Any person who disobeys the directions of a police officer in this regard is liable to a penalty of \$100. Subsection (4) provides for the situation where, owing to the absence or incapacity of the owner, driver or person in charge of the motor vehicle, authority to remove that vehicle cannot be obtained. The police officer present at the scene of the accident may himself sign the authority in lieu of the owner, driver or person in charge of the vehicle involved in an accident but only for the express purpose therein described. The police officer will then deliver the duplicate of such authority to the person on whose behalf he has signed it. No liability for the signing of such authority shall attach to the police officer concerned or the Police Department.

Subsection (5) provides that every driver of a tow-truck shall, when requested by a member of the Police Force, forthwith produce his authority referred to in subsection (1) of this section to the member of the Police Force who made the request. A penalty of \$50 is provided. New section 83b is designed to provide relief to owners of motor vehicles damaged in an accident who, often by means of unfair tactics, are persuaded by persons employed in the towing business to sign an authority to repair their damaged vehicle. In many cases owners, etc., are suffering from shock as a result of an accident and are in no fit state to be entering into legal relationships. They subsequently find that, as a result of the authority that they have given, they are often faced with exorbitant repair charges imposed by crash repairers. These repairers frequently work hand in glove with tow-truck operators who get a commission for the repair

work that they supply to repairers. This is one of the reasons that leads to intense competition among these operators at the scene of an accident to obtain towing work. Unless owners agree to pay these exorbitant charges they are unable to recover their vehicles from repairers.

This new section accordingly provides that any contract or authority for the repair of a damaged vehicle which is entered into before or within 24 hours after the carrying or towing of that vehicle commences between the owner, driver, etc., of that vehicle with the person who is to repair that vehicle shall be unenforceable against that owner unless:

- (a) the contract or authority is in writing and signed by both parties or their agents;
- (b) that a notice is clearly printed on the contract or authority with words to the effect that the contract or authority is unenforceable unless the owner notifies the repairer within a certain period of time that he confirms that contract or authority;
- (c) that the repairer or his agent has given a copy of the contract or authority to the owner, etc., at the time of signing thereof; and
- (d) that the owner, in not less than six hours nor more than seven days after the signing of the contract or authority, has notified the repairer that he confirms the contract or authority.

Subsection (2) provides that if the owner decides not to confirm the contract within seven days of the signing thereof the repairer shall forthwith, upon the request of the owner, deliver up the damaged vehicle and all articles of value therein to the owner upon payment of charges for the carrying, towing, and storage of that vehicle. The charges would be in accordance with a scale of charges laid down by the S.A. Automobile Chamber of Commerce Incorporated. Subsection (3) provides a penalty not exceeding \$100 if the repairer refuses or neglects to hand over the vehicle. New section 83c is the general penalty provision, and makes it an offence for a person to cause or induce by trick, pretence, etc., any person to sign an authority to remove any vehicle or to use any intimidation against the driver of a tow-truck to remove any vehicle in contravention of this Act or, not being a certificated driver, to solicit or to attempt to solicit an owner, etc., of a damaged vehicle to obtain an authority to lift, carry, or tow that vehicle by means of a tow-truck.

The penalty provisions in paragraphs (a) and (b) are designed to deter or prevent the type of harassing and unfair tactics commonly used by some tow-truck drivers and others in the towing industry to obtain permission from owners, etc., to tow, etc., a damaged vehicle away, and to compete with other tow-truck drivers at the scene of an accident to get work. Further, in paragraph (c) the intention is to deter or prevent the practice of persons in "scout" cars preceding tow-trucks to the scene of an accident and soliciting owners, etc., of damaged vehicles to get towing business. These reprehensible practices have, as I have earlier remarked, led to many complaints to the police and the R.A.A. about the activities of persons engaged in the towing industry.

New section 83d provides for some necessary exemptions from the operation of the proposed legislation with regard to certain persons and bodies when using a tow-truck or other vehicle in the course of certain towing operations. Clause 9 amends section 141 of the principal Act and enables the Registrar, for evidential purposes, to issue a certificate stating that a person on a specified day was not the holder of a certificate authorizing him to drive or operate a tow-truck. The proposals contained in this Bill have, I may add, been widely canvassed and discussed with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, the police, the Road Traffic Board, the R.A.A., and the S.A. Automobile Chamber of Commerce, and they have each made useful comments and suggestions many of which have been incorporated in this Bill. They all welcome, and are in general agreement with the proposals contained in the Bill. I commend it for the consideration of honourable members.

Mr. HALL secured the adjournment of the debate.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The Legislative Council intimated that the Hon. A. F. Kneebone had been discharged from attending the Joint House Committee, and that the Hon. D. H. L. Banfield had been appointed in his place.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had appointed the Hon. C. M. Hill to be a member of the Printing Committee in place of the late Hon. C. C. D. Octoman.

ROWLAND FLAT WAR MEMORIAL HALL INCORPORATED BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 27. Page 2627.)

Mr. FREEBAIRN (Light): I support the Bill, which makes several amendments to the existing legislation, all of which I generally support except in one important regard. Most members know the background of egg marketing legislation, and agree that it has been of great benefit to egg producers of this State. The parent Bill was introduced in 1941 at a time when Australia was faced with war-time difficulties: there was a shortage of eggs, and the traditional suppliers of eggs to the British market were unable to supply it because of the war. Australia was forced to fill the breach and to supply much of the United Kingdom's import egg requirements. To ensure some sort of orderly marketing in this State, the South Australian Egg Board was established at that time. Over the years, several modifications have been made to that legislation, perhaps the most important change taking place in 1963, when the then Minister of Agriculture introduced a Bill to ensure that the three egg-producing representatives on the board were not nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted to him, but elected directly by South Australian egg producers.

I recall that at the time Parliament's view was that a producer selling 3,000 doz. eggs a year through the board channels could reasonably be considered to be deriving a sufficient proportion of his income from poultry farming to justify his being termed a genuine producer. I must confess that I was appalled when the Electoral Department discovered that only about 650 egg producers in South Australia produced that quantity of eggs out of a total of over 4,000 producers. It was found that the franchise for the election of producer members was indeed limited. Last year the legislation was again amended to bring it into line with the Council of Egg Marketing Authorities plan, when the 3,000-doz. egg limit requirement was altered to a 250-bird requirement.

This Bill alters the definition of a producer; whereas the existing definition relates to a person who keeps 20 or more adult female fowls (for the purpose of this definition a fowl shall be regarded as an adult if it has commenced laying eggs), the Bill defines a producer as a person who keeps 20 or more hens. Although I do not know who was at fault, eggs at present laid by fowls under six months old

do not have to be marketed through the recognized channels. Although some members may think that a fowl so young may not produce many eggs, when we realize the growing tendency towards all-pullet poultry farms and the fact that even birds under six months can produce a reasonable quantity of eggs, the necessity of ensuring that the recognized marketing channels are observed will be appreciated.

I believe that no better way of assessing the egg production of birds under six months of age can be found than by my referring to the records of the poultry flock in which I am interested. These records show that birds of 21 weeks old lay at the rate of about 5 per cent daily production (these records have been compiled from our returns last year); at 22 weeks birds lay about 10 per cent; at 23 weeks, 30 per cent; at 24 weeks, 50 per cent; at 25 weeks, 66 per cent; and at six months of age, when the first levy payments are due under the C.E.M.A. plan, the birds are laying at the rate of 76 per cent. This, as a matter of interest, is the maximum achieved for the whole laying lives of the birds. Under the present intensive producing conditions in the industry, most birds have reached the full rate of lay well before they are six months old (the age at which the producer becomes liable for the levy payment). As I have stated, the eggs of those young birds do not have to be marketed through the recognized channels.

The second important clause relates to the election of the three producer members who, as I have previously said, are elected by the growers themselves. At present these members are due to retire on March 31, 1967 and, under the present legislation, would face re-election all at the same time. However, the Bill provides that only one will face re-election on March 31, 1967; another, a year later; and the third, a year later than that. I agree with this intention to provide a continuity of experienced personnel on the board. In the light of the difficult situation at present confronting the poultry industry, it could be inadvisable to have three new and inexperienced members on the board, for it would not help the industry at all.

At present producers whose flocks consist of 250 birds or more are entitled to vote for the election of producer members on the board, but under the Minister's Bill, I object to the qualification contained in clause 4 (b) that such producers must keep that number of birds for 24 levy days out of

26. Under the C.E.M.A. plan, levies are payable fortnightly. Never having been happy with that arrangement, I should prefer a monthly basis of payment. I stress the fact that the most distinctive feature of the poultry industry in South Australia is that it is an overwhelmingly part-time industry. The Commonwealth Department of Census and Statistics has informed me that in the last financial year, 1964-65 (ended on March 31), only 302 South Australians received more than half their gross incomes from the sale of eggs and poultry. Therefore, nothing I said could illustrate more clearly the part-time nature of this industry.

The Secretary of the Egg Board, in providing me with a break-down on this State's poultry flock statistics, has informed me that, on the last count on September 8 this year, 1,735 producers kept less than 75 hens; 1,045 producers kept between 76 and 150 hens; 966 kept between 151 and 500; 164 kept between 501 and 1,000; 94 kept between 1,001 and 2,000; 42 kept between 2,001 and 5,000 hens; eight kept between 5,000 and 10,000; and only five producers at that date kept 10,000 hens or more. It will be seen that only 313 producers in South Australia kept more than 500 birds, a total of 3,746 producers keeping the remainder. Again, these figures display the essentially part-time character of our poultry industry. Using the figures of the last producer election in which only 650 producers could vote for the election of producer members on the board, we find that those 650 producer members had the franchise for about 4,000 egg producers in South Australia.

This 650 may be whittled down to 400 producers if clause 4 goes through in its present form. We should not lose sight of the significance of the relatively small producers in the South Australian egg industry. We are doing a great dis-service to the industry if we limit the franchise for the election of producer members to the big poultry farmers; they are certainly important but they cannot reasonably claim to represent the whole industry. I should like the 250-bird limit reduced to 100: that would greatly increase the franchise and make the producer members of the board much more representative of the industry than they are at present. In saying that, I do not wish to cast any reflection on the members of the present board, for they are doing generally a good job in an industry that is suffering several great disabilities.

I referred earlier to the all-pullet farms and I note that the Minister appreciates the magnitude of the pullet farm section of the

industry in this State. Many poultry farmers nowadays, and certainly most in my district, buy their chickens about the first week of September. By February or March of the following year the birds are laying, and they are kept for only six or seven laying months before being sold. In those six months these farmers are supplying the consumer market when the price of eggs is high and they sell their birds when the price of eggs falls. Consequently, those producers (and I think they are in the majority in my district) would be making only about 13 levy payments in 26, and would thus be paying their levies for only half a year. Under this measure, which requires 24 levy payments, they would lose their franchise to elect producer members of the Egg Board and also they would not have an opportunity of standing as candidates in such an election.

Mr. Nankivell: Is it economic to keep the hens in production for only six months?

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Yes, provided those eggs are being produced when eggs are in short supply. This is the developing pattern of the poultry industry in my district, and I think it is a pattern that will become more wide-spread. The very big producers who have continuity of sales with organized retail selling outlets can produce eggs for the whole 12 months, but I stress that those big producers do not represent the industry as a whole.

Mr. Nankivell: You have idle capital for much of the year.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Yes, and I appreciate the interjection of the member for Albert. I should like to quote from *The Egg Situation* (the journal of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, December, 1965), which refers to the preceding 12 months:

The relatively large increase in production in the preceding year was reflected in a sharp rise in exports as only a portion of the gain in output was absorbed by the domestic market.

Now, Sir, since the C.E.M.A. scheme has operated there has been an overall gain in production and a big increase in exports, as follows:

Exports of shell eggs and exports of production in shell egg form increased by 7,300,000 dozen to 18,900,000 dozen. All the increase—and this is the key statement—in exports occurred in egg pulp and egg powder which in shell egg equivalent almost doubled to 15,600,000 dozen.

Note that the exports have almost doubled and I think this is the answer to the interjection of the member for Albert when he pointed out that producers who did not produce eggs in the flush season had idle capital. I

point out that, if those producers continued to produce eggs, the export surplus would be even greater than it is at present. When we consider that the home price is kept near the cost of production and the export price is about 10c, we realize how significant it would be if the part-time producers were to produce throughout the whole year. The defect of the C.E.M.A. plan is that an increase in egg production to date has occurred, and there has been a big increase in export sales. The C.E.M.A. plan, although it may work well in theory, is approaching saturation point because the present levy of 91c, which is almost the maximum levy payable (namely, 100c) is barely enough to cover present export losses.

I shall not speak on this theme any longer except to refer again to the restrictive qualifications for franchise and stress the disadvantage it will have in respect of part-time producers. I stress again that only a tiny minority of South Australian egg producers are at present able to exercise a franchise to elect producer members, and if this legislation is passed the number will, in my opinion, be reduced by a substantial amount.

Mr. Nankivell: What percentage of eggs does that group produce?

Mr. FREEBAIRN: I have to rely for my statistics on the Bureau of Statistics and the South Australian Egg Board, and they cannot give me this information. I understand that 313 producers keep 501 birds and upwards, and the other 3,746 producers keep the rest of the poultry in this State. I support the second reading and I will speak on clause 4 in Committee.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Alexandra): I offer no objection to the Bill. My colleague, the member for Light, has foreshadowed an amendment which I think will improve the Bill, and in Committee I will support that amendment. The industry now is completely subject to the operation of the C.E.M.A. plan, and I think it is pertinent to remind the House of some points about this plan. First, it is the implementation of a head tax on livestock owned by producers without reference to the productive capacity, and as such it is unique, to my knowledge. I think that is one of the reasons why the matter was debated at considerable length when the plan was first introduced. Secondly, the plan provides the maximum incentive for the big people to get bigger and the small people to get smaller.

Mr. Freebairn: And that is happening now.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Of course it is. The figures that have been produced

indicate that the number of small flocks is decreasing, but they do not indicate anything like the true picture, because hundreds and probably thousands of small flocks have been so reduced that they have never actually been levied under the C.E.M.A. plan. The third thing I point out is that this plan, unlike most primary-producer marketing schemes, was foisted on the producers without their having an opportunity to vote on it. It is customary when a plan is introduced for a vote to be taken, although this is not so where producers clearly want a plan. However, this was not a clear-cut case.

Fourthly, the scheme has achieved one of the aims of its architects in driving out of the industry so many small producers. Production is rising because the big people are increasing their production, and I should think it may rise still further through new people coming into the industry with a big investment. A year or more ago I said that there should be better organization of export marketing. At present we do not know enough about the export markets that we are filling. I know that we are clearing eggs to various export markets, but I do not know the prices at which we are doing that. If production continues to rise, it is inevitable that there will be an appeal for an increase in the levy or tax over the statutory limit that operates at present. With those few comments, I support the Bill.

Mrs. STEELE (Burnside): I rise to make a few comments and to ask one or two questions on behalf of the consumer. I am aware of the changes that have taken place in this industry and of the plans that have been made for the improvement and better control of it. Quite frankly, apart from that I do not know very much at all about the production side of the industry, and I think the average consumer (the one who eats the product about which we are speaking) is in the same position. The housewife, who deals with this commodity most of all because it is in daily use and consumption, does not know why it is that these days she never gets cheap eggs. In fact, I think that in the last 12 months, since the C.E.M.A. plan came into being, the price of eggs has not fluctuated much below 60c a dozen. In fact, at present the price is about 68c a dozen.

Mr. Quirke: They don't cost you anything in some country towns: people give them to you.

Mrs. STEELE: If a housewife wishes to buy one or two or three eggs she is paying 6c or 7c an egg, which to me seems an appalling price. There was a time, of course, years ago when in the flush season of the year the price dropped so low that the thrifty housewife could buy eggs cheaply and could preserve them against the time when the price rose considerably. However, we do not see this sort of thing these days. My delicatessen man told me this morning that in the last 12 months the price of eggs has rarely been below 58c or 59c a dozen, and this seems to me to be extraordinarily high.

Plenty of people still keep their own poultry, but this is restricted to a certain extent because they must comply with the by-laws of the council area in which they live. Frequently it costs those people a considerable sum to install the facilities for rearing poultry in their backyards, and in any event it is not a very popular thing because even when people comply with the by-laws the neighbours complain bitterly about it. I make this point because it seems to me that nobody has ever explained to the housewife (the person who is the real consumer) why it is that she has to pay these high prices for eggs and why it is also that never these days does she have the opportunity to buy cheap eggs; from the money that she budgets each week for housekeeping expenses the maximum amount is being extracted to subsidize the loss incurred on eggs exported overseas. I make these comments and perhaps when the Minister is replying he will answer some of the questions I have asked.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga): The speech by the honourable member for Burnside prompts me to say a word or two about this problem, which appears to me to be one that will get out of hand if the policy this Bill seeks to implement is carried out. I say that with a certain amount of knowledge of the industry. The encouragement of straight-out commercial growers to expand their business means finally, as the members for Light and Alexandra pointed out, increased production of eggs for export. The C.E.M.A. plan was fixed on the basis of subsidizing the export market by the levy it imposed on hens. There are two methods by which any additional surplus of export eggs can be subsidized. First, there can be an increase in the levy on hens or, secondly (and this is much simpler), the home market price can be stabilized at a higher level, and that is what the member for Burnside complained about. Those are the two sources

from which the uneconomic price received from the export surplus of eggs can be subsidized. It appears that the present policy of the board is to encourage the straight-out commercial grower in his business. After all, this grower's costs are fairly stable and he has no other irons in the fire. All his eggs are in the one basket, so to speak.

Mr. Freebairn: He has his own outlets.

Mr. SHANNON: But his surplus has to go overseas. The full-time egg producer has no other source of income. Of course, he must be able to earn a living and I do not object to his right to do that. However, I am afraid that he will be able to get a margin over and above the cost of production by increasing the local market price of eggs. What the member for Burnside said is true: the price of eggs does not fluctuate with the spring production. Marked decreases in the price of eggs are not seen, nor are steep increases seen in the lean period. The price has been patterned out at a level that is satisfactory to producers but not to the consumer.

The board appears to be concentrating its energies on the full-time producer rather than on the part-time producer, which will obviously mean that the cost of production and the marketing possibilities will have to be examined carefully by the board. There will either be an increase on the levy of a hen (which I do not think will happen) or, what is more likely, an increase in the home price. It could be said that part-time producers are inefficient and do not know what are their costs. However, another factor regarding the economics of small producers is that they can undertake egg production in the normal course of their activities on a mixed farm. They are not involved in additional labour and receive an extra source of income without an increase in costs. They may have to work slightly longer hours but country people are accustomed to doing that; they are not worried so long as they receive an extra return for the extra labour.

These people can produce eggs at a cost that would at least meet their expenses. The bigger a straight-out commercial grower gets the more important become the factors to which I have referred. For full-time growers capital investment is a big item and they have no opportunity to subsidize their income from sidelines. It seems that the economics of egg production will mean static prices and we will be eating dear eggs for ever and ever. The more small producers that are eliminated the more certain we can be that we will be looking

at dear eggs at breakfast. When I was first married I used to keep a few hens in the back yard. As I kept them clean I do not think they caused any nuisance to my neighbours. I used table scraps to augment their diet; I enjoyed the eggs they produced; and I occasionally enjoyed one of them for dinner when it had become too old to produce eggs. That helped my budget and it can help the budgets of young families. However, this practice is a thing of the past. When people kept a few hens to help their budget, the eggs produced meant a little extra pocket money for the wives to spend. With this money wives could purchase groceries and so on, which was a jolly good thing for all concerned.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: No tax was paid.

Mr. SHANNON: I know that the C.E.M.A. plan hates that.

The Hon. G. A. Bywaters: The Commonwealth Government hates it.

Mr. SHANNON: The C.E.M.A. plan is not designed to encourage that type of egg production: on the contrary, it is designed to discourage it, as its policy indicates. I believe small producers wishing to keep a few fowls should be encouraged. This is a valuable way in which people can fill in their spare time. The Bill will mean that small producers have no voice in the egg industry. As the member for Alexandra said, they have had no voice as yet. The fewer the growers the more certain we can be that the growers there are will organize the marketing of eggs (especially on the local market) to suit their businesses. The matter will be in their hands in such a way that no concern will be shown for small producers. They will not be given a say and, in fact, they will not be there to have a say because they will have been squeezed out of the industry. I am not happy about the Bill and I hope that amendments will be passed at the appropriate time.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I do not know much about the poultry industry. However, the C.E.M.A. plan has had a limiting effect on the number of hens in my district. This legislation (if one can say something nice about it) has smartened up the efficiency of the poultry industry. In the past it was common to see many fowls running around on farms with little attention paid to collecting the eggs. We saw the old brown fowl disappear for several weeks and arrive back with chickens. Consequently the degeneration took place and the industry became inefficient, but the C.E.M.A. plan has smartened up productivity.

My colleague, the member for Light, gave an extensive appraisal of the Bill and mentioned the provision regulating the retirement of producers. This legislation will ensure that there will be an experienced producer on the board at all times. I am in accord with this because, if all members retired at the one time, too many inexperienced members would have a say in the running of the board.

The Bill provides for a reduction in the franchise in respect of those producers who may be eligible to vote, and I agree with the member for Light on this aspect. I shall be interested to hear what the Minister has to say about that from the administrative point of view, when he replies. The member for Burnside has pointed out the difficulties of the housewife with the high price of a commodity that is part and parcel of our everyday life. This is, of course, why this type of legislation is introduced. I do not know how we will solve that problem. On the figures given by the member for Light, I believe we must be heading towards saturation point, whatever that is, but this is something only the future will tell. I have no concrete suggestion to put before the House, but I will support the amendment that has been foreshadowed.

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS (Minister of Agriculture): I thank members for their comments on the Bill. Some homework has apparently been done on it. The member for Light has mentioned the matter of the relative numbers of producers and the number of birds they keep, and he has foreshadowed the amendments that are now on file. People with over 250 birds are eligible to vote, whereas the honourable member kept referring to the number of producers who keep over 500 birds.

Mr. Freebairn: That is because the statistical record—

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: True enough.

Mr. Freebairn: I cannot get the precise figures.

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: The most relevant number is 250. At this stage I have not the actual number of producers who are eligible, but the honourable member said about 600 voted at the last election. He considers that, if this legislation is passed in its present form, this number could be reduced to 400; but I do not think that is so. I feel very few part-time producers reduce their flock. Most of the producers are farmers—wheat and wool producers or men engaged in some other form of agriculture keeping a few

fowls as a sideline. Because of this they keep them all the year. I know that people in my district do this, and I know of none in my district who would cull out to the extent that he would only have half the number of levy days on which he would keep this number of birds. I think that, if they keep 250 birds or more, they have them for most of the year. The member for Alexandra referred to the C.E.M.A. plan as being a hen tax on productive capacity, and said that it was unique, but I point out—

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: It was not productive capacity at all.

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: My mistake—not on productive capacity and it was somewhat unique. This levy, however, has to a great extent produced efficiency in the industry. I have a farmer in my district who had a number of birds; he would never know how many he had, and most of them used to go up the creek alongside his place and roost in some lucerne bushes he had, and occasionally bring down a number of chicks. Since the C.E.M.A. plan was introduced he has kept a recognized number of birds with some degree of efficiency, so I believe he is far better off. This gentleman, who did not sell interstate but to the Egg Board, complained bitterly about this legislation, but he agrees now that the legislation had tidied up one side of his industry he had not thought of before.

I therefore maintain that the C.E.M.A. plan has brought about greater efficiency. We have heard both the member for Alexandra and the member for Onkaparinga refer to the small people being forced out of the industry to the advantage of the larger producers. I think that this is somewhat confusing, however, because most of the so-called “small producers” are keeping fowls as a minor side of their income. Many of them are large wheat and wool producers or carrying on some other form of agriculture and, because of this, they keep poultry purely as a sideline. As the member for Onkaparinga said, this is a way the housewife can get some pin money, and when the C.E.M.A. plan was being introduced this was one of the main complaints that the producer had escaped taxation before but that this would now cut into his returns. However, that could not be an excuse for not having the C.E.M.A. plan. Surely we must encourage everyone to pay his just due in taxation. What one person does not pay someone else must pay. I do not think that this is an argument that can be used in this instance.

Most of the larger producers are people who have come from another industry and have had an ambition to be on their own. These people have entered an industry into which they can get with a reasonable amount of capital. Because of this they are keeping 2,000 or 3,000 birds and are making it a full-time livelihood. These people are efficient and produce a high-quality egg which is not always produced by people who run poultry as a sideline. The member for Onkaparinga said that this was not in the best interests of the consumer. That surprised me, because not so many years ago the dairying industry was in a similar position. Many farmers kept one or two cows as part of their livelihood, but now dairy farming has become a specialty, which has benefited the consumer. The dairy farmer now produces a much better product, the industry is controlled and, because of the efficiency, the consumer benefits. This is so with egg production: the full-time egg producer is providing a much better article for the consumer.

Since the C.E.M.A. plan was introduced, the export position has improved. Previously, the South Australian Egg Board and the New South Wales Egg Board both exported, cutting each other's throats on oversea markets. This position has been overcome with the advent of C.E.M.A. with a resulting benefit in export prices. The member for Burnside logically and understandably takes an interest in the consumer, but we all do that. Most of us are consumers, and naturally think of the price structure and its effect on us. The honourable member said that a fluctuating price no longer existed, with a low price in the spring. In recent years I have not found this so even before the introduction of C.E.M.A., which has had a steady effect on price ranges throughout the year.

Today, the wholesale price of a 2oz. egg is 56c a dozen, whereas a few months ago it was 59c, but with the retailer's margin added (8c in excess of 50c and 6c under 50c) the retail price is 64c. The price of eggs today is reasonable compared with the price when the basic wage was about \$6 a week. In those days eggs could be purchased at a low price during part of the year, although one was never sure of the quality of the egg but today, with an Egg Board stamp on the egg, one can be confident of its contents. I buy eggs through the proper channels and I am happy with the price I pay compared with the price a few years ago. The member for Onkaparinga spoke about export losses,

and said that they would be reflected in home consumption. We have an Egg Board that has the confidence of all honourable members, and few complaints have been made against it.

It has three producer members with a good knowledge of the industry; one member represents grading floors and agents; and one represents retailers. All members are fully conscious of the need not to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. If the home consumption price were raised, eggs would be priced out of the market for consumers, and the producer would be the loser. This would either boost the cost of the levy or reduce the price, as there would be greater export with reduced home sales. Obviously, a constant home market must be maintained and members of the Egg Board are conscious of this.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Election of producer members."

Mr. FREEBAIRN: I move:

In paragraph (b) to strike out "twenty-four" and insert "thirteen".

Only one-fifth or one-sixth of the egg producers in this State are entitled to vote for producer representatives on the board. I am informed by the Electoral Department that about 650 producers were able to exercise a franchise for the last election of producer members, but if this clause as it is at present were passed that figure could be whittled down to about 400. Again, I stress the part-time character of the poultry industry, which applies throughout the State. Although I do not wish to reflect on the producer members on the board, each of them, I believe, has 10,000 birds or more and, as there are only five South Australian producers with such large flocks, the board may well become sympathetic only towards the large producer, an aspect of the present restrictive franchise that I deplore. My amendment would ensure that producers would have to produce eggs for six months of the year, keeping 250 birds for the whole period, to be entitled to vote for the producer member.

In making a special plea in respect of the plight of poultry farmers in 1964, the present Minister of Agriculture, when in Opposition, indicated that he was indeed aware of the unfavourable situation. From what he said then he obviously appreciated the fact that many poultry farmers sold birds in October and filled their houses with young birds. I wish to ensure that more poultry

farmers will be entitled to vote for producer members on the board than have been entitled to in the past.

Mr. SHANNON: Even the large producers have a policy of annually replacing the whole of their flocks with young chickens. I have a son who, having married an English girl and settled in Suffolk, England, has taken up poultry farming as a livelihood, and owns about 10,000 birds. With a policy of selling all his birds every year when they finish laying and replacing them with chickens, I doubt whether he would qualify to vote for the election of a producer member of the board under this set-up. Most of the eggs produced come from flocks of 500 or fewer birds. If eggs are produced on smallish blocks it is only fair for that section of the industry to have a direct representative on the board so that part-time poultry keepers have a voice in the industry's affairs. It seems certain that in the future only the big producer will be able to obtain a seat on the board, and there is a danger here to the community. The levy is obviously a straightout payment into the fund to subsidize the oversea market. The big producer is aware of that and he is also aware that there is a local market that helps support his uneconomic oversea market. Even today, with the present price of eggs, the average housewife has reduced her purchases, and that reduces our local market. We are in a cleft stick. By increasing our price we are reducing home consumption and increasing our exports, and this unhappy position should be carefully watched. If representation on the board were allocated to specific sections of the industry according to volume of production, I would not have so many fears. I support the amendment.

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS (Minister of Agriculture): Concerning the situation outlined by the member for Light, I am prepared to concede a little. He mentioned a speech I made here some time ago in which I said that some poultry farmers do cull. I believe, however, that this applies mostly to the full-time producer—not to the type of person whom the honourable member calls a part-time producer and who has about 500 fowls. I am prepared to go a little more than half way towards the honourable member and make it 18 levy days, but not 24, and I think this will overcome the honourable member's objections. I am prepared to go a little further: I believe that, although only 650 voted last time, there will be more this time because the C.E.M.A. plan has resulted in more people supplying eggs for

South Australia (many did not qualify at the last election because they sent eggs to other States). I shall try to ascertain whether there will be people affected in this regard and whether we should consider reducing it even further during the next session. At this stage, I ask the Committee to accept 18 rather than 24 (instead of the 13 proposed by the member for Light).

I know that the member for Onkaparinga was absent when I replied on the second reading, but I did say something on his comments about increased local prices. Regarding the remarks of the member for Burnside we should compare present prices with those operating when the basic wage was \$6 or less. Eggs may be purchased more economically today than in those days, and I believe that the Egg Board has this question very much in mind and that it would be careful to avoid pricing itself out of the home market. I am sure the board realizes that the home market is the best market. I have already pointed out that the dairying industry today is a specialized industry, that it is efficient because specialized equipment is used, and that the Milk Board has kept the dairyman on an economic basis. No-one can complain about the price of milk here compared with the price in other States. So, if we have an efficient industry the result must be a lower price for that commodity to the consumer.

Mr. FREEBAIRN: I am most distressed that the Minister should have introduced a Bill providing for a certain franchise for producer members of a marketing board without knowing just how narrow the franchise was. I do not know how he was able to arrive at the figure of 24, and I wonder whether it is purely an arbitrary figure he snatched out of the air. Also, I should like to know how he arrived at the figure of 18 in his suggested compromise.

I am unhappy that the Minister cannot give a positive indication of the numbers of producers who will be entitled to vote at an election of producer members of the board, if he expects the Bill as it stands, or even as he suggests it could be amended, to be passed. Will he move that progress be reported so that he can obtain the figures and enable the Committee to know on what it is voting? If he is not prepared to move in that way, I will insist on my amendment. Under the Bill, one large producer in South Australia, who lives in the Mid-North and keeps his birds only six months each year, will be denied a vote and denied the opportunity to stand for election as a producer member of the board. He stood as a candidate on the last occasion. However,

if the Bill is passed as it stands (or even if the Minister's amendment is carried), this man may be denied the right to stand as a candidate for the board. He is not alone in this: he represents a large section of the poultry-farming industry in South Australia that will be denied franchise if the Bill is passed in its present form.

The Hon. G. A. BYWATERS: The Bill is not designed to deprive people with legitimate qualifications of their franchise. In view of the honourable member's comments, and as I did not know before today that he intended to move amendments, I ask that progress be reported.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVE: NAPPERBY.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's resolution.

MONEY-LENDERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

HARBORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 27. Page 2619.)

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Flinders): I thank the Minister for arranging the Notice Paper so that I could speak on this Bill today, as circumstances will prevent my being here next Tuesday. As the Bill was left in my charge, I wanted to indicate my attitude to it before the House adjourned today. The Bill has a simple objective but its simplicity belies its import, because it is a fundamental matter concerning the operations of the Harbors Board. The Bill abolishes the Harbors Board as such and creates a department solely responsible to the Minister, who will not have the services of the board available to him.

I oppose the Bill because I believe it is based on unjustified argument. For many years the board has operated in South Australia to the entire satisfaction of the people, of the Government, and of those people who have done business with it. I can see no just reason for, or any advantage to be gained from, changing the structure of the administration of the activity in this way. Of course, I am aware

that it is the policy of the present Government to take this and similar action wherever it can. However, I disagree with that policy and, therefore, I disagree with the Bill. The Minister's explanation stated simply that the Harbors Board had wide powers, powers which he suggested were so wide that they should not be entrusted to a board. In the second paragraph of this explanation he made detailed reference to the powers of the board and I assume, from that detailed reference, that he believes these important functions should be not in the hands of the board but directly under the control of a Minister who sits in this House.

Mr. Shannon: Somebody has to have them.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Exactly, but I join issue with the Minister on the definition of the powers that he has attributed to the board. In his explanation, he said:

The Harbors Board, which consists of three Harbors Commissioners appointed by the Governor, was set up many years ago and it was considered desirable that it should possess a high degree of authority. It has very wide powers. It may make agreements, fix charges, purchase and dispose of land and plan and fix its own work programme. It has the exclusive control and management of all harbours in the State, lighthouses, etc., and all necessary ancillary powers. It licenses and controls pilots and pilotage. It controls the removal of wrecks and obstructions and generally controls harbours and ferries within the State.

Let us consider these powers to see whether they are absolute, as I consider that in almost every case they are restricted. For example, the fixation of charges is dealt with in sections 126 and 127 of the Act in which charges are to be made by regulations made by the Governor on the recommendation of the board. The board does not have an absolute power: it may recommend to the Minister that certain charges should be fixed, but it is the prerogative of the Minister in Cabinet and finally of Executive Council to fix the charges. The board's recommendations may be accepted or rejected. Dealing with the purchase and disposal of land, section 76 of the Act provides:

Notwithstanding any Act or law to the contrary, no lease or licence of or permission to occupy or use, any portion of any sea beach or foreshore, or any land overflowed by the waters of the sea, within the limits of the jurisdiction of the board, which beach, foreshore, or land is not private property, shall be granted without the consent in writing of the board first obtained.

This gives the Harbors Board an absolute authority only in regard to the land that lies between low water mark and high water mark.

This is a proper proviso, because the board should have jurisdiction over this area. However, sections 77 to 81 of the Act do not substantiate the claim made by the Minister that the board has wide powers, as each contains the words "approval of the Minister". In section 83 a proviso makes the board subject to the Supply and Tender Board. Obviously, the Minister is aware of the limitation of the powers of the board, but the inference from his second reading explanation is that the board's powers are absolute, whereas that is not so. It is proper that the board as a marine authority shall be an expert on some matters, but the South Australian Harbors Board may deal only with matters lying within its jurisdiction. At present, the Commonwealth Government has taken over much responsibility for lighthouses and other matters around the coastline. In his second reading explanation the Minister said:

Although some of the operations of the board are subject to Government approval, it is its own master in many respects and for the most part the Minister can act only on the board's recommendations.

That is tipping the scales the wrong way, as the contrary is correct. The board is subject to the Minister more than the Minister is subject to the board. For the most part the board can act only with the approval of the Minister. The Harbors Board, as we have known it, has been a valuable instrumentality in the development of this State. It cannot be held that the board has not been alive to its responsibilities for its potential for development within the State, and that it has not taken advantage of every opportunity to work for projects that will be advantageous to the State. The oil refinery at Port Stanvac was a project in which the Harbors Board was involved. Although the former Premier was engaged in the original negotiations, the board was very much concerned with the early discussions; it lent its advice and support to this project, with the result that the negotiations were successful, enabling an oil refinery to be established in South Australia. The development of the gypsum industry in this State has been supported and encouraged by the board; the installation at Thevenard to handle the vast reserves of gypsum in that area was largely the result of the board's efforts. I cite, too, the board's assistance to the company on Kangaroo Island in establishing a special loading berth for gypsum from that area.

The board actively supported and encouraged the development of the limestone industry around our gulfs; it was concerned with the

lime sand project at Coffin Bay, a project in which I was involved when conducting negotiations with the board and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited on those aspects that concerned the board. The Harbors Board has actively participated in the establishment of bulk handling facilities for grain in this State, a system that has grown phenomenally over the past 10 years. In no case has the bulk handling authority desired to establish an outpost in respect of which the board has not been prepared to co-operate. The board, again, was alive to the requirements and the possibility of establishing and modernizing steel-handling methods, resulting in the establishment of possibly one of the most modern steel-handling berths in any Australian port.

What I have illustrated belies the necessity to abolish the board and replace it with a Ministerially-controlled department "because of developments in the shipping industry". With great respect to the Minister, I suggest that the board knows far more about undertaking research into modern methods of loading or unloading ships than ever he could know. The board's Commissioners have attended conferences of international authorities on shipping and handling methods. A previous Commissioner (Mr. Meyer) returned from a visit to America only three or four years ago with a most valuable report on the very matters in respect of which the Minister has said the board should be abolished. However good the Minister may be (and there have been some good Ministers of Marine in this State; I must admit that still applies), with great respect to us all, we cannot ourselves be expert in these matters. I valued the advice, knowledge and experience of the board's Commissioners, who kept me informed on developments in the shipping industry and incidental matters.

I am sure that the administration of our ports and harbours will not be improved in any of the ways forecast in the Minister's explanation. The results that he expects to accrue from the abolition of the board will not, in fact, accrue. Taking the interests of the State as our primary concern in this matter, I believe that we shall be going backwards if we decide to accept the Government's recommendation to abolish the board. As far as I can see, only one minor change may be necessary: the regulation made under the Public Service Act many years ago that created the Chairman of the Harbors Board as the official head of the organization is obviously outdated and should be changed. I am sure

that if the Minister has not given effect to that change, he will do so.

In further illustrating the forward thinking of the board's Commissioners, I point out that they first considered the scheme for the upper reaches of the Port River. Surely, that is an imaginative scheme with great possibilities, and I am sorry that the Government has not seen fit to proceed with it. We must consider the vast disabilities confronting much of the metropolitan area's work force in having to travel such long distances to work each day, which would be ameliorated if this area were developed as a housing area, so that people might live only two or three miles from their employment instead of 10 or 12 miles as at present. Apart from that, the scheme would create out of waste land a most attractive and desirable suburb that would be hailed, I am sure, as being a notable advent in the planning and development of Adelaide.

Mr. Shannon: The Gold Coast would have to take second place.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I had that in mind just now.

Mr. Shannon: There'd be no sharks there, as there are on the Gold Coast.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The advantages would be enormous.

The Hon. C. D. Hutchens: Are you suggesting the Government has given the project away?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: No, if I thought that I would stand here until six o'clock and condemn it. The project deserves a higher priority than it is apparently receiving, however. Whereas there were about 80 ports in South Australia when the board was first established, we now have only six major outports, through which 80 or 90 per cent of our commerce moves. The board has kept abreast of these matters; I know of no criticism that could be justly levelled at the board for any shortcomings it had in this regard. Another valuable and imaginative project is the levelling of the sandhills along the foreshore, and the use of the foreshore as first-class industrial land.

I shall conclude by referring to the composition of harbours authorities around the Australian coastline. Almost every State Government, whatever its political colour, has over the past 20 or 30 years allowed the control of ports and harbours to remain in the hands of an authority similar to the South Australian

Harbors Board. I believe that this is also the pattern in almost every part of the world, and I found nothing to alter my belief during my recent overseas trip. In Queensland, there is a Department of Harbors and Marine located at Brisbane which controls some of the smaller ports and administers the Marine Act. However, all the main ports are controlled by separate authorities, each autonomous in its own sphere.

In New South Wales the Maritime Services Board is the sole harbour and marine authority. Again here, we have a board, not a department. In Victoria, the Department of Ports and Harbors plays only a minor role in the administration of Victorian ports: it controls only the small fishing ports and deals only with minor matters. The Marine Board controls marine matters, but the big Victorian harbours of Melbourne, Geelong and Portland are controlled by trusts. Each is a separate autonomous authority whose responsibilities extend as far as framing its own regulations, raising money, and arranging shipping.

In Western Australia a Harbor and Light Department controls marine matters, although the major Western Australian ports (Albany, Bunbury and Fremantle) are controlled by autonomous trusts. There is a ports administering authority in the Northern Territory whose responsibility is now being extended to control shipping in Papua and New Guinea. However, Darwin is the only major port in the Northern Territory and very little commerce passes through it. In Tasmania a State marine authority, recently set up, is representative of the various marine boards. Tasmanian ports are controlled by autonomous authorities also.

I noted that the great ports of the United Kingdom (London, Liverpool and Hull) all have separate authorities, and I believe that the same applies in the United States of America and in Canada. As far as I know, the major ports of Holland, West Germany and Japan all have separate instrumentalities. Why are we in South Australia deciding to be the odd man out in this matter? The only answer that I believe is forthcoming is that this is Government policy, and I do not believe that Government policy is well founded in this matter, nor do I believe that Government policy is sufficient justification for the abolition of the Harbors Board. I hope (although the hope be slender) that the Government will change its mind. In South Australia we have excellent examples of other instrumentalities

operating under similar conditions and without embarrassment to anybody, and they do a first-class job. I see no reason for changing the present set-up.

The Hon. C. D. Hutchens: We have some excellent departments, too.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Minister is correct, but those departments are possibly more restricted in their activities than is the Harbors Board. The Minister himself administers one or two of them and they are good departments: I am not in any way deprecating the work they do.

Mr. Ryan: Are you suggesting that they should be handed over to boards?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: No, but I can if the honourable member wishes me to.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: No reason has been given.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The only reason given is that it is Government policy, but that is not a sufficient reason for such a sweeping change of a structure that has proved itself completely able to operate in the interests of the State in a forward-looking way. This is a bad move that will take away from the administration and development of this State a force and an authority that has played a leading part in the development of South Australia over the last 40 years. I oppose the Bill.

Mr. RYAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

POTATO MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 27. Page 2627.)

Mr. McANANEY (Stirling): This is a simple Bill. I understand that a person who bought potatoes on the black market was prosecuted and that a loophole was found in the Act; therefore this amendment was introduced. If that is the reason, I will not oppose the Bill. However, the potato industry is an unhappy industry: it does not appear to have confidence in the board. We should take advantage of this opportunity to discuss the matter. Two years ago amendments were made to give the board more power and members understood that certain duties would be performed by the board, such as operating its own distribution centre and taking over the functions of an orderly marketing board.

Recently the boundaries of the various electoral districts were altered. Previously there had been two board members from the South-East, but this representation was reduced to one. The South-East was a large producer of potatoes but the potatoes are now sent to other States. I believe that is because many years ago a leading potato grower in South Australia was a member of the board but became so dissatisfied with the way it worked (it did not act as an orderly marketing board) that he left, and now sends most of his potatoes to other States. Recently two new districts were created in the hills area. The two members elected, in their policy speeches, strongly advocated that the board should become a functioning orderly marketing board instead of what it is. At that election, one sitting member was defeated.

Another representative from the Lower North believes that the functions of the board should be widened so that it will become a proper board. I understand a petition to have the board abolished has been lodged by more than 100 growers from a hills district. Apparently the instigators of the petition came from an area represented by a member of the board. I am informed that if a vote were taken now it would favour the continuance of the board. Although that might sound inconsistent with what I have said, potato growers believe in a proper orderly marketing scheme for their potatoes. However, they disagree with the present method of marketing. South Australian Potato Distribution Centre Limited is owned by the merchants and is the agent of the board. Potatoes going through it are not owned by the board.

However, that is not the position that applies to the Egg and Barley Boards. The potato growers want their board to be carried on similarly to the Egg and Barley Boards. Each year the report of the Egg Board is tabled in Parliament and it shows sales and other details. Egg producers work through the various merchants as their agents. The board buys and sells eggs; these sales are included in the accounts that are audited by the Auditor-General, who brings down a report. It has been argued that the Potato Board is predominantly grower-controlled. However, it has five grower members, two members from the merchants, one from the retailers, and one Government nominee as Chairman. This gives the growers a slight majority in voting. However, as the Minister of Agriculture pointed out two years

ago in this place, many difficulties confront the grower members of the board. The merchants are in the trade and know what is going on as do the retailer and the Chairman. However, the growers come from various parts of the State and never meet to discuss matters of policy; perhaps they could be blamed for this. As the Minister of Agriculture said, however, it is difficult for them to know just what is going on. Certain controls affecting local government have been debated.

The SPEAKER: Will the honourable member link up his remarks with the Bill?

Mr. McANANEY: I shall try to do so, Sir. The growers are dissatisfied because the Potato Board is a secret society from their point of view. Letters are not answered and figures are not placed before the growers' representatives. As far as I know, the accounts are not audited. The figures should be placed before the growers' representatives at meetings. On other boards, accounts are audited and the people know what is going on: if they ask questions they receive reasonable answers.

When the then Leader of the Opposition spoke two years ago on legislation affecting potato growers he said that he could see no reason for any other authority to sell the growers' potatoes. He said that the board was a growers' board and that growers should control the industry. About four pages of *Hansard* are devoted to what the member for Norwood said about the Potato Board. It was said that the board should have extra authority so that it would have the power to buy and sell potatoes and act as a true co-operative, selling the produce of the growers. Certain actions of the board are hard to understand. The board has been given much authority, and growers have to forward statistics of their acreages and of expected crops. This year a surplus was available to the board, which sent 4,000 tons to other States for sale at a low price, but at the same time growers were not allowed to sell second-grade potatoes here.

The SPEAKER: I do not wish to restrict the honourable member, but he will agree that this Bill is limited to two clauses only. He cannot open up the whole subject of potato marketing. His remarks are now more pertinent to his contingent notice of motion. I am not ruling the honourable member out of order, but I am asking him to co-operate by applying his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. McANANEY: This amendment deals with the buying and selling of potatoes and the function of the board, and I am dealing with the activities of the board. Growers oppose selling potatoes when there is a surplus, because nearly every year there is a shortage and potatoes have to be imported. Too little detail is given to growers by the board, and the growers lose faith in the board. When potatoes were imported from Victoria they were taken to a certain washer; the second-grade potatoes were taken out, inspected by a board member, and washed again. Although local second-grade potatoes were not allowed to be sold, this did not happen with the potatoes imported from Victoria.

Potato growers have told me that Parliament should not give this additional power to the board unless it can have an orderly marketing scheme. The board was given the power to buy and sell potatoes and to buy and lease land, and it did this. There should be a depot to which potatoes are delivered, but they go through the distribution centre. That centre draws the cheques, pays the growers (when it feels like it), and organizes the pool. Payments by the distribution centre are delayed and it would not require much finance for the board to administer its own orderly marketing scheme. Over the last two years I have attended many meetings of potato growers. At one, there were 100 growers and, although the price was \$200 a ton, they were still unhappy.

Mrs. Steele: What is the price a ton now?

Mr. McANANEY: Three or four months ago the price was low, which influenced restrictive acreages to be planted for the coming year. A fortnight ago the price of potatoes was increased by \$16 a ton: imported potatoes from Victoria were washed quickly and sold, and on the following Friday the price went down \$16 a ton. It is difficult to understand how this can be an orderly marketing scheme, as it is impossible to obtain full information about what is going on. The board has authorized the purchase of 1,000 tons of potatoes from Western Australia and 300 tons from Victoria to replace the potatoes exported recently to other States. It should not be necessary to use second-grade potatoes as cow feed when they are then replaced by potatoes from Victoria.

Mr. MILLHOUSE secured the adjournment of the debate.

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT
BILL (REGISTRATION).

The Legislative Council intimated that it did not insist on its amendments Nos. 3 and 4 but had made an alternative amendment in lieu thereof as indicated by the appended schedule.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.42 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, November 8, at 2 p.m.