HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, February 12, 1969

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: EDUCATION INQUIRY

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE (Minister of Education): I ask leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: I believe I should comment on statements attributed to the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers (Mr. W. A. White), speaking on behalf of his executive on aspects of the recently announced Committee of Inquiry into Education in South Australia, that were reported in this morning's *Advertiser*. The executive is reported to have said that "it was difficult to understand why the Government had not appointed a practising member of the teaching profession". Following the announcement of the setting up of the committee, Mr. White was reported to have said that "the South Australian Institute of Teachers welcomed the announcement of a Committee of Inquiry into Education in this State". The report continued:

The composition of the committee and its terms of reference were such that many important aspects of education, which had concerned the institute for some years, should come under searching review. The institute would be ready to submit evidence. Nothing but good could come from the inquiry on the important issues of more autonomy for the Education Department, teacher education, comprehensive secondary schools, and extensions of services for handicapped children.

As might well be expected, much careful thought was given to the composition of the committee. The issues of a representative committee as compared with an expert committee were carefully considered. Naturally, the possibility of having a parents' representative, a teachers' representative, a representative of the Education Department, a representative of independent schools, a representative of employers, a representative of trade unions and representation of other groups interested in education was reviewed. However, it was clear that if various interested groups were to be represented (and it is obvious that the Institute of Teachers has a vital interest in the inquiry) the committte would become cumbersome and unwieldy, and there was the danger that representation of particular interests could dominate thinking.

I, therefore, came to the conclusion, after giving full weight to all factors, that a committee with no direct interest in the matters included in the terms of reference would be best suited to the task, and, in fact, the committee does not represent any particular section of people. It has expertise in education and economics, together with wide community interests. All of the members are highly educated. Two are university professors, with Professor Karmel, of Flinders University, who is an educationist and economist of distinction, as chairman; two have been practising teachers; one is a businessman; and nearly all have families and, therefore, have a direct personal interest in education. I considered that by appointing some members of the committee from outside the State, the charge of insularity could not be levelled at the Government.

I am of the opinion that this committee is well balanced and particularly well qualified to carry out its duties, and I have no doubt that it will produce an excellent report that will have a profound bearing on education in South Australia for many years to come. Although the Teachers Institute and other organizations will not have direct representation on the committee, ample opportunity will be afforded all interested persons and organizations to present their views to it. I also refer to the institute executive's objection to my reported statement that the Government "wanted to make sure that the schools were producing the right kind of students to become technicians, technologists and engineers". Although I did say this, it was only part of a larger statement, part of which unfortunately was omitted from the report in the *Advertiser*. As a preface to the reported statement, I specifically stated that the Government wanted to make provision to ensure that our children became complete persons to do what they wanted to do as their particular contribution to society, whether it be in technology, medicine, teaching or commerce. My reported statement must be taken in this context, as otherwise it gives the narrow concept of education to which all would object. I particularly want this impression to be corrected, as a number of people have drawn attention to it.

QUESTIONS

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Last evening there passed through the Parliament the Electoral Districts (Redivision) Bill, for which assent could be expected within a day or so. Can the Premier say when we may expect the appointment of the electoral commission to be announced?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The short answer is "as soon as possible". However, I believe the arrangements are in the hands of the Attorney-General, who is urgently inquiring into the matter and making organizational arrangements.

FOOTBALL POOLS

Mr. LANGLEY: As other countries have conducted football pools successfully and other States are considering granting permission for their conduct, will the Premier ask the Chief Secretary whether the Government has before it any application for the operation of a football pool during the coming football season and, if it has, when a decision is likely to be made?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will ask my colleague what applications he has and I will bring down the necessary information.

FIAT MOTOR COMPANY

The Hon. B. H. TEUSNER: Can the Premier say whether any progress has been made in his negotiations with the Italian Fiat Motor Company regarding the establishment of a motor car factory in South Australia?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: A great deal of contact has been made with the company by my office and the Industrial Development Branch. These discussions originated when, while in the United Kingdom, I changed my itinerary when I heard of the interest of this company in establishing in Australia and I visited representatives of it in Turin. Since then the Australian manager of the company has visited South Australia several times, and a group of high executives from Italy has visited Australia, has been guided through comparable industrial activities in this State, and has been entertained by me during the visit. Subsequently, the company conducted investigations in New South Wales, and at present the matter rests with a technical investigation that is to be made by officers of the company who will visit Australia shortly. My department has done everything possible to encourage this company to establish here by pointing out the many advantages that South Australia offers, ranging from the presentation of up-to-date brochures on land availability and transport facilities to the physical requirements of the company, and to personal representation at the home of the company in Turin. The final decision will rest with the technical assessment to be made by officers of the company who will visit Australia shortly.

Mr. RICHES: Direct representations were made from Port Augusta to the representatives of the Fiat company in Australia pointing out the advantages of the establishment of a factory adjacent to the standard gauge railway line which would give railway communication with every capital city in Australia, whereas these advantages would not be available to the company if it established in the metropolitan area. Other advantages peculiar to Port Augusta were also pointed out to these representatives and the Fiat company said that it was interested in the representations that had been made and that its representatives would communicate with the interested parties at Port Augusta when they visited South Australia. Can the Premier say whether, in his discussions with the Fiat company, any suggestion was made (or a case put) to decentralize the company's activities further, and whether the company showed any interest in a site outside the metropolitan area?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: In talks with officers of my department or with me the company has not shown any interest in decentralizing further than the metropolitan area, and I use "metropolitan area" in its widest sense. The problem faced by South Australia in regard to this industry is that the company considers it is decentralizing by coming to South Australia, as the biggest market for its products is overwhelmingly in the Eastern States, particularly in New South Wales. Its organizational system is centered in New South Wales at present so that before coming to South Australia a decision has to be made to alter what could be called the centre of gravity of that company in Australia.

Mr. Riches: Would rail gauges have a bearing on this matter?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: When the technical officers of the company visit this State they will consider the transportation system extensively. The company has already asked for, and received from the Government and the Railways Department, a firm quote for freight of their vehicles to other States. This is a crucial matter in the company's thinking because it will need an advantage here that would at least offset the additional freight cost of most of the company's vehicles to other States. I assure the honourable member that all matters will be brought to the attention of these technical officers when they come here. As far as I know, investigations have been concentrated on the metropolitan area because of the peculiar requirements of this industry: for such an industry there are certain advantages in

being situated close to existing motor manufacturing plants. The company's representatives who have been here inspected the works of both Chrysler Australia Limited and General Motors-Holden's and were most impressed with the standard of work in this State. They see some advantages in being near other manufacturers, because skilled tradesmen are, to some degree, attracted to various plants, but there is also a disadvantage in this matter because of the competition between companies for the services of skilled tradesmen. However, as the honourable member has raised this aspect in respect of Port Augusta it will be placed before the technical officers of the company when they arrive.

BRIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr. HUDSON: Yesterday, one classroom at Brighton Primary School was without the necessary tables, desks, chairs and blackboard. I understand from parents who approached me and who are associated with the school committee that an additional room was required because of an increase in the numbers of children. I believe that the parents have been told by the headmaster that the order for the desks, chairs, and blackboard was placed some time last year at the required time, but these things have not been delivered to the school. As a result, yesterday a new teacher had to use temporary accommodation with insufficient desks and chairs. Will the Minister of Works inquire urgently into this matter and, if necessary, consult with the Minister of Education to ensure that the necessary equipment for this classroom is delivered to the school without further delay?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Yes.

LANGHORNE CREEK BASIN

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Premier a reply from the Minister of Mines to my recent question about the present activities of the Mines Department in the Langhorne Creek Basin and the possibility of this area being proclaimed under the Underground Waters Preservation Act?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Mines Department investigations have been temporarily suspended because of staff losses, and no further work is possible until late March. Several bores have been sunk, and pump testing to determine the aquifer potential is planned. Consideration is being given to the need to proclaim the area under the Underground Waters Preservation Act, and a preliminary report on the geology of the basin is being prepared.

SERVICE STATIONS

Mr. VIRGO: Recently, I asked a question of the Premier concerning the request of the Automobile Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of petrol station owners, for a full inquiry to be held into all aspects of petrol marketing. This morning's *Advertiser* reports a reply by the Chief Secretary to a question by Dr. Springett in the Legislative Council yesterday concerning this matter but, unfortunately, the Premier has not yet been able to obtain a reply for me. Can the Premier say whether the statement that the Chief Secretary had asked the Prices Commissioner to convene a conference of oil companies and the chamber to discuss problems within the oil industry is, in fact, a move by the Government to comply with the request that the Government conduct a full-scale inquiry into this matter?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Yes.

PORT CLINTON WATER SUPPLY

Mr. FERGUSON: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked on February 5 about erecting a water storage tank at Port Clinton?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Cabinet approval was given in January, 1968, for an expenditure of $30,000 to cover the estimated cost of laying 11,000ft. of 4in. main and the construction of a 100,000-gallon R.C. tank. These improvements are designed to provide balancing storage for the township and also to augment the supply to adjacent farmlands. The current position is that trial holes have been sunk, the tank site has been approved and the land acquired, design drawings and a specification are nearing completion and it is expected that excavation and the placement of lean concrete will be carried out this financial year. Construction of the tank and the laying of the approved 4in. main are programmed to be completed prior to next summer.

DEEP SEA PORT

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: Some time ago an inter-departmental committee was set up to study the need for a deep sea port on Eyre Peninsula. As I understand that the report of that committee has now been submitted to the Minister of Marine, will he say what was the nature of the report and whether the Government has decided to act on it?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: An inter-departmental committee report, presented to

me as Minister of Marine, related to a suggested deep sea port on the eastern part of Eyre Peninsula, the three sites originally suggested being at Port Lincoln, Arno Bay and Port Neill. Having investigated these sites, the committee recommended that deep sea facilities should be constructed at Port Lincoln. Since then, reports have been made on the matter to me by interested parties in that part of the State, and when in Port Lincoln about three weeks ago I met a deputation of Port Neill residents who advocated that their port should be preferred to the others. Before going any further at present, and before accepting the committee's recommendations, I believe there should be much more investigation. When in Port Lincoln, I inspected from the water the site recommended by the committee but, in fairness to all concerned (that is, residents of Port Lincoln, Arno Bay, Port Neill or, indeed, the whole of Eyre Peninsula) I believe there must be much more exploration and investigation, and this is what I intend to recommend.

BUSH FIRES

Mr. GILES: One of the most effective ways of preventing bush fires is to remove all flammable material from roadsides. This can be achieved by landholders and council employees, etc., spraying the roadsides with a desiccant or eradicant spray during spring time. One of the most successful sprays that have been used in the Adelaide Hills is vorox, which is extremely expensive. Will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture to consider giving councils and landholders concerned financial assistance so that they can use this chemical to prevent the growth of grass, etc., on roadsides and so that bush fires can be prevented in this area?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will take up this matter with the Minister of Agriculture and I suggest that any interested council should contact the Minister. As the honourable member knows, the Government spends large sums on bush fire prevention, on publicity, and on other work by the Bushfire Research Committee, and it helps local government in various ways in relation to the Bush Fires Act. The member's suggestion would result in an additional subsidy, and we would have to have considerable discussion on matters of policy, where the money is to be obtained, etc. I also suggest that he, together with the council concerned, approach the Minister for this kind of subsidy.

NUCLEAR POWER

Mr. CASEY: I was interested in recent remarks of the Minister of Works regarding a nuclear power station in South Australia. He is no doubt aware that this proposal was fully exploited by Sir Thomas Playford in no uncertain fashion, particularly at election time. Has the Minister discussed the feasibility of building a nuclear power station in South Australia with officers of the Electricity Trust who are abreast of all aspects of this source of power? About three years ago, I had discussions with the trust's officers on my return from the United States of America, where I had seen the Oyster Bay nuclear power station under construction. I brought back with me the economic analysis of that power station that had been made when construction was contemplated. When I presented the report to the trust's officers they already knew about it. When the Minister discusses this matter with the Minister for National Development (Mr. Fairbairn), as he has indicated he will do, he should be able to put to him the size, cost and location of the plant he is contemplating and, possibly, the feasibility of building a desalination plant in conjunction with the station. Has the Minister any of this information at his fingertips? If he has, I should be pleased if he would give it.

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I told the House the other day that I had received a communication from the Minister for National Development in which he said he wished to visit South Australia to discuss this matter, as he is discussing it with Ministers in other States, and I said that this Government wanted to promote the case for South Australia and suggested that the first nuclear power station should be built here. I know that other States have other views and that they have publicly stated them, but that is our view. As the honourable member realizes, a nuclear power station must be of a certain minimum size to be efficient. Further, such a plant requires an enormous quantity of water (running into millions of gallons a day). The size of the station is important: a small station of, say, 200 megawatts has doubtful efficiency and economy compared with some of our existing thermal installations, whereas a station of, say, 500 megawatts would be an economic proposition. Costs of this type of station vary considerably, but the total cost could be about $100,000,000. Therefore, the type of project we are talking about must be viewed in that light. As the honourable member will appreciate, if such a decision were made many years would pass

before the project went through the planning, developmental and installation stages and could be put into commission. Although I admit that I am speaking a little hypothetically, for the purpose of a comparison of size, the Torrens Island power station, which was mooted in 1960-61, is, in 1970-71, expected to have an installed output of about 480 megawatts, which will increase in succeeding years by a further 400 megawatts. I emphasize that at present what we are talking about is completely speculative. The Commonwealth Minister will come to South Australia to discuss the matter. As a Government we welcome his visit, and we are preparing for submission to him a case to prove that South Australia should have the first station of this type in Australia.

GERANIUM SCHOOL

Mr. NANKIVELL: Yesterday the Minister of Education gave me a most comprehensive report on the situation at the Geranium Area School. This morning the chairman of the school committee telephoned me pointing out that the reason for the school's not being opened on time, and for its possibly not being opened next week, is twofold. The principal factor is that four pumps have been put out of action by being submerged following 5in. of rain, an unusual rainfall in that area. The whole of the paved area of the school being submerged is a matter that cannot be taken lightly. Until the four pumps are working again the drainage system of the school cannot operate and, until it operates, the headmaster, into whose hands the Minister has placed the decision when the school will open, cannot possibly rule in favour of its opening. Secondly, the 4in. or 5in. of water, which covered the paved area, also covered the septic tank and underground rainwater tank, with the resultant possibility of contamination of drinking water. Although this matter must be checked out, it is less important at this time than the other matter to which I have referred. As these pumps are vital to the re-opening of the school, will the Minister of Works, instead of trying to have something done about the present pumps, seriously consider having sent to the school four new pumps of the same horsepower as the old ones and having them installed and working so that the school can re-open on Monday?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I shall be happy to take up the matter at once to see if the problem to which the honourable member referred can be overcome.

KULPARA SCHOOL RESIDENCE

Mr. HUGHES: A few days ago the Minister of Education told the press that Cabinet had approved placing a group order with the Housing Trust for the construction of 25 houses for Education Department teachers, the total cost being $325,000. The Minister further stated that nine of these residences were required as replacements for residences considered uneconomic to maintain. Can the Minister say whether the proposed new teacher's residence at Kulpara is listed among the nine replacements?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: As I cannot remember positively whether it is listed, I will look at the list and let the honourable member have a reply tomorrow.

TRUCK DRIVERS' LICENCES

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: The secretary of the Whyalla Branch of the Good Neighbour Council has complained that migrants in Whyalla are having great difficulty in obtaining the A class driving licence that is necessary for a person to have to drive a 3-ton truck and trucks above that capacity. On contacting the police officer at headquarters who deals with these matters, I have been informed that this is a State-wide problem and that many applicants for this class of licence to drive these trucks have no experience whatever in driving them. There are two classes of driver who aspire to the A class licence: the inexperienced and the experienced. Many inexperienced drivers find it impossible to obtain a 3-ton truck to get the necessary experience, and those who have experience find it impossible to obtain a truck to take the test for the licence. Will the Premier have the matter examined and consider two propositions: first, that the Government circularize or publicly ask employers to try to co-operate, in the type of situation to which I have referred, with employees and prospective employees in obtaining licences; and secondly, that the Police Department have a 3-ton truck that could be taken around to enable experienced drivers to pass their tests?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: For some time I have been aware of the difficulty of persons who legitimately wish to become qualified but who have great difficulty in obtaining the use of a vehicle not only for testing but for training, as the honourable member points out. This has presented great difficulty to many people. However, I noticed in a driving instruction school in the city several months ago a truck obviously above the 3-ton class.

Although I do not remember much about it, I made a mental note at the time I saw it, because I was aware of the problem now raised by the honourable member. Therefore, from my personal observation, I think that in the city there is probably at least one truck available for people who wish to have this type of instruction. I will bring the matter to the notice of the Chief Secretary to see whether there is some way in which the matter can be facilitated, perhaps through the Police Department, as the honourable member suggests. However, I doubt that the State could undertake too much of the financial responsibility for providing the material means for this action to be taken, although possibly some organizational means, as suggested by the honourable member, may be available to help deal with the problem. If those means are available, I hope my colleague can help.

MOSQUITOES

Mr. RYAN: The member for Semaphore and I have often raised with the Minister of Marine and others the mosquito menace that exists in the upper reaches of the Port River and near Osborne, the mosquitoes having caused great inconvenience to people living in these areas over the years. Many conferences have taken place between the Health Department, the Marine and Harbors Department and local government authorities in the hope of solving the problem. I am told by many people that this is probably the worst year they have ever known for mosquitoes and, in view of the recent weather conditions, the problem seems likely to be even worse later this summer. I draw to the attention of the Minister of Works the following article that appeared in the *Advertiser* of December 14, 1968:

Making insects sterile has become an effective way of birth control, but in this case it is usually the male which is sterilized. Another success, this time against the mosquito, has been recorded in a Burmese village.

There are 20 different crossing types of the local species. From there it has been possible to produce males which can mate with all female strains, but produce no fertile eggs. Last year a small isolated village in Burma was chosen for a trial.

Each day for several weeks thousands of the sterile males were released. The result was a sharp drop in the number of mosquitoes. Within 12 weeks there were none.

Will the Premier ask the Minister of Health whether the method explained in the report could be used effectively to eliminate mosquitoes from breeding areas in the Port River and the upper Port reaches?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I am well aware of the problem in the honourable member's district, as well as in adjoining districts, including the District of Gouger.

Mr. Clark: In my district, too.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Yes, the District of Gawler also has the problem. Because of the concern of all members, particularly those representing the districts to which I have referred, about the mosquito menace I will bring the matter to my colleague's attention in the hope that the suggestion made in the report (which I think many of us have read) may help solve this problem.

TOURISM

Mr. McKEE: Has the Minister of Immigration and Tourism a reply to the question I asked last week of the Minister of Works, in his colleague's absence, about tourist promotion?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The South Australian Government Tourist Bureau has branch offices in prominent locations in Melbourne and Sydney. The function of these offices is to encourage, advise and assist people to visit South Australia. A staff of five persons is employed in each of the two branch offices.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

Mr. HURST: Has the Minister of Labour and Industry a reply to my recent question about industrial accidents in South Australia?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I have an extensive report for the honourable member and, because of its significance, I will read all of it. The total amount of workmen's compensation (including compensation for wages lost, hospital and medical expenses, and lump sum settlements) paid on all industrial accidents for the last five financial years has been as follows:

Year	Amount paid
1963-64	$3,800,000
1964-65	$4,300,000
1965-66	$4,700,000
1966-67	$5,400,000
1967-68	$5,800,000

It is generally accepted in industrial accident prevention textbooks by persons working in this area that the hidden or indirect cost to employers of accidents is between three and four times the compensation and medical payments. This means that the total cost of industrial accidents to South Australia could be $25,000,000 to $30,000,000 each year. It can be seen from these figures that any reduction in industrial accidents can have great benefits for this State. Whilst the amount paid

on industrial accidents has continued to rise over the years because costs have risen and the benefits payable under the Workmen's Compensation Act have been increased, the number of accidents has been reduced. Detailed statistics of industrial accidents in South Australia are available only in respect of accidents which involve absences of one week or more. In the last three years, since 1964-65, the number of accidents involving lost time from work of one week or more has been reduced from 11,809 to 9,562, which is a reduction of almost 20 per cent. In those three years the number of accidents in manufacturing industries has been reduced by 25 per cent. This is particularly pleasing as the industrial safety education and promotion activities of the Department of Labour and Industry and the National Safety Council of Australia, South Australian Division, have been directed mainly to the manufacturing industries.

In the year ended June 30, 1968, a reduction of 8 per cent in the number of accidents was achieved compared with the previous year. In that year the number of accidents caused by machinery fell by 24 per cent, indicating that legislation requiring machinery to be effectively safeguarded, and educational programmes which have been carried out, have resulted in a quite dramatic reduction. More accidents are still caused during the course of handling goods and materials and when people fall, slip or stumble at work than because of any other factor, but last year there were reductions of between 5 and 6 per cent in accidents caused by these factors. Another heartening feature is the fact that the number of fatal accidents in 1967-68 (12) was fewer than half the 25 fatalities recorded in 1962-63, when industrial accident statistics were first published.

One of the main problems faced in reducing industrial accidents any further is the difficulty of contacting smaller employers. Most of the large firms are safety-conscious and realize the benefits of implementing accident prevention programmes. Most of the delegates to the most recent Industrial Safety Convention, held in November last year, represented large firms. One of the points that was raised again and again in discussions at this convention was the necessity of promoting safety to smaller employers. It is with this in mind that the industrial safety promotion activities of the Department of Labour and Industry are being planned for this year. A survey of safety committees in factories is being undertaken, and emphasis will also be placed on encouraging safety in the building industry. This is in addition to the safety training courses for supervisors and trade union officials, which will be conducted regularly if sufficient enrolments are received, the publishing of industrial safety literature, the screening of industrial safety films, and other normal activities.

Also I have asked the Factory and Industrial Welfare Board, which last November was appointed under the Industrial Code, for its advice and recommendations concerning the establishment in Adelaide of a permanent industrial safety exhibition. The Government had already announced its willingness to provide accommodation in Hindmarsh Building, in Grenfell Street, where such an exhibition can be established if industry and trade unions are willing to assist in donating or lending suitable items of both new safety equipment and damaged equipment which has been involved in accidents and which has saved men from serious injury. The members of the board comprise nominees of the Chamber of Manufactures, Employers Federation, the United Trades and Labor Council, and the Government. The board has already had its first meeting and will again meet towards the end of February, when it is expected that it will formulate proposals for the establishment of this industrial safety exhibition, which has already created a great deal of interest and which it is hoped will be another means of safety education of employers, supervisors and employees.

GODFREY'S PROPRIETARY LIMITED

Mr. JENNINGS: Some time ago I took up with the Attorney-General the problem of a lady in my district who had gone into Godfrey's Proprietary Limited to purchase goods worth, I think, about $50 and came out after purchasing goods worth $1,500. I do not know whether the lady was inveigled into making this purchase. However, as a consequence of the question I asked, on the following day a representative of the company telephoned me, when I explained that I was not making any allegations against the company but merely asking for information. Since then the lady concerned has telephoned me several times to ask what action the Attorney-General was taking and, when I have asked the Attorney privately on several occasions, he has said that he still has not had a report from, I think, the Crown Solicitor's Department. I understand

that the lady concerned and Godfrey's Proprietary Limited now have their own private solicitors acting in the matter. As the Attorney has told me that he has a reply to my question, will he give that reply to the extent that he is able to do so?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: As a result of inquiries that the honourable member has been making of me regularly in the last few weeks I have brought down the file. Since he asked the question early in December the police have made inquiries at Godfrey's Proprietary Limited and other places concerning the matter, and it seems from the file that both the company and the lady who consulted the honourable member have retained solicitors and are at arm's length civilly, on the matter. Therefore, I would rather not express any views on the legal rights as between the company and the lady. The question of criminal law is still being considered. By coincidence, only yesterday a Mr. Norton from the company telephoned me on behalf of the manager to discuss that aspect of the matter, but I suggested to him that it would be more appropriate if the company's solicitor spoke to me about it and it has been arranged for the solicitor concerned to get in touch with me so that I may discuss the matter with him. I assure the honourable member that the matter has not been overlooked and that inquiries have been continuing since he asked his first question. That is the stage that has been reached in this matter, but at present it is certainly a matter civilly between the two parties. There may or may not be any criminal element involved, but I am not certain about that yet.

GAUGE STANDARDIZATION

Mr. VENNING: As a recent agreement was signed with relation to the gauge standardization of the line from Cockburn to Broken Hill, can the Premier say whether any further progress has been made to standardize the northern lines, and what progress has been made by the independent study group that is considering the standardization of the line between Adelaide and Port Pirie?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Obviously, from his question the honourable member is aware that the Commonwealth Government asked the State Government whether it would agree to a study by independent consultants of the proposed link between Adelaide and the standard gauge line from Port Pirie to Broken Hill. We have told the Commonwealth Government that we would agree to this study, the results of which I hope will lead in due course to an agreement to standardize this line, or whatever programme is outlined in the agreement. I will obtain an up-to-date report on this study for the honourable member.

PRICE CONTROL

Mr. LAWN: Has the Treasurer a reply to my recent question about retail prices?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The Prices Commissioner reports:

The apparent contradiction of a falling wholesale price index and a rising consumer price index is essentially due to the fact that there is little real basis of comparison between the two for the following reasons:

(1) Various commodities included in the consumer price index are not included in the wholesale price index, and *vice versa.*

(2) Commodities in the wholesale index are priced in their primary or basic form and in the consumer index in their finished product form at retail prices.

(3) Whereas services are included in the consumer index, the wholesale index relates only to basic materials and foodstuffs.

Two groups of basic materials included in the wholesale price index which recorded decreases are not included in the consumer price index, that is, chemicals; and oils, fats and waxes. There was no increase in the consumer price index for Adelaide for the quarter ended September 30, 1968. For the quarter to December 31, 1968, the increase was equivalent to 35c a week. This compares with the capital city average of 52½c for the six months to December 31, 1968.

I ask leave to have the following information inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

ADELAIDE INCREASE

	Increase (cents)	Reduction (cents)
Foodstuffs—		
Meat	—	27.5
Potatoes	15.0	—
Other	7.5	—
Clothing and Drapery	5.0	—
Housing	5.0	—
Housing supplies and equipment	2.5	—
Miscellaneous—		
Fares	10.0	—
Other items including beer, radio and television licences and motoring charges	17.5	—
	62.5	
Less reduction in meat	27.5	
Net increase	35.0	

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The report concludes:

Movements in meat and potato prices were largely seasonal whilst increases in other items would mainly reflect increased costs resulting from wage increases in the past year.

MURRAY BRIDGE ROAD BRIDGE

Mr. WARDLE: I believe that, because of the inability of the Highways Department to obtain suitable footings, the Public Works Committee has not been able to consider further the construction across the Murray River of the new road traffic bridge, which may be built downstream from the township of Murray Bridge. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether the Highways Department has any further information on the footings for submission to the committee?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I will find out and let the honourable member know.

GLENELG TREATMENT WORKS

Mr. BROOMHILL: Having noticed some building activity at the Glenelg Sewage Treatment Works, I refer to the Report of the Public Works Department for the year ended June 30, 1968, which states (at page 13):

The pipes for the experimental sludge outfall to the sea are ready for installation when conditions are favourable, and the pumping station and screening plant for this project have been completed.

Will the Minister of Works say just how far this work has progressed, and can he give an assurance that the pumping to the sea will not have any adverse effect on nearby beaches?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Some years ago a pipe was laid out to sea and the effect was carefully studied by my department, the Health Department and the Glenelg and West Torrens councils, which were the councils in the area concerned. No ill effects were noticed and, in fact, the effluent water discharged is in many ways suitable to be used, some being used on nearby lawns and golf links. About six months ago I recall going to the area almost at dawn on a winter's morning to see the new pipe being laid out to sea. This was a new pipe that extended over a distance considerably more than that of the original pipe. Up to the present, the pipe which is discharging effluent, has been working extremely satisfactorily. Speaking from memory, I believe the sludge works have been completed but I will certainly check this. The honourable member may have noticed additional activity outside the treatment works in connection with the sandhills. I recently authorized further beautification work to be undertaken. The member for Hindmarsh (Hon. C. D. Hutchens) will recall the work that has been done on the lawns around some of the sludge tanks and at the station itself; indeed, this has beautified the area so much that schoolchildren are sometimes taken through it on trips. I have now authorized the extension of this work and the levelling of the unsightly sandhills, as well as their grassing, and I know that the residents of the area will appreciate this. If I have missed any points, I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

RAILWAY PASSES

Mr. CLARK: Last week I sought information, through the Attorney-General, from the Minister of Roads and Transport regarding the possibility of refunds on season tickets which passengers had not been able to use because of the rail strike. As I have not been notified by the Attorney-General of a reply, I take it that he does not have one as yet. However, as further rail stoppages have aggravated the situation, will he try to hasten the reply to my question?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Yes.

HAMBIDGE RESERVE

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: As I have been approached on the matter by the Northern Naturalists Society based at Whyalla, will the Minister of Lands indicate, if he can, present Government policy on the Hambidge Fauna and Flora Reserve?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: This matter is, at the moment, being considered and I expect a decision shortly. I will discuss the matter with my colleague this week.

MATRICULATION CLASSES

Mr. NANKIVELL: Now that most of the schools have commenced the new scholastic year, can the Minister of Education give any figures relating to secondary enrolments and say whether they are up to the estimates of last year? In particular, can she give details regarding the Bordertown High School, which is commencing a Matriculation class this year?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: Although this might be regarded by members opposite as a "Dorothy Dixer", I am happy to collaborate with the honourable member by providing the information. I have had brought to my attention by the Acting Director-General of Education certain facts and what I believe is probably an interim report on the accuracy of the predictions about secondary enrolments, a

report which I imagine is provided to Ministers of Education at this time of the year, following the opening of schools. As the figures are of interest to all members of the House, I am happy to be able to give them, and they are largely as predicted. Enrolments at high schools have increased by 280, although, strangely enough, there is a decrease of 500 enrolments at technical high schools. However, there has been a pleasing increase of fifth-year enrolments in country high schools of 186, 92 of which were in the country. The Bordertown Matriculation class will start with 29 students which, I believe, is eight more than the number expected; the Heathfield Matriculation class has over 30; and the largest increase over estimate (144) relates to the Elizabeth High School.

RAILWAY LAND

Mr. McKEE: Has the Attorney-General a reply to the question I asked last week about the sale of the old Ellen Street (Port Pirie) railway station building?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: No.

TEENAGE DRINKING

Mr. McANANEY: My question refers to a statement by a magistrate about a fortnight ago with regard to 15-year-old persons being convicted as a result of drinking liquor. Evidence was produced that it was commonplace for such purchases to be made from hotel bottle departments. As the hotelkeeper has the protection of being able to ask young people to produce their driving licence or other proof of age, he can be satisfied that they are are of the necessary age to obtain liquor. Will the Attorney-General ascertain whether there have been prosecutions of hotelkeepers for supplying liquor unlawfully to under-age persons? If there have not been any such prosecutions, will he take up this matter with the Chief Secretary to see that action is taken against hotelkeepers who break the law in this respect?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I should be surprised if we find that action has not been taken; indeed, I believe it has been taken in appropriate cases. As this is a matter primarily for the Chief Secretary I shall discuss it with him and ask whether the necessary information can be supplied by the Police Department.

FIRE BAN NOTICES

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question on fire ban notices I asked him last week in the unfortunate absence of the Minister of Lands?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: The Minister of Agriculture reports:

The meteorological districts referred to by the honourable member, which are used as the basis for fire ban announcements, were originally defined in consultation with the Regional Director of the Bureau of Meteorology and are slightly different from the normal forecast district boundaries. Maps depicting these districts were printed at the direction of the previous Minister of Agriculture and were widely distributed. Included in the distribution were all police stations, but it is possible that many of the maps would by now have been damaged or destroyed. My colleague is grateful to the honourable member for bringing this matter to notice, and will make further inquiries regarding the availability of maps at all police stations, with a view to ensuring that they are available throughout the State. The Regional Director of the Bureau of Meteorology, who is acutely aware of the need to publicize this information, published and distributed about 25,000 leaflets at the Royal Show and elsewhere last year. Every practical means will be explored to inform the public on this matter.

INTEREST RATE

Mr. BURDON: Recently, I was approached by one of my constituents who was irate because he had been asked to act as a guarantor for a person who was seeking from a money-lender a loan of $400 for six months, for which $120 in interest was being charged. This represents a rate of interest of 60 per cent per annum. As there would be no risk to the money-lender because the guarantor would be responsible if the borrower defaulted, I concur in this person's indignation. Does the Attorney-General consider that this rate of interest is excessive and, if he does, what action will he take to eliminate this kind of exploitation?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: A more practical approach would be for the honourable member (if he wishes to do it) to give me the details in confidence and I will have the precise transaction investigated.

CHOWILLA DAM

Mr. HUDSON: Yesterday, I had three questions on notice to the Minister of Works, and in reply to two of those questions I was given full information, which I was pleased to receive. My third question, however, was not answered effectively. The technical committee's report is concerned to work out what will give the greatest yield to New South Wales and Victoria, assuming a given entitlement to South Australia. At no stage in the technical committee's report is there any evidence of investigations of what combinations of storages will maximize the yield of the whole system or the yield to South Australia. The only

indication we have of this matter occurs in relation to table 3, to which I referred the Minister and which shows that the total yield of the system increases with an increasing entitlement to South Australia. It explains that this occurs largely because of the more effective use of tributary inflow. The question I asked the Minister on notice was whether studies had been carried out by the technical committee to discover which proposals would maximize the average annual supply to South Australia. The reply was that the purpose of the studies was to maximize the yield of the Murray River resources by the construction of additional storages. As I have indicated in my comments on the committee's report, however, that is not an accurate reflection and, in view of that, will the Minister say whether any studies took place which were concerned to discover what system of storages would maximize the minimum yield of the Murray River in any year to South Australia? In addition, the Minister said yesterday that studies had been undertaken for a range of flow at Mildura from 300 cusecs to 900 cusecs, whereas the figures are given in the report for only 600 cusecs and 900 cusecs. Will the Minister ascertain what are the relative yields to New South Wales and Victoria on varying South Australia's entitlement if the minimum flow at Mildura is 300 cusecs?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I will try to obtain the additional information the honourable member seeks.

PETERBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr. CASEY: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my question of February 5 about the toilet block at the Peterborough Primary School?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: Advice has been received from the Public Buildings Department that tenders closed for this work on December 10, 1968. The work forms part of a group contract let on January 31. At this stage the department is not able to state the expected commencement date, but as soon as a date is available advice will be forwarded.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

Mr. VIRGO: On October 24, 1968, I asked the Treasurer a question on what I (and I think he also) thought was the inadequacy of workmen's compensation payments. In reply, he said:

I will have the whole matter examined promptly and let the honourable member know what will take place as a result of that examination.

On December 11, 1968, the Treasurer provided me with the following interim reply:

I said that I have had a preliminary look at this matter, but I have not come to any conclusion about it, and I will continue my examination so that I shall be able to discuss it with my colleagues soon.

Has the Treasurer discussed the matter with his colleagues and, if he has, does he intend to introduce an amending Bill this session so that people who are injured will not have to suffer any longer than necessary the inadequate payments currently provided under the Act?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I gave to the House and to the honourable member a schedule of the payments now current in the various States. At the time I commented that South Australia was not badly served in this respect, having regard to the rates applying in the other States. I then intended to examine the Workmen's Compensation Act with a view to having amending legislation drafted. This I have done to the extent that I have gathered together all the files that refer to the various amendments requested by all parties. Having read all the documents completely, I have caused to be prepared a summary of all the proposed amendments and requests that is now ready for Cabinet to examine to see just what amendments the Government intends to insert in an amending Bill. Although there has not been time to finalize the matter, I have informed myself on the amendments requested and I have caused a summary to be prepared. As soon as Cabinet can get a few minutes to have a look at this, it will examine it. However, I do not think it possible that the legislation will be introduced this session. As I regard the matter as important, I hope that we can bring in a Bill early next session.

GRANGE RAILWAY LINE

Mr. BROOMHILL: I have received a copy of a petition, which was made by people represented by the Sea Range Estate Progress Association at Grange and which has been forwarded through the council to the Minister of Local Government. Many people have signed the petition, which draws to the Minister's attention certain facts about the intended closure of the Grange railway line. In particular, the petition points out that the line is presently so well patronized that another carriage has been added to the train.

during the last few months. The petition also points out (and I think this is significant) that many new houses may be built in the area served by the line, particularly at a new estate that could well be opened soon in this area. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether these two important points were considered by the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study before it recommended closing the line?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Yes.

WHEAT

Mr. CASEY: Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked last week about money being made available to South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited for the construction of further wheat storages in this State?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Minister of Agriculture states:

Since assuming office as Minister of Agriculture, I have been in constant touch with South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited in regard to storages in this State. As the honourable member mentioned, the unforeseen increase of more than 50 per cent in this year's wheat yield is causing much worry to the company. However, the co-operative has, to my knowledge, had no problem in obtaining finance through its normal banking channels. The State Government is a guarantor for the company. The Bulk Handling Board will meet in Adelaide on Monday next to discuss, amongst other things, the matter of increased silo capacity for next season's harvest. I will receive a report as soon as it is available and will study any recommendations made by it prior to furnishing a report to Cabinet.

Mr. CASEY: Has the Minister of Lands received from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked yesterday about recent statements attributed to the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry regarding the possibility of farmers receiving a lower price for wheat next year and also the possibility of a decrease in the acreages of wheat sown throughout Australia?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: My colleague states:

I have not seen the report attributed to Mr. Anthony to which the honourable member refers. If he could supply me with a copy I should be grateful. I have, during the year, had three meetings with Mr. Anthony on wheat industry problems, and this matter will be discussed again at the meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council to be held in Hobart in March. The limitation of acreages is a matter for the wheat industry itself, and I have had no official approach from the industry along these lines up to the present time.

PORT AUGUSTA HOSTEL

Mr. RICHES: Can the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs tell the House (if not today, tomorrow) the probable site of, and accommodation and services to be provided by, a hostel (and, I believe, associated cottages) proposed to be built for women at Port Augusta?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I prefer not to make a statement on the matter today, but I will endeavour to do so tomorrow.

LIZARDS

The Hon. R. R. LOVEDAY: I am informed by the Northern Naturalists Society at Whyalla that the traffic in lizards which have been killed and prepared for sale in gift shops is continuing apace. Apparently nothing is being done so far to check this trade that is having such a deleterious effect on our fauna, which must inevitably be decimated, if not completely extinguished, if the traffic is not stopped. In view of earlier questions on this matter last year by the member for Stuart (Mr. Riches), can the Minister of Lands say whether the Government is taking any action or whether it is intended to protect our fauna (not only the sleepy lizard referred to in the earlier questions but also all lizards and other reptiles, possibly excepting the venomous ones) in order to preserve it? Also, will the Government consider placing reptiles under the protection of the Fauna Conservation Act?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: As the honourable member knows, the administration of the Fauna Conservation Act is under the control of the Minister of Agriculture, to whom I referred questions asked about lizards last year. The Minister, too, was horrified by the practice. Since then the Minister and I have not seen much of each other.

Mr. Jennings: I think you're both fortunate.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Almost inevitably, if in reply to a question one hesitates, seeking a word, the member for Enfield volunteers a word which, again almost inevitably, is unsuitable. I think it is agreed by all members of this House and by the Minister of Agriculture that the practice to which the honourable member has referred should be stopped. I will raise the matter again urgently with the Minister and let the honourable member know the result. In addition, I will add to the suggestion the matter of further additions to the list of protected species.

ANZAC HIGHWAY

Mr. HUDSON: I have been approached about work being done on Anzac Highway, near the Glenelg sea-front, in connection with the construction of the sewerage main. Because of this work, access to shops on both sides has had to be blocked off and only one lane of traffic is provided to serve traffic using both sides of the road. Yesterday, one of the workmen told a shopkeeper in the area that the men expected to be working there for two months. Naturally enough, the shopkeeper then contacted me, explaining that his turnover had already been affected by this closing off of access. Although he realizes that the work must be carried out, he is concerned about the possibility that it will take a long time to complete. Will the Minister of Works ascertain whether the work can be expedited? Further, if the project will take several weeks to complete, will the department examine methods of providing access to the shops, by way of car parking facilities or other suitable means, for those who engage in casual trade at these shops, to minimize the effect on shopkeepers' turnover?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I shall be pleased to examine the matter, which deals with an important aspect of this type of construction. All major public works on our roads must inevitably inconvenience motorists, residents or shopkeepers. In this particular case, a shopkeeper's livelihood is affected, and I will certainly find out whether some method of overcoming the disability can be arrived at.

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Mr. VIRGO: I have received from the Corporation of Mitcham a letter in which the council conveys the unanimous resolution of a full council meeting at which all members were present. I understand that the Attorney-General has received a similar letter, and for the information of the House I should like to read about five lines of the letter: I shall not read all that I am holding in my hand.

The SPEAKER: As long as it is not too long.

Mr. VIRGO: The portion of the letter that I wish to read is as follows:

That the honourable Minister of Local Government be informed that the council views the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study proposal for a Hills Freeway and a Foothills Expressway with grave disquiet and, after long consideration of all factors, it is convinced that such proposals would not be in the best interests of or necessary or essential to the development of metropolitan Adelaide or the State of South Australia.

Attached to the letter is a statement setting out the reason for the council's conclusion, and also alternatives to the proposal. Because of the request with which the letter concludes, namely, "Your earnest and sympathetic consideration of the council's views will be appreciated by ratepayers and the council of the area", will the Attorney-General, as the member for the District of Mitcham (which, I understand, is predominantly, if not entirely, within the boundaries of the Mitcham Council) be expressing the views of the council when this matter is (as apparently will be the case) determined by Cabinet?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Obviously this is one of the matters that will be taken into account when I express my opinion.

SCHOOLGROUNDS

Mr. HUDSON: On February 5 (a week ago) I asked the Minister of Works whether he would obtain for me a report on the latest position regarding the sowing of the ovals at the Glengowrie High School, which work had been delayed for a couple of months, and whether he would inform me about the letting of a contract for developing the oval at Brighton Boys Technical High School, this work also having been delayed. As yet I have had no replies to this question, and the matter is rather disturbing. The Glengowrie High School has two ovals and two hockey fields, and the necessary areas were ploughed before Christmas preparatory to the sowing of grass. Work ceased during the Christmas period, the grass was not sown, and weeds grew apace until towards the end of January, when the whole areas were prepared again. During the weekend we have had some welcome rain and there are signs that the weeds may start to grow apace again. Certainly, weeds are growing furiously in the areas between the ovals and the playing fields.

This is the third year in which the Brighton Boys Technical High School has been open and the school comes within the policy of providing school ovals at Government cost. The grounds are somewhat of a dust bowl and dust is causing considerable nuisance to residents of Wattle Avenue. Further, disability arises because the school is not providing proper playing facilities for the boys. Will the Minister examine these matters, treating them as urgent?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I deeply regret that the honourable member has had to wait a week for a reply. However, I assure

him that on the morning following the day on which he asked the question action was initiated to correct the position to which he has referred. I regret that the reply has not been made available for me to give to the honourable member, and I will see whether I can get this reply for him tomorrow.

Mr. BROOMHILL: The Minister may recall that last year I may have incorrectly asked questions of the Minister of Education about the Education Department's policy concerning school ovals, but at that time the Minister of Education told me that, although there has not been much activity in accordance with the Government's policy of establishing playing fields and ovals a list of priorities was being drafted. I am particularly interested in the Kidman Park Primary School, because the Parents and Friends Association had asked me to assist in hastening the start of work at this school. However, yesterday at the new West Beach Primary School much criticism was expressed by parents of children who started at that school, because as a result of the weekend rains, the children became covered with clay and grass from the schoolgrounds. Although I appreciate that other schools may have been waiting longer than West Beach Primary School, it seems that it would help school committees if they had some idea of the department's plans concerning playing fields. Will the Minister of Works arrange for a list of priorities to be provided to members so that they may inform members of school committees what can be expected?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I will consider that suggestion.

STAMP DUTIES

Mr. CORCORAN: Before the Christmas adjournment I asked the Treasurer a question about donations made for conservation purposes in this State and drew attention to a report in the *Advertiser* of a statement made by Mr. Noel Lothian, Chairman of the National Parks Commission. As the Treasurer said that he would consider the matter, has he anything to report?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I must confess that the matter has slipped my mind and, apparently, my department has not noted the question or followed it up. If the honourable member will accept my apologies, I will examine the matter again.

ROAD REPAIRS

Mr. HUDSON: During the last four or five weeks gangs from the Highways Department have resurfaced Anzac Highway from the Keswick Bridge, and this morning the work had almost reached Marion Road. The work involves resurfacing three traffic lanes on either side of the median strip, and probably represents one of the most remarkable and rapid pieces of work done under the auspices of a Government department by Government workers in South Australia. So that the Minister of Roads and Transport may be aware that I am prepared to be fair on these matters, I should like the Attorney-General to inform his colleague of my views about the important contribution that workers in that department have made in doing this work so rapidly. Will the Minister pass on my comments to Highways Department officials?

The SPEAKER: I do not know whether I can allow the question.

FORBES SCHOOL

Mr. VIRGO: The Minister of Education will recall that last year I asked several questions about land adjacent to the Forbes Primary School that was available for sale. Without my going into further detail, the final decision was that the department did not intend to buy the land. However, the Minister indicated that the department intended to replace the existing timber frame school with solid construction buildings in, I think, the not too distant future. The school committee was informed of painting that was to be done and minor renovation work, estimated to cost $27,000. Will the Minister ascertain the actual cost of this job and the estimated cost of building the new school, and whether a sum to cover the cost of the new school will be placed on the Loan Estimates for the coming financial year?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: Yes.

RUTHVEN MANSIONS

Mr. BROOMHILL: The Minister of Works may recall that last year I drew to his attention the dilapidated state of Ruthven Mansions in Pulteney Street, and that he supplied me with an interim report providing for small changes to be made. As he undertook to provide me with details of what the Government intended to do about this building, has he anything further to report?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I recall the question asked by the honourable member and I undertook to do one thing (to remove the small tree from the gutter) and this has been done. I assure the honourable member that I have had serious discussions about this building with both the Minister of Health (because

of the presence in the building of the chest clinic) and the Director of the Public Buildings Department, but although at this stage I cannot say what has been decided, I think I shall be able to provide details to the honourable member within three or four weeks.

NORTHERN ROADS

Mr. CASEY: My question is to the Attorney-General representing the Minister of Roads and Transport but, in his absence, I ask the Minister of Works to kindly accept the question on behalf of his colleague. It concerns the transfer of the Highways Department gang from Oodlawirra to Morchard, which I understand will be the base for the road-sealing programme of the road between Orroroo and Wilmington. Before the present Government came into office I was informed that the first priority of road sealing in the North was the road between Wilmington and Quorn. I know that the member for Stuart is anxious that this road should be sealed, because he and I are concerned about the tourist industry in that area and that roads used by tourists are sealed. No doubt the Minister of Immigration and Tourism is also interested. Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether there has been a change of priority in the programme of the Highways Department, causing the Wilmington-Quorn road to be overlooked and replaced by the Wilmington-Orroroo road?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I will refer the question to my colleague.

POSTAL DELIVERIES

Mr. VIRGO: On November 12 last, at the request of several business people in my district, I directed the attention of the Premier to the unsatisfactory state of affairs that had resulted from the cessation of two mail deliveries a day. The Premier reminded me that this was a Commonwealth matter, and on December 13 he was good enough to forward me a copy of a letter he had received from the Postmaster-General setting out much information but in no way suggesting that the request to reinstate the two deliveries a day would be considered. In view of the adverse effect this is having on some business people, will the Premier be good enough to take up this matter again with the Postmaster-General, requesting that the two deliveries a day be reinstated?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I again remind the honourable member that this is a Commonwealth matter. However, following my policy of giving service wherever possible, I took up the matter and obtained a reply for the honourable member. The honourable member is no doubt extremely well represented in the Commonwealth House of Representatives and can therefore direct his inquiries accordingly. Being involved in politics, he should know where to make those inquiries. It is not that I refuse to consider the honourable gentleman's further question, but I cannot prolong indefinitely the consideration in this House of a matter that really relates to the Commonwealth. For that reason, I suggest that the honourable member use some of his time (no doubt he has much time now that he is on the Opposition benches) and make his own inquiry. I am sure that he would thereby receive just as good an answer as he would receive from me.

RECEIPTS DUTY

Mr. HUDSON: I have received approaches in relation to the imposition of receipts duty on withdrawals by a partner from a partnership. The Treasurer last week made an announcement on this matter, which was reported in the press, to the effect that consideration was being given to exempting such withdrawals from duty, or it may have been that such withdrawals were to be exempted from duty. I am referring to the turnover tax in the case where a partner makes withdrawals from a partnership, the withdrawal being equivalent to the receipt of a salary by someone employed by a company. The objection being taken to this is that the duty is equivalent to a tax on the salary of the partner, because this is effectively his salary. People involved in partnerships have been informed by the Commissioner that such withdrawals are currently dutiable, and I understand that the Treasurer (although my recollection may be incorrect) made an announcement either that amendments would be introduced or that amendments were being considered to provide for the exemption of such withdrawals from the receipts duty. Can the Treasurer clarify this matter for me, and if no amendment is contemplated at this stage will he consider introducing such an amendment?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The matter was widely discussed, and I was involved in a number of interviews on this matter. I think the text of the announcement which I made and which was published in the press was that there seemed to be a legal doubt whether the Commissioner was legally entitled to recover stamp duty tax on such drawings by a partner

from the partnership account, and the Government had therefore decided to follow the practice and precedent in Victoria and New South Wales in this matter and would not require duty to be paid on such drawings.

Mr. Hudson: Is any amendment contemplated?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: Not at this stage, because there seems to be a legal doubt about imposing the tax. The Government's opinion therefore is that the imposition of the tax could be successfully contested in law. We have therefore decided as a matter of policy not to ask the Commissioner to collect the tax.

BUS SERVICE SUBSIDY

Mr. VIRGO: A few weeks ago I asked the Minister of Roads and Transport, through the Attorney-General, whether a subsidy was being paid to bus proprietors who were being granted permission to run buses in lieu of a cancelled rail passenger service. The Minister subsequently assured me that no such subsidy was being paid. However, I am now informed that it is currently being stated in Angaston that the bus proprietor who is running the service there in lieu of the train service is receiving an annual subsidy of $24,000 a year. Will the Attorney-General take up this matter with his colleague to see whether my information is correct?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Yes.

PACKAGES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Lands) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Packages Act, 1967. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As members will recall, the purpose of the Packages Act, 1967, which was passed by this House was, among other things, to ensure that there would be a uniform method of marking packages. Prior to its introduction of that measure, the Government of the day engaged in consultations with industry to ensure that the proposed methods of marking would be satisfactory to it. The Minister at that time was the present Deputy Leader of the Opposition. To ensure that the requirements of the packaging industry in this State were satisfied it was necessary for some slight departure to be made from the generally agreed approach, but, following consultations with the other States, this State's attitude in this matter has been vindicated to the extent that all States have agreed to an approach which is substantially that originally advocated by this State. However, this entails some slight modification of the South Australian approach in the interest of this uniformity and it is felt desirable that the provisions relating to marking be redrafted accordingly. In addition, an opportunity has been taken to bring our system approvals of approved brands generally into line with that of the other States and to make such other modifications to the 1967 Act as experience has shown is necessary.

Clause 1 is quite formal, and clause 2 makes an addition to the definition of "pack" to bring in the derivatives of that word. Clause 3 slightly expands the exemption provision of the Act to enable the Minister to exempt articles from portion of the Act. Experience has suggested that this amendment would be desirable. Clause 4 recasts section 9 of the Act to provide that the Warden of Standards, and not the Minister, will approve brands so as to bring this provision into line with the procedure in other States. Clause 5 is consequential on the amendment made by clause 4.

Clause 6 re-enacts section 15, which deals with the marking of packs, and while in principle it departs little from the provisions that were provided in the original Act it does represent the agreed uniform formula. The significant feature of this amendment, which was the result of much discussion at the formal conference in New Guinea, is that the packer must be able to identify the physical location of the place where the article was packed. Clauses 7 and 8 make amendments in the interests of clarity to sections 22 and 23 of the Act where there are references to prescribed articles.

Clause 9 inserts in the Act two new sections (sections 23a and 23b) which cover the question of packing at standard conditions. These provisions were recommended by a recent interstate conference on weights and measures and were not in issue when the Act was originally enacted. Their purpose is to provide for the method of determining the weight of wool, yarns and other similar articles where, because of the effect which temperature and humidity have on the actual weight of the commodity, it must be accepted that the weight marked on such articles should be correct only at certain prescribed standard conditions of temperature and humidity.

Clause 10 inserts a new section 33a in the principal Act which relates to selling of articles marked "net weight at standard conditions". In keeping with what has been the firm policy of this State it is not proposed to expose the seller to prosecution for an offence that he could not possibly have the means of detecting. Accordingly, the only obligation on the seller is to ensure that any article so marked is an article which under the Act is permitted to be marked "net weight at standard conditions".

Clause 11 provides for two evidentiary provisions: one relating to the fact that a name and address on a package will be evidence that the article was packed in the State or territory indicated by the address; the other that where an article is found exposed for sale will be evidence that the article was packed for sale. There are two other consequential amendments made by this clause. Clause 12 gives a regulation-making power to set standard conditions in relation to any article which can be marked "net weight at standard conditions".

Throughout the negotiations on the question of uniform legislation the South Australian authorities had a steady policy and were at all times in touch with the Chamber of Manufactures to see that the provisions would be workable from the point of view of the large packaging industry in this State and that, at the same time, they would give the protection intended to be given under the Act, whereas, some other States did not follow this practice. They did not consult their own industries and, as a result, I think they made some moves on which they have since had to retract. The matter was decided at a conference only late last year, when the South Australian attitude was vindicated, and other States have now followed our system.

In the course of the conference one or two small improvements were made, which made it necessary to adjust the wording of our legislation. This is part of an undertaking I gave: to introduce a new Bill so that the Commonwealth could come into line on this matter. The somewhat difficult negotiations, which are well known to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, owe much of their success in South Australia to the Warden of Standards (Mr. Servin), who was, in effect, the leader in the Commonwealth through the whole of the negotiations, to the assistance of officers of the Lands Department, and from the Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman (Mr. Daugherty), who accompanied the Warden to the last conference.

Mr. CORCORAN (Millicent): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and I heartily endorse the Minister's final remarks. It must give a great sense of satisfaction to the Warden of Standards in this State to think that, after protracted negotiations in this matter, uniformity has been achieved throughout Australia. The Minister said that I had played a part in this matter and, therefore, I would hardly be opposed to the Bill's contents, because I realized at the final conference between the States and the Commonwealth that this legislation was necessary. It is a credit to South Australia that our position has been almost wholly maintained, and I think that the introduction of this uniform legislation throughout Australia will be an advantage because it will protect not only consumers but industry itself.

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

LOTTERY AND GAMING ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Lottery and Gaming Act, 1936, as amended. Read a first time.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its main object is to extend the powers of the Totalizator Agency Board to enable it—

(*a*) to conduct totalizator betting on any event scheduled to be held within or outside Australia, such as the English Derby; and

(*b*) as the agent for any club licensed to operate a totalizator, to conduct and operate that totalizator on a racecourse.

The Bill also makes certain other necessary amendments that are incidental to or consequential on measures that have previously been approved by Parliament. Clause 2 makes a formal amendment to section 2 of the Act. Clause 3 amends section 4 of the principal Act—

(*a*) by bringing up to date the reference to the Licensing Act in the definition of "public place"; and

(*b*) by defining "racecourse" to include the land and premises appurtenant to a place where a race meeting or trotting meeting is held or, in other words, to include betting rings, totalizator and grandstand and other enclosures.

Clause 4 amends section 22 of the principal Act which requires permits for trotting races to be issued by the executive committee of the league. Subsection (2) provides that each permit shall be for one night only as regards a meeting to be held in the metropolitan area, and for either one day or one night meeting as regards a meeting to be held outside the metropolitan area. The Lottery and Gaming Act Amendment Bill, 1968, which was considered by this House earlier in this session, provides for the use of the totalizator at not more than 10 trotting meetings to be held at Globe Derby Park, Bolivar, during the winter months, but when that Bill was drafted it was not clear to the draftsman that initially the trotting meetings to be held at Globe Derby Park would be day meetings. Clause 4 accordingly amends the section to enable day meetings to be held there, notwithstanding that they are within the metropolitan area.

Clause 5 amends section 28 which deals with the mode of dealing with moneys paid into a totalizator conducted by a club. When section 28 was last re-enacted, it had regard to the fact that the Totalizator Agency Board's powers were limited to the conduct of off-course totalizator betting. In order to extend the board's powers to enable it, as agent for a club licensed to operate a totalizator, to conduct and operate that totalizator on a racecourse, it is necessary to draw a distinction between off-course totalizator betting conducted by the board and on-course totalizator betting conducted by the board for and on behalf of a club. Paragraphs (*a*) to (*g*) of the clause make the necessary amendments to achieve this result. Paragraph (*h*) strikes out subsection (6*b*), which was a transitional provision and has served its purpose. Paragraph (*i*) brings the reference in subsection (8) to the Stamp Duties Act up to date.

Clause 6 (paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*)) makes consequential amendments to section 29 of the principal Act, and paragraph (*c*) removes from subsection (6) an obsolete reference to the Lottery and Gaming Act, 1917. Clause 7 makes a formal amendment to the heading of Part IIIa of the Act. Clause 8 re-enacts subsection (2) of section 31a and provides specifically for the board to conduct on-course totalizator betting at a race meeting or trotting meeting held by a club. Clause 9 brings up to date a reference to the Licensing Act in section 31h.

Clause 10 (paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*)) amends section 31j of the principal Act by extending the powers of the board to enable it to conduct both off-course and on-course totalizator betting on any event scheduled to be held within or outside Australia. Paragraph (*c*) adds a new subsection (3) which provides that where the board, by arrangement with a licensed club, conducts a totalizator which that club is authorized to use the board is to be regarded as the club's agent and anything done by the board as agent of the club shall be lawful if it would have been lawful if done by the club itself.

Clause 11 makes two consequential amendments to section 31ka. Clause 12 makes a consequential amendment to section 31m (1). Clauses 13, 14, 15 and 16 make consequential amendments to sections 31n, 31na, 31u and 31v of the principal Act. Clauses 17 and 19 bring the reference to the Licensing Act in sections 38 and 115 up to date. Clause 18 is consequential on the amendment to section 22 made by clause 4.

Mr. HUDSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

INDUSTRIAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE (Minister of Works) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Industrial Code, 1967-1968. Read a first time.

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its principal purpose is to provide for an office of Deputy President of the Industrial Court of South Australia. Up to 1966, provision was made for there to be two such Deputy Presidents but, when legislation amending the Industrial Code, 1920-1965, to provide for an Industrial Commission was introduced, the provision for the office of Deputy President was then omitted. This situation was continued on the re-enactment of the Industrial Code by the Industrial Code, 1967.

Honourable members will be aware that the position of Public Service Arbitrator has been, in the past, held by the then Deputy President of the Industrial Court and retained by him on his becoming President of the Industrial Court. The reason for this dual appointment was to ensure that there was a connection between the two systems of industrial jurisdiction in this State, since this connection seemed a desirable one. However,

for some time, the Government has felt that the burden of these two offices fell too heavily on the shoulders of a single occupant, particularly when that occupant has the responsibilities inherent in that of the President of the Industrial Court. Accordingly, on December 12 last, it was announced that it was proposed to revive the office of Deputy President of the Industrial Court and to appoint the present Public Service Arbitrator to that office. This should continue the desirable connection between the two systems of industrial law and, at the same time, strengthen the general industrial jurisdiction in this State by providing some assistance to the President of the Industrial Court.

It is intended that the Deputy President, as is at present the case with the President, will be required to have the same qualifications for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court has, and that he will again, as the President has, have the status of a judge of the Industrial Court. He will also *ex officio* be the Deputy President of the Industrial Commission and hence will be able to play a part in this aspect of the general industrial jurisdiction. I emphasize that this measure in no other way affects the general industrial jurisdiction picture in the State and, in particular the position and jurisdiction of the Commissioners of the Industrial Commission is not affected, and I would now like to consider the measure in some detail.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 makes necessary amendments to the interpretation section, consequent on the creation of the office of Deputy President. Clause 3 provides for the Deputy President to act as the President in the absence from office of the President, and in the absence of the Deputy President provision is made for an appointment of a suitably qualified person to act. Payment of a suitable allowance for the acting appointee is provided for. Clause 4 formally provides for the appointment of a Deputy President. Clause 5 confers on the Deputy President the status and tenure of a judge of the Industrial Court. Clause 6 provides a salary of $11,400 a year for the Deputy President. Clause 7 provides for the Deputy President to be entitled to hold office until he is 65 years of age.

Clauses 8, 9, 10 and 11 provide for the contribution for and receipt of pension benefits by the Deputy President and his dependents. Clause 12 provides for the Deputy President to be Deputy President of the Industrial Commission of South Australia. Clause 13 sets out the position of the Deputy President in relation to the constitution of the Industrial Commission. Clause 14 will enable appeals against decisions or orders of a board of reference to be heard as the President directs by the President or the Deputy President. Clause 15 will enable the Deputy President to undertake mediation in an industrial dispute. Clause 16 gives the Deputy President similar powers to the President in the summoning of compulsory conferences. Clause 17 allows the Deputy President to approve witness expenses.

Clause 18 is the only provision of the Bill which is not directly related to the creation of the office of Deputy President. It clarifies the meaning of a provision of the Code relating to the variation of awards or orders in relation to which a period of operation has been fixed. Clause 19 provides that the Industrial Commission constituted for the purpose of the recovery of amounts due under awards and agreements may be constituted by the Deputy President. Clause 20 recognizes the newly created office of Deputy President in relation to the powers of entry and search provided under the Act. Clause 21 strikes out the reference to the Registrar constituting the Commission in Appeal Session since that officer will, on the creation of the office of Deputy President, no longer constitute the Commission in Appeal Session. Clause 22 gives to the Deputy President of the Industrial Commission the same protection and immunity as is given to the President of the Industrial Commission.

Clause 23 gives to the Deputy President the same jurisdiction, in interlocutory matters, as the President. Clause 24 again gives the Deputy President the same jurisdiction as the President to issue orders for the taking of evidence on behalf of the Commission. Clause 25 again gives the Deputy President the same powers as the President relating to the dispensing with personal service of summonses. Clause 26 recognizes the office of Deputy President in relation to the granting of adjournments by the Registrar. Clause 27 recognizes the office of Deputy President in relation to summonses. Clause 28 enables the Deputy President to state a case for opinion of the Supreme Court, in the same way as the President may state a case. Clause 29 enables the Deputy President to dispense with a quorum at a meeting of a conciliation committee in the same way as the President may exercise this power. Clause 30 enables the Deputy President to hear an appeal from a

decision of the Registrar varying the terms of an award or industrial agreement in accordance with the equal pay for women provisions. Clause 31 enables the Deputy President to hear appeals from decisions of the Secretary for Labour and Industry in relation to the granting of permission to work for less than award wages in the case of aged, slow, inexperienced or infirm workers.

Clause 32 recognizes the position of the Deputy President in relation to references to the Full Commission of matters before the Industrial Commission. Clause 33 enables the Deputy President as well as the President to refer industrial agreements to the Industrial Commission. Clause 34 recognizes the office of Deputy President in relation to contempt proceedings. Clause 35 empowers the Deputy President to hear appeals against the decision of the Industrial Registrar in relation to registration of associations. Clause 36 is consequential on clause 35. Clause 37 grants to the Deputy President the same powers as the President in relation to the ordering of any persons to cease to be members of a registered association. Clause 38 recognizes the position of Deputy President in relation to rules and procedure in respect of matters dealt with under the Code.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

MENTAL HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 11. Page 3502.)

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE (Minister of Education): When I sought leave yesterday to continue my remarks, I was speaking about the change in conditions in psychiatric hospitals in South Australia and went on to say that in all these hospitals the changes made meant that patients were living under much better conditions, with much better amenities. I, perhaps, know more of the changes that have taken place at Glenside Psychiatric Hospital, because it is in my district and I have visited it more often. However, not only in our hospitals but also in the services provided for mental patients great and important changes have been made in the last few years.

There was much talk by the Opposition of shame and of the inhumanity on the part of this Government in instituting the changes that this Bill envisages. However, I consider those remarks irrelevant to the whole purpose of the legislation, but it was a view reiterated many times by Opposition members who followed the lead set by the Leader of the Opposition. I was particularly surprised at the following statement by the member for Whyalla (Hon. R. R. Loveday):

> It is proposed to place these people who need mental help and mental services in a worse financial position, to beggar them financially if they are not already beggared as a result of their long disabilities, to influence the Commonwealth Government. They are to be the bunnies, the martyrs, in this particular exercise.

I suggest that to speak of the patients in our hospitals in such terms was not to make their lot, which is not a happy one, any happier. It is also suggested that mental patients generally are in bad financial straits. The honourable member knows well that many people in our psychiatric hospitals are able to pay for their hospital treatment. All this talk of the inhumanity and shame that we on this side should feel comes strangely from members who were extremely reluctant to make provision for necessary buildings at the Strathmont Hospital. Many times when members of the present Government were in Opposition we drew attention to the need for expedition in providing these new buildings. Time and time again they were deferred, and if it had not been for representations made by then Opposition members we would have lost much more in subsidy from the Commonwealth Government than we did. I am certain it was because of the insistence of the members of the Party to which I belong that some action was taken to start building at Strathmont.

Mr. Langley: You make me laugh.

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: And the honourable member makes me laugh sometimes, too. Had it not been for the repeated representations made by members of the Liberal Parties in all States to the Commonwealth Government we might have lost even more, but these representations resulted in the Commonwealth Government continuing the arrangement between it and the State for a further period of three years, enabling us to take advantage of the subsidies it offered. Illness of any kind, whether physical or mental, imposes a great financial and emotional strain not only on the patient but also on the relatives of the patient. I believe that all people who are sick, from whatever cause, are eternally grateful for the services rendered to them by members of the medical and nursing profession and by the services provided in hospitals, and I believe that, as a natural corollary, most people feel a sense of obligation to meet the cost of the illnesses from which they suffer.

Mr. Langley: What if they haven't got it?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: Illness falls on the poor and on the rich: nature is indiscriminating. I believe that people who do not have much money do, from a sense of real obligation, struggle to pay the account that they owe to people who have done so much for them. It is a great misfortune whenever illness occurs, but I repeat that I believe that most people realize the obligation that they have to meet. I said earlier that I intended to quote from the second reading explanation. I do so now because it answers so many criticisms levelled at the Government by Opposition members, particularly when it states:

> The Government believes that, despite the absence of hospital benefits, a procedure of moderate hospital charges should be introduced and that payment should be made by or on account of those mental hospital patients who are able to afford the whole or part of such charges.
>
> It is intended that the maximum fee for inpatients should be $3.50 a day (or $24.50 a week). This would be about half of the average daily cost of accommodating and treating a patient at Glenside, the least costly of our mental hospitals. Whereas the average daily cost at Glenside this year is estimated to be about $7.00, it will be about $8.00 at Hillcrest and probably about $15.00 at Enfield. I stress that the proposed charge of $3.50 a day will be the maximum. The Government has had regard to the facts that hospital benefits are not available and that the average length of stay in a mental hospital is greater than in a general hospital.
>
> It is realized that many patients will not be able to afford the maximum charge and that some will not be able to afford anything. I assure the House that the scheme will be administered with discretion and sympathy; that the reasonable needs of the patient and his or her dependents will be considered; and that a charge will not be made if it would cause hardship. It is intended that each case be considered individually; that a careful assessment be made of the amount which it would be reasonable to charge in each case; and that this be the amount actually billed. This approach would be more convenient for the patient himself and also from the point of view of administration, rather than making the full charge initially with subsequent remissions being necessary . . . The regulations may confer on the Director or a person authorized by him power, from time to time to reduce, or remit any part of any amount so prescribed, or vary any reduction or remission, in the light of the financial position or of any change in the financial position of the person by whom the amount is payable, and may provide for the recovery of funeral and other expenses incurred by the Crown in respect of any person who dies in an institution.

What could be a fairer foundation on which to base the introduction of charges to patients in psychiatric hospitals? If it is claimed that the community finds fault with the legislation, I find it strange that little reference has been made to it in the press: there have been few press reports of the proceedings of this Bill in another place, and certainly no representations have been made to me as a member of Parliament and one who has always shown a tremendous interest in the field of mental health. No representations have been made to me by anyone—patient or relative—for further consideration of the action the Government now intends to take. Also, only four speeches (two for and two against the Bill) were made in another place and no division was called for at the end of the debate. I believe that the Government is in order in seeking by this Bill to meet some of the costs incurred in providing the latest drugs and treatment for patients in psychiatric hospitals and, for the reasons I have expounded in my speech, I support the Bill.

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh): I have listened patiently and with much interest to the Minister's speech, and I consider that she came to many conclusions on surmises built on false bases.

Mr. Broomhill: And she was insulting to us.

The Hon. Joyce Steele: Of course you weren't insulting to us!

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: The honourable Minister implied that we had spoken in terms that were not creditable to the people who care for those unfortunate people who are mental cases.

The Hon. Joyce Steele: I did not say that at all.

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: On the contrary, we have the greatest admiration for those people who are undoubtedly dedicated to the cause in which they serve. If they were not they could not continue in the work they are doing. The Minister referred to the second reading explanation and posed a question whether there was any fairer bases on which to level charges, or words to that effect. We submit that there are no bases for charges in a case like this, and that is why we oppose the Bill. The Minister criticized the Labor Party for what it had not done when it was in office. She is entitled to do that, but I suggest that she should be fair. We believe we have reason to look back with some satisfaction on what we achieved during the time we were in office. But we were not satisfied: we had begun to bring about remedies where for more than 30 years there had been evidence of neglect on the part of a Liberal Government.

Having been a member of this House for 19 years, never have I been more perturbed about or more disgusted with a piece of legislation than I am regarding this measure. Having been criticized for being a little emotional in the matter, we believe we have reason to be concerned and upset by such action as is contemplated in this Bill. Indeed, I never thought I would see this type of legislation being considered in the House. I once had the privilege (if one can call it that) of inspecting the Tower of London where I was disturbed to see recorded atrocities that had occurred in years gone by. I left that place with the consolation (as I thought) that I would never see anything so beastly done in these times.

However, I suggest that the charges in this Bill sought to be made on those who are mentally sick are cruel, inhumane, and comparable with the ghastly things recorded in the Tower of London. The charges outlined in the Bill are discriminatory: the Government is seeking to make a distinction between those who can afford to pay and those who cannot. I know something about mental illness, because I have friends in whose families mental illness has occurred. Chronic mental illness can be tiring and of long duration, disturbing not only the patients but also relatives and friends. The amazing thing about this Bill seems to be the fact that the Government has failed to realize that much suffering can be avoided if early treatment is obtained. Indeed, in most cases early treatment can effect a complete cure. We all know that if someone has a motor car that breaks down, strangely enough the owner is prepared to spend money to effect repairs, but in the case of mental and physical illness, involving a charge for treatment, it is human nature to hope for the best and to delay the treatment that is often necessary. This is borne out by a reply that I received yesterday through the Premier from the Minister of Health in which it was clearly stated that 74.8 per cent of those people who had recently received treatment for mental illness had gone to the mental hospital voluntarily.

Mr. Jennings: They wouldn't do that if they were charged.

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: That is the point I am trying to make. The person concerned will often delay treatment, only to worsen his condition and to cause suffering to himself and relatives, as well as creating an additional cost to the State. If these people were restored to health, they would naturally have an earning capacity and be able to contribute by way of taxation to the State. It is economic folly therefore to force charges on these people. Those most prone to severe mental illness are definitely people who can least afford to pay. It seems to me that the Bill seeks to render a charge against a certified patient. We are saying to a person, "In the interests of society you must be put away and because we put you away, you poor unfortunate soul, we are going to charge you for it."

Is this the type of thing we expect of an enlightened society in 1969? Because of the long duration of their illness, mental patients can become insolvent prior to their discharge, having then to win their way back into society, many of them conscious of the disabilities they have suffered and fearful of what may be thought about them. In addition, they are often without money. Surely, there is every possibility of a recurrence of the illness in these circumstances, necessitating further treatment which will unfortunately be delayed because of the charge that is to be made. The Government wants more revenue but the Bill clearly shows that it is so inhumane that it is prepared in cold blood to condemn the poor unfortunate patient to a cruel mental death. In so doing, the Government stoops to a level that is beneath that on which the most distasteful creatures crawl. It does this without concern, because its outlook is that of the heathens. If this were not so, it would realize that the Author of our Christian faith has laid down that to turn away those who are in need is to bring about their automatic expulsion from the possibility of Divine forgiveness. Accordingly, I plead with each member of the House that, in this enlightened age, they realize what they are being asked to do in supporting the Bill, thereby condemning themselves to a permanent hell as a result of the suffering that has been caused to those who are literally pleading for help.

While every endeavour has been made in recent years to provide improved accommodation at Glenside, in most cases it is still inadequate. I express my sincere and heartfelt admiration to those who serve so nobly in antiquated accommodation to bring relief to those who are mentally ill. While the parents are compelled to accept these conditions reluctantly, I am sure they will become hostile if they are asked to pay. The Bill should be condemned and thrown out in the interests of humanity.

Mr. EVANS (Onkaparinga): I support the Bill. If I believed what the previous speaker said, I should not support the Bill, but I

do not believe that he really believes the assumptions he has made. If the Bill is passed, it will not stop improvements in our mental hospitals: it will allow the Government to provide more money for them. I do not consider that $3.50 maximum a day is asking too much when the average daily charge a patient in Government general hospitals is $10. One Opposition member has said that there is no difference between a mental and a general illness. I agree, and I consider that they should be judged and treated on the same basis. If a person can afford to pay for a service we are giving him, then he should pay. I am sure that the department and the officers concerned will judge each case on its merits and, if there are isolated cases of injustice where the fee may be too high, it is our duty as Parliamentarians to see that, when representation is made to us, this matter is looked into. This has been done in the past.

The Minister of Education said that only two speakers from each Party spoke to the Bill in another place. In fact, Opposition members said that they considered there was a need to amend the Act and that some of the patients were able to pay. I believe that if they can pay they should pay, as we are supplying a service to them. The member for Whyalla said that the poor unfortunates would have to pay. If the patient is poor he will not be asked to pay. I know they are unfortunate to be in this position, but it is no more unfortunate to be mentally ill than it is to be physically ill. The Labor Government increased hospital charges in general hospitals and made people receiving the service pay for it when they could afford to pay. The Leader of the Opposition has said that a means test protects the spendthrift and penalizes the thrifty. Does he mean that the people in the lower income brackets are the spendthrifts? I believe that some people in the higher income brackets are spendthrifts, and they will have to pay the $3.50 a day. People in the lower income brackets who are thrifty may have to pay a small or perhaps a high proportion of the fee, but I consider this is justified.

Mr. McKee: Why?

Mr. EVANS: If a person can afford to pay for a service that is given he should pay. The Leader of the Opposition said:

One of the most important arguments against the proposed charges is the fact, which is continually observed in psychiatric practice in this country and supported in the United States of America by research, that whereas neuroses (the milder forms of mental illness) are found more often in the people who come from the middle and upper-income groups, psychoses (the more severe forms of mental illness) are found more often in people in the lower income groups. As a result, private psychiatrists have tended to develop expertise in treating neurosis and have left the development of therapies for psychosis largely to the State mental health services. On balance, then, the people who most often suffer from the more severe mental illnesses (the people who are least able to pay) will in most cases need to receive treatment for which they will not only have to pay . . .

But they will not have to pay. If they cannot afford to pay they will not be asked to pay, but if they can afford to pay any part of the fee they should pay it. Each case will be judged on its merits. If people in higher income groups can afford to go to private psychiatrists, why should they not do so and relieve the burden on our public hospitals?

The member for Hindmarsh said that people had approached mental hospitals voluntarily and had asked for help. I believe they will still do this. People should be made to realize the importance of their own health and the health of their families. I do not believe that a man would have his motor car fixed, walk around with a broken leg and deny treatment to his child who was mentally ill. That is a ridiculous statement for a man who has been a member of this House for 19 years. Some people who have been treated in mental hospitals free of charge have petitioned for insolvency on their discharge. I believe this has also happened in the case of those suffering general illness. It will never be overcome, irrespective of whether or not the people are charged. I do not believe that the burden is any harder on a person who is mentally ill than it is on a person physically ill. We should not treat people who are mentally ill any differently from the way in which we treat people with general illnesses. If we treat people mentally ill any differently, they tend to feel inferior. We must treat them on the same basis as we treat others so that they will feel the same as other citizens in the community. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, believing that in the future the Government must look to people to pay for all these things and that we should not provide charity for people who can afford to pay.

Mr. HUGHES (Wallaroo): I am concerned at the attitude adopted by the member for Onkaparinga towards this important legislation. I am afraid the honourable member is a little confused when he talks about making people pay for the services we have to give

them. I do not think for one moment that the honourable member realizes the predicament of mental patients compared with the predicament of other people. I regret that he has adopted the dictatorial attitude he has adopted towards mental patients. Before asking for this debate to be adjourned yesterday, the Minister of Education said that Opposition members had played follow the leader, referring to the Leader of the Opposition. She said that we had said nothing new and that this indicated that we had not read the second reading explanation. I assure the Minister that we have read that explanation and that we fully understand the impact that these provisions will have on certain people. Opposition members appreciate the deep concern felt by the Leader towards those who will be greatly affected by the legislation. In fact, the Leader's concern is so justified that I and all other members on this side will continue to follow his lead in an attempt to prevent the Government from passing this legislation, the purpose of which is to confer a regulation-making power for the fixation of charges for accommodation and maintenance provided or for treatment or services rendered at institutions.

When, as an Opposition, the present Government went to the people, did it tell them at that time that, if it was elected as the Government, it intended to bring into effect charges for treatment and services rendered in mental hospitals? Of course it did not tell the people that. It did not tell people that, if their relatives went into mental hospitals, they would have to pay $3.50 a day or $24.50 a week. They took care at that time not to tell the people of their intention. I believe that the Government is so callous in its greed for money that it wants the Bill rushed through as quickly as possible so that it can take money from people who are not even able to manage their own affairs. I say this because last Thursday the Government was anxious to have the Bill passed.

Mr. Broomhill: Indecent haste.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, of course it was. In his second reading explanation, the Premier said:

By direct approach from Premiers to the Prime Minister, and through annual meetings of Ministers of Health, the case has been put to the Commonwealth many times that full social services and hospital and medical benefits should be available to patients of the mental health services, and that it would be practicable to achieve this aim by a succession of steps designed to spread the impact on the Commonwealth Budget.

From the Premier's statement it would appear that, to force the Commonwealth Government into a position where it accepts responsibility towards patients in mental hospitals, in a way similar to the way in which it accepts responsibility for invalid pensioners and others in Government hospitals, this Government is prepared to crucify mental patients by making them pay for services. On the condition that no charge is made by the State Government, the Commonwealth Government meets part of its obligation towards aged and invalid pensioners confined to Government hospitals. This provision does not extend to patients confined to mental hospitals and, to force the hand of the Commonwealth Government, this Government will worry people, who need sympathy, love and kindness, by charging them for mental health services. I believe the Government will be responsible for overcrowding our mental hospitals. In the community today are hundreds of people who suffer from nervous tension but are capable of living a semi-normal life, provided they are free from worry. This type of legislation will be the means of putting extra strain on people of this type. The quickest way to break down the health of certain people is to place undue strain on their nervous systems and, in many cases, that is exactly what the provisions of this Bill will do.

Mr. Jennings: In many cases it will reduce the number of patients in voluntary hospitals and increase the number in committal hospitals.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. Only last week the Premier admitted that people such as I have been mentioning live in the community. He put on a real act when trying to convince members to vote against a certain measure. He admitted that we have in our society people who may be weak and suffering some form of instability, and went on to refer to people who were under pressure of bereavement or under stress. He would have the House believe then that he was worried about the very people whom I have been mentioning today.

I am extremely concerned that this legislation will upset the people to whom the Premier referred last week as people who may be weak and in some form of mental instability. A patient in a mental hospital may have a certain amount of money but his affairs are placed in the hands of the Public Trustee when he enters the hospital. If this Bill

passes and all the money that the Public Trustee is holding in trust for such a person is used, what will happen? The money that the Public Trustee held would enable services to be paid for for a certain time, but the time could come, as has happened in the past, when a person could be discharged and could enter society again. The use of modern drugs enables people to be discharged but many persons are given discharge papers that state that they are unable to look after their own affairs. These people are thrown on the mercy of the outside world, without having any lawful means of support. What would be the position if such a person had no relatives to whom he could go?

Mr. Broomhill: Has that happened previously?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, I know of a case. How can such a person pay the fees in a nursing home, or similar institution? These people are well enough to be in the outside world but they are not well enough to work and earn money to pay for services. The money placed in trust for mental hospital patients should be held in the hope that it will benefit these people when they are discharged. I commend the doctors who have dedicated their lives to the care of mental patients. I think it was the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) who last week mentioned a doctor who will be remembered for many years for his valuable contribution to the mental health services in this State. I did not hear the interjection that an honourable member opposite just made.

Mr. Corcoran: The member for Victoria said, "You're giving him a back scratch."

Mr. HUGHES: I am not sure about back scratching but I know that this is not a laughing matter, although the Parliamentary Under Secretary (Mr. Rodda) would like to have the House believe that it is. He has made an unkind interjection about a person whose name I have not mentioned and who, perhaps, is not known to many members of his House.

Mr. Casey: It was very undignified of the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Premier.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. I have been referring to Dr. Birch, who gave such valuable service to mental patients over a long period. For the benefit of the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn), who has just returned, I repeat the interjection by the Parliamentary Under Secretary that I was doing a bit of back scratching when I was commending the work of Dr. Birch. I am afraid the member for Victoria did not know of Dr. Birch and his magnificent work, yet he made that interjection. The member for Adelaide and I know of the love and affection that the patients at Glenside Hospital had for Dr. Birch. Although the patients may not have known his name, they were able to recognize the kindnesses that he showed to them. Dr. Birch treated the patients not only in his capacity as a doctor but also as a man who had dedicated his life to the welfare and betterment of these people. I cannot find words that adequately commend this man's work when he served the Government as an officer of the Health Department. I could mention many other doctors who are still in the Government service, but I have mentioned Dr. Birch because he retired some time ago.

Also, other doctors do magnificent work in caring for mental patients, and they are to be commended for the manner in which they handle these people. I also commend the wonderful and dedicated work of the nursing profession. Despite the Government's attitude in forcing the provisions of this Bill on the public, I do not think that Government members have had any close association with those who care for mental patients. The job is not easy for the doctors and nurses who have to work with these people.

Mr. Lawn: Government members have no sense of humane values.

Mr. HUGHES: Of course not, otherwise they would not adopt their present attitude. If this Bill passes it will place a serious strain on many people, because if the news becomes known that there is to be a charge for patients in mental institutions, those who may suffer from a nervous tension or strain will immediately fear the repercussions that may occur if they are admitted to these institutions and the worry caused by this Bill may be the means of these people requiring treatment. I plead with members to reject this legislation.

Mr. Lawn: It is no good pleading with the opposite side, but what about pleading with the Speaker to use his casting vote?

Mr. HUGHES: I plead with all members and hope that my remarks will not fall on deaf ears. I hope that the Speaker is listening through the amplifying system and that he will seriously consider throwing out this Bill, so that our mental patients will be cared for in the same way as they are cared for today, and that this legislation will not be imposed on people and cause them mental misery.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Treasurer): In commenting on this Bill I hope to get back to the realities of the situation. The debate

has shown strong emotional over-tones to the proposition advanced in this legislation and this was foreseen when the Government considered it and when it was foreshadowed in the Budget. It was inevitable that these arguments would be advanced and I have no objection to members expressing their point of view if, indeed, such a point of view is valid. If half the things that have been said about the Government's attitude to this legislation were true, I would not have been a party to its introduction. Many of the statements have been seriously overdrawn and many accusations are completely without foundation: the rather harrowing speeches about the soulless and cold-blooded Government have no foundation in fact. The member for Wallaroo said that members, after studying the second reading explanation, had drawn their conclusions. If they did study it, they have chosen to disregard the parts of the explanation that are of the greatest importance to the Bill and of the approach to it.

We have heard repeatedly that we have no proper right to charge people who suffer from mental illnesses; we have heard that we are requiring people who cannot afford to pay a charge to pay it, and it has been alleged that by so doing we are contributing to the onset of or continuation of a state of mental instability that will prolong a patient's stay in hospital: and it has been claimed that people feeling the need for treatment will be deterred from getting it because there may be a charge involved. I use the words "may be" advisedly.

Let us consider some of the statements. If members had studied the second reading explanation they would realize that we did not intend, even as a maximum charge, to charge anything like the cost of the treatment. The cost of treatment in mental hospitals (and most members accept this) is reasonable by any standards and significantly lower than the cost of treatment for ordinary illness in a general hospital. The cost of accommodating and treating a patient at Glenside will be about $7 a day; at Hillcrest about $8 a day; and at Enfield probably about $15 a day. I think I am correct in saying that most cases of mental illness are first treated at Enfield and if further intensive treatment is required the patient is removed to other institutions. It will be realized that the maximum charge that may be charged is to be $3.50 a day, so that we are not attempting to recover a fraction of the cost of the treatment, even if all patients in our institutions paid the maximum charge.

I will try to relate mental illness with ordinary illness. The Premier said (and I think we all agree) that, fortunately, there has grown up in the community an acceptance of mental illness as an ordinary type of illness. In other words, there is no distinction in society between people who are mentally ill and those who are physically ill. Some are both.

Mr. McKee: The medical benefits scheme makes a distinction.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I regret that that is so. I hope that the rather faltering steps the Commonwealth Government is making towards remedying this situation will become somewhat more precise and well-defined, because I can see no reason why a person should not qualify for hospital benefits as a mentally-ill patient in the same way as a physically-ill patient qualifies. In considering what charges should be made, we have taken this fact into account and have tempered the charges to be made accordingly. I am trying to make the point that mental illness is no longer regarded as a stigma or as something of which one should be ashamed. We have outgrown the previous concept, and I am extremely pleased that that is so. In my opinion, there is no reason why we as a Parliament should not regard mental illness in the way that the public outside regards it, namely, as being on the same plane as that of physical illness.

Mr. Corcoran: Don't you think in this case a person needs more encouragement to seek treatment than in the case of physical illness?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I thank the honourable member for that interjection, because it leads me to the point I intended to make. I think there is no more reluctance on the part of people suffering mental illness to seek treatment than there is reluctance on the part of physically-ill people to seek treatment.

Mr. Corcoran: I cannot agree with that.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I think I speak with some knowledge on this point. I know there is a reluctance on the part of many people to seek treatment for any form of illness, but it is not the charge made for the treatment that prevents a person from visiting a doctor: it is the fear that the doctor will say the worst and that the illness will be something more than that person can face. How much propaganda has the Cancer Research Foundation disseminated in order to encourage people to seek preventive treatment or treatment in the early stages for this dreaded disease? It is beginning to break through, fortunately, and people are taking advice to

seek early treatment and also to seek an analysis of symptoms that can show whether or not a malignancy exists. This reluctance to seek treatment is not in any way specifically related to people who are mentally ill. Indeed, I have found in my experience that most people who are aware that they have some sort of mental abnormality are most anxious to obtain treatment and to have it remedied. The fact that such a large percentage of those people who are receiving treatment are people who go along voluntarily rather disproves, in my view, the fear that such people will be deterred from seeking treatment because of any charge that may be imposed.

It has been said that a charge will be improperly made on the person who has been confined by order to a mental institution because of his relative danger to the community at large and to the people with whom he associates and because he is not able to control himself and his physical activities. It has also been claimed that those people are probably permanently disabled mentally and that their incarceration in an institution will be for an indefinite period. Quite so; but many people exist also who are incurably ill physically, who are patients in our hospitals but who are not likely ever to be able to carry on a normal life again. Those people are charged according to what they can pay for their hospitalization. I fail to see that we have any justification for drawing a distinction between the two types of patient. There are people who have been incurably ill for many years, and yet they have to face up to the cost of treatment and accommodation which is essential for them, so why do we make a distinction in these two cases? The accusation levelled at the Government that we are going to force people into a state of mental anxiety and illness because we are charging them something they cannot afford to pay is entirely false. Members opposite have chosen to adopt the emotional approach to this sort of thing, because it is the only argument they can produce, and there is no other.

There are people who are occupying hospital beds today and who are profiting substantially thereby. I know it is not a general accusation, and I hasten to add that, but thank goodness there is sufficient morality left in the community to ensure that this sort of thing is not widespread. Unfortunately, I know of cases where it occurs blatantly. In the discussion about charges that has ensued in this debate members opposite have taken curiously divergent views. One honourable member said that there should be no charge, but he did not say it quite as vehemently as some of his colleagues said it. That member went on to canvass the suggestion that there should be no limit on the charge we make on people who can afford to pay. Interjecting, I asked whether he would be prepared to suggest a higher charge, and he said that he would; he did not know why there should be any limit. The Government surely cannot be charged with both crimes (if, indeed, it is a crime in respect of this measure), namely, that we are charging when we ought not to charge anything and, on the other hand, that we are not charging enough for people who can afford to pay more. Is it a fair thing that people with resources, who are able to have available to them the very best treatment that can be given in connection with their illness, should not pay anything at all for it? Yet the taxpayers have to subsidize this free treatment in hospital when they are far less able to do it out of their meagre incomes by way of taxation than are the people receiving the treatment. Is this a fair proposition? No! There is a just case for a charge, and there can be no argument that invalidates the postulate I am adopting. Is it fair that people who can well afford to pay for the treatment they receive in mental hospitals and who are far better off possibly than the average taxpayer in the community should escape a payment for treatment when this payment has to be paid for by the taxpayers of the State, many of whom are in a less favourable economic position than is the person receiving the treatment?

If one accepts that (and I think one must), the position arises as to what kind of charge will be made and how it will be administered. One speaker said today that most of the people who need treatment for mental illness are people in the lower income bracket who cannot afford to pay. I do not know where he got this evidence because, as far as I know, mental and physical illnesses are no respecters of a person's economic position in life: physical and mental illnesses strike down both rich and poor alike. I do not know how the honourable member can support such a statement. Many of the neurotic patients treated as outpatients or at the Enfield Hospital are people whose comparative idleness in life is largely contributory to their condition. There are thousands of people in the community today who, if they had more to do, would be happier in life than they are. There is no validity in the statement that most of the people who seek treatment for mental illness cannot

afford to pay for it. Even supposing this were the case, the House knows that, because of the statements made regarding the administration of the charge, it is not intended to charge people who cannot afford to pay. This is the principle we have adopted in regard to our public hospitals and so on. The administration has been conducted in such a way that it has at least given the people administering the matter plenty of experience in administering it. It cannot be held that, regarding our public hospitals for the physically sick, we have been generally, at any rate, unjust or hard in demanding payments from those who cannot afford to pay. Rather, I think we have erred on the other side.

Be that as it may, the people who will be determining the charges for patients in mental hospitals will have the same facility as those in other public hospitals for deciding what charge is fair and proper. If, in hospitals for the physically sick, this system can be successful and do justice by all sections of the community, why can it not be successful and administered sympathetically in hospitals for the mentally ill? The Government is not made up of cold-blooded or soulless people. We have had plenty of contacts and experience with unfortunate people; many of us have them in our own families, and we certainly have them in our constituencies. I put it to members opposite that they are not the only ones who know about people in necessitous circumstances in life. Indeed, I spend much of my time as member for my district in alleviating the problems of people of this type. If I have made any reputation in politics at all it is based on the fact that I have at all times been willing to help people, who are unable effectively to help themselves, vigorously, consistently and persistently to overcome the problems they have. Therefore, this type of experience is not unique to members opposite.

Members on this side have just as much reason as anyone else to be alive to, and aware of, the problems of people in straitened circumstances. We are conditioned therefore to accept that it must be the duty of the community and of the State to help those who need help and are unable to afford it. The Opposition cannot charge that by this legislation the Government intends to make this charge and levy it in such a way as to contribute to people's mental illness or to their distress. It is quite wrong to say that it will be levied at people who cannot afford to pay, and honourable members know that.

Mr. McKee: How do you intend to get money from people who do not have it?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: We do not intend to get it from them. However, those who do have it and can afford to pay, ought to pay. I have tried to point out that those who can afford to pay for this treatment should not receive it for nothing when other people have to pay taxes to cover it. I think it can be agreed that our policy has been to administer charges for any sort of treatment or service in the community as fairly as possible. For the member for Port Pirie to suggest that we would make demands on people who cannot afford to pay is just ridiculous.

Mr. McKee: You will make demands on their relatives.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: The honourable member would have us make demands on the workers of the community to pay the cost of maintaining mental institutions, so that someone with independent means, who was well off, could get service for nothing. A Government does not escape the cost of its generosity. A Government must recover something from those who can afford to pay in order to keep down the costs of people who have to pay the bill anyway. It is stupid to suggest that we could maintain these institutions without some charge on people generally, because that could not be done.

Mr. Riches: Would I be right in saying that under other legislation you're giving away more than you'll collect under this Bill?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: I did not catch the purport of the interjection.

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON: When an interjection is made in good faith I like to accommodate the interjector if I can. Perhaps the honourable member can ask me about that later. It is not just a matter of saying that we will make no charge for the maintenance of these institutions or the treatment of patients in them, because somewhere someone has to pay for them. All I say is that those who can pay for their own resources ought to pay. Those people who are not able to pay should be treated with all leniency and generosity, and that is what the Government intends to do in the administration of this charge.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie): I oppose the Bill. I was amazed when the Minister of Education said that the remarks of the member for Whyalla (Hon. R. R. Loveday), who opposed the Bill, would make a lot of these people most unhappy. All I can say is that if the remarks of the member for Whyalla, in

opposing the Bill, made these people unhappy, it would be interesting to know what effect the remarks of the Minister, in supporting the Bill, had on these people. The Treasurer said that mental illness was no different from physical illness. However, no hospital benefits organization will accept these people as a medical risk, because of the nature and duration of their illness.

Mr. Clark: This does make a difference.

Mr. McKEE: Yes. There was no mention in the second reading explanation of $15 a day at Enfield hospital and about $8 a day at Hillcrest hospital. The only fee I recall being mentioned is a charge of $3.50 a day.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: I have the second reading explanation in front of me.

Mr. McKEE: Will the fee be $15 a day in every institution?

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: No, and we never said that. Read the explanation again.

Mr. McKEE: The Treasurer mentioned a fee of $15.

The Hon. G. G. Pearson: I said that that was the cost. Do your homework.

Mr. McKEE: I am not talking about doing homework. I want to get the facts, because I cannot trust anyone on the Government benches about what is provided in the Bill. Surely a member is entitled to ask questions. I have a job bringing myself to trust some Liberals. I object strongly to this form of revenue raising and the people are extremely burdened by the severe taxation measures of this Government. Many people today are finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet. This is the most callous form of raising money and I am sure that it has come as a shock to the people, because it was not mentioned during the election campaign.

Mr. Burdon: The cost of living has gone up, too.

Mr. McKEE: Yes, but that is another issue. The Government will use that as an excuse to further increase this fee.

Mr. Hurst: Challenge the Government to go to the polls.

Mr. McKEE: The Government could be challenged to do that on many things, as the member for Semaphore knows. No-one would believe that even a Liberal Government would stoop so low as to think of raising money from these unfortunate people. The member for Whyalla (Hon. R. R. Loveday) said that the Government's action was a shame and inhuman. The Minister of Education (Hon. Joyce Steele) said that it would make the lot of the people unhappy, but, nevertheless, she could impose a charge on them: that would not make them very unhappy! The Treasurer (Hon. G. G. Pearson) said that many people were reluctant to go to mental hospitals, and that they should be encouraged to go. This Bill will send many people there! If they are not insane at first, they will become insane from worrying about this Bill.

It has also been said that this sort of legislation had to be introduced because the Commonwealth Government was shirking its duty on this issue and this measure was necessary to entice the Commonwealth to assist. We heard about having a big happy family by having a Liberal Government in the Commonwealth Parliament and in this State, but the election of a Liberal Government in South Australia seems to have had the reverse effect. Surely Government members are not stupid enough to think that the people will accept such a measure as this. I agree that a greater proportion of the responsibility regarding mental health should be taken by the Commonwealth Government. The Australian Labor Party members of the Commonwealth Parliament from South Australia are continually asking for increased assistance from the Commonwealth for unfortunate people and for increased social services generally, but, as Government members have said, there has been no representation by Liberal and Country League members of the Commonwealth Parliament from this State for such assistance. We have in this State the Commonwealth Minister for Health ("call me Jim" Forbes), but what has he done about assisting the people of South Australia?

Mr. Hurst: What about the statement by Andrew Jones?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Semaphore is out of order. The honourable member for Port Pirie is able to make his own speech.

Mr. McKEE: Mr. Jones is a person who should have some knowledge of mental disturbances but I have not noticed a report that he is asking the Commonwealth Government to accept its responsibility. Jonesey is not very worried about the health of people. His main concern is to have as many young Australians as possible killed in Vietnam. That is the extent of his concern about the health of the people.

Mr. Lawn: He's got a regard for Australian womanhood, you know.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McKEE: I will not discuss the merits of that matter, Mr. Speaker, so you need not be alarmed.

Mr. Clark: He accidentally spoke to me last—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation. The member for Port Pirie.

Mr. McKEE: The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) said that everyone in South Australia knew, to their sorrow, the bad financial situation that this Government is in at present. I cannot foresee any improvement: the situation can only get worse. A Government must be going bad when it has to turn to this form of revenue raising. It is scraping the barrel right to the wood. This is the most shocking piece of legislation that I have ever had the displeasure of hearing debated in the House. I think it was the member for Adelaide who said that many certified people probably would not know what was meant by imposing a fee for their treatment. How does the Government intend to get money from them?

Mr. Hurst: Take it from their relatives.

Mr. McKEE: Yes, that is provided for in the Bill. There is a good reason for such a provision, because that is the only way the Government will be able to get the money. I think there is only one solution for a Government that introduces such legislation and that is to resign. There is no other way out.

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

Mr. McKEE: When a Government reaches such a low ebb as this Government has reached, I believe it should resign. The Government has found itself in financial difficulties and has been unable to carry out its responsibilities. When a minority Government such as this introduces legislation of this type to try to overcome its financial problems, it is not capable of carrying out the duties of a responsible Government. At present the whole affairs of the State are being mismanaged, references to this being made every day by members on this side. The recent sell-out on the Chowilla dam indicates that the Government is irresponsible and confirms what I have said. Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed,

Mr. McKEE: I doubt whether this Bill has received any publicity: I have not noticed much about it. One has to search the *Advertiser* to find any reference to legislation of this type introduced by the Liberal and Country League Government, but that is understandable when a newspaper acts as a public relations department for the Government. My Party believes in, and has endeavoured to bring about, free medical treatment and hospitalization for everyone. We believe that people pay sufficient taxes (and under this Government they are paying plenty) to have provided from those taxes free hospitalization, whether as a result of physical or mental illness, for everyone. No-one wants to be sick and no-one goes to hospital of his own choice. When people are ill, productivity is lost, their taxation payments cease, and the whole State and the Commonwealth are affected generally. Therefore, I believe it should be the responsibility of the Government and the community to see that people recover quickly. I am sure many people would recover more quickly if they could lie in their hospital beds knowing that they would not be served with a summons before they got out of the hospital yard. In most cases, if the patient does not get a summons his relatives do. We already have a provision whereby free hospital treatment can be given to this section of the community, but the minority Government is taking away something that has been established over the years.

Mr. Casey: They are drunk with power.

Mr. McKEE: Yes, but they will have to sober up quickly, because the people will not forget this legislation. If I were not here when this Bill was introduced, I would not have believed that such sadistic legislation could be introduced by a minority Government.

Mr. LANGLEY (Unley): I agree with other Opposition members who have spoken. Incidentally, we should not be in Opposition. Even if the score was level, I am sure that members opposite would not admit defeat. However, at the last election the Government Party was defeated soundly, as everyone knew. It will not be long before members opposite will all be out: in future there will not be bumpers but knock-outs.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member ought to get back to the Bill.

Mr. LANGLEY: I am sure that the people are extremely displeased about the actions of the Government in introducing this Bill. The people of Australia need security and, although we have developed this country well over the years, we have never been able to provide security for our sick people. The main concern of people who suddenly become mentally ill is whether they have that security. Those who are able to contribute to health funds are able to achieve this, but the person who is mentally ill is not able to help himself, and it generally falls the lot of someone else to help him. I am sure that most members of this

side agree that Australia should have a national health scheme and that all States and the Commonwealth should combine to ensure that the mentally sick can be looked after to the best of the State's ability.

I listened to the Treasurer's statement about people who volunteered to have treatment. A person who does that today does something for his State and his family, and he also has the opportunity to become fit and well again. However, as a result of this Bill, this will not occur in future, as people tend to shrink from going to hospital when they need medical benefit if they cannot afford to pay.

Recently a person in my district told me he thought that this Bill had become law and he and his family, while not shirking the issue, were worried about whether they would be able to make the necessary payments. It is known that South Australia has been the leader in the provision of mental health facilities in Australia, but now, when a person becomes mentally ill, his family can be called upon to pay charges to the Government. Many families are willing to help, but they cannot always do so. I should like to know whether a means test will be applied or how a person will be asked to pay.

Mr. Broomhill: The Government has given no details.

Mr. LANGLEY: No. A person may have a rich uncle at Oodnadatta but everyone else in his family may not have much money. Under this Bill, the richest member of the family can be approached and told, "One of your relatives is in hospital. You have the means to pay and you should be able to help in this case." The Treasurer said it would cost about $15 a day for a patient at Enfield and $8 a day for a patient at Northfield. South Australia's methods of restoring people to mental health are unsurpassed in Australia. There are several hospitals where people are being rehabilitated. There are about 300 patients in rehabilitation hospitals. They are given an opportunity to be rehabilitated and brought back to normal life. Sometimes the attempt is successful and sometimes not. On occasion, they are brought back to the Glenside Hospital for short spells. Perhaps the Government will want to charge more of these poor unfortunate people who want to get out into the community and help themselves.

On the boundary of my district, as the Attorney-General knows, there is the Home for Incurables. Many charitable organizations in the district keep that hospital going. Some people there are mentally ill and some physically ill, but mostly they are physically ill. If this Bill is passed, the charitable organizations will say, "The Government wants the lot." These charges at that hospital are reasonable, but some of the people receive a Commonwealth pension. The Commonwealth Government is at fault on this issue, because it should ensure that the State Government receives ample remuneration for the work done in this sphere.

Several rehabilitation hospitals are situated in the Unley district but the Government is now to charge $24.50 a week if this amount can be afforded, but some hospitals receive only $12.80 for taking care of these people, rehabilitating them, and helping them recover from their illness. Patients in these hospitals receive some money for clothing and some pocket money, and the same happens at the Home for Incurables, but it seems that this legislation will impose a heavy charge on these people. Because people are admitted to these hospitals the Government is saved between $2,000,000 and $3,000,000, as these patients do not have to be treated at Government institutions.

Many other aspects of this issue should be considered before a charge of $24.50 is imposed on these people, because there are probably many ways in which they can be assisted. I hope the Government will consider further this Bill and realize that it will be a severe impost on many people who cannot afford to pay these charges. It has been stated that many people will not use the mental hospitals, but, because of the enlightened thinking about this illness, people are now prepared to receive the necessary treatment. Once people would not talk about receiving a pension, but that attitude has changed today. I do not think any person would object to paying more taxation if that extra money could be used to provide the necessary amenities in our mental institutions, but increased taxation in this way is not the answer. The mental health scheme in this State has been excellent, but this Bill, if passed, will cause nothing but harm for the mentally ill people of this State.

Mr. HURST (Semaphore): I do not intend to prolong the debate, but I would be remiss if I did not state my opposition to this measure, which I consider is detrimental to humanity and contrary to the principles for which I stand. Many Government members have remained silent, and the only support for this measure has been the statement that the Government wants more money. If the Government had directed its

attention to attacking the authority whose responsibility it is to provide adequately for these unfortunate people (that is, the Commonwealth Government) it would have had my support, but the Government now attacks people in all sections of the community who unfortunately are not able to defend themselves, by charging them for essential treatment. The charges will deter these people from obtaining early treatment, yet authorities in the field of mental health strongly advocate early treatment.

I know from other fields where the means test is applied that it deters many people from making an application. How can a person who is mentally affected and who needs treatment stand up to the pressures involved in a means test? It would only aggravate the situation not only for the patient himself but for his relatives at a time when the patient should be receiving the utmost encouragement to get the treatment he needs and to which he is entitled. At no time during this debate has the Government cited an authority in the field of mental health that supports this iniquitous charge, nor has it even cited an opinion of the Australian Medical Association. The Government is very good at citing authorities when it suits it to do so, but it has been silent in this respect during the debate, and its silence deserves condemnation. Not one Government member has replied to the question posed by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to people who are unfortunately certified and forced into an institution by medical practitioners who possibly think they are doing the right thing by the individual and the community; subsequently, their relatives may be responsible for paying this grossly unfair charge.

Mr. Lawn: The Government members convict themselves by their silence.

Mr. HURST: Yes. This Bill will affect not only patients but organizations that voluntarily assist these unfortunate people. If these people are subject to a means test, suspicion will be created in the minds of many voluntary workers who raise money to assist this worthy cause. As a result, people will be deterred from taking an interest in this important activity. Never has any of my constituents, irrespective of the level of society to which he belongs, expressed his sympathy for the Government in introducing this measure. Indeed, every person who has spoken to me about this Bill has been utterly disgusted that the Government should sink to this level to raise revenue. Revenue is available from other people who could well afford to pay it, so the Government should not attack the mentally sick. I am utterly disgusted at this Bill, and I oppose it.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (18)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Brookman, Coumbe, Edwards, Evans, Ferguson, Giles, Hall (teller), McAnaney, Millhouse, Nankivell, Pearson, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Teusner, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (18)—Messrs. Broomhill and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Casey, Clark, Corcoran, Dunstan (teller), Hudson, Hughes, Hurst, Hutchens, Langley, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, Riches, Ryan, and Virgo.

Pair—Aye—Mr. Freebairn. No—Mr. Jennings.

The SPEAKER: There are 18 Ayes and 18 Noes. There being an equality of votes, it means that of necessity I have to give a casting vote. In order that further consideration may be given to the Bill in Committee, I cast my vote in favour of the Ayes. The question therefore passes in the affirmative.

Second reading thus carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Charges for treatment and services rendered at institutions."

Mr. HUGHES: I refer to new section 166 (1) (*a*). In his second reading explanation the Premier said:

> It is realized that many patients will not be able to afford the maximum charge and that some will not be able to afford anything. I assure the House that the scheme will be administered with discretion and sympathy; that the reasonable needs of the patient and his or her dependents will be considered; and that a charge will not be made if it would cause hardship.

In the event of the patient's not being able to pay the amount set down, what relative of the patient will be liable for payment of this sum?

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier): As my second reading explanation indicated, this charge will be levied most sympathetically and according to a means test, which means that those who cannot pay will not be asked to pay. Without providing the administrative detail to the crossing of the last "t" and the dotting of the last "i", I assure the honourable member that this will not be administered so as to cause hardship.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier has not answered my question. If the patient is unable to pay, what relatives will be liable to meet the financial liability?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: No-one will be liable any more than is the case at present in regard to Government hospitals. The honourable member can rest assured that the same provisions as apply now to the payment of charges at a Government hospital will apply here, except that a means test is applicable. Does that answer the honourable member's question?

Mr. HUGHES: No. The Premier is dealing with cases of physical illness, whereas the Bill relates to mental hospitals. If the patient is unable to pay, who will be liable? It might be a member of the family who was able to pay. How far down the family tree will this go?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: This clause will enable regulations to be introduced. New section 166 (1) (*b*) states that the Governor may make regulations prescribing the persons or classes of person from whom the amounts so payable are recoverable and providing for the payment by and recovery from persons or persons of a class so prescribed of any amounts so payable for any such treatment or service. Those matters will be under the scrutiny of Parliament.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier is trying to palm me off by referring to a regulation, because if we pass the measure it will be too late to do anything by regulation.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The honourable member may argue about any such regulation when it is before Parliament. I cannot add to my statement that the provision will be administered sympathetically, according to a means test.

Mr. HURST: The Premier's explanation is unsatisfactory. How could we, having accepted the principle in the Bill, legitimately argue against a regulation? If the Premier cannot answer our questions, progress ought to be reported.

Mr. CLARK: I am disgusted, because not only are we imposing a fee for the period to which a patient is in an institution, but we are also providing through his estate for his relatives to be slugged when he dies.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I do not want to push this Bill through if members opposite are seeking further information. I draw their attention to section 166 of the present Mental Health Act, which mentions fees that may be charged. It defines the persons who may be responsible, and provides:

. . . shall be a debt due to the Crown for which the following persons shall be jointly and severally liable:

I. The person so detained:
II. The husband of the said person:
III. The father (or, if the father is dead, the mother) of such person if and so long as the said person is under the age of twenty-one years:
IV. The children of the said person being of the age of twenty-one years or upwards.

They are the people already defined in section 166 (1) of the Mental Health Act. I cannot give an undertaking that it will be limited to that, but I imagine it will be. The matter will come before the House by regulation. If members desire me to consult my colleague and find out what he intends to do about the regulation, I shall be happy to do so.

Mr. CORCORAN: The Premier should consult his colleague on this matter. He has given us an insight into how far this goes under the present Act. It goes too far.

Mr. LAWN: Members on this side have been given information by the Premier about the class of person that will have the responsibility of making these payments. If this clause is passed the class of person to which the Premier has referred will be deleted from the Act. Can he say what class of person will replace those referred to in section 166?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Details would be given by regulation and the matter could be discussed in this Chamber. However, I will obtain further information.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 6. Page 3460.)

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Leader of the Opposition): I support the Bill.

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

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from December 5. Page 3074.)

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide): I support the Bill. Clause 30 provides that a member of Parliament may, by notifying the State Returning Officer, vote in the district he represents instead of in the district in which he resides. No reason has been advanced for this provision. As a member who could take advantage of this provision, I say that I do not want this privilege. I have never needed it and I can only think it has been inserted on behalf of members of the Legislative Council, supporters

of the present Government, who have lived in the metropolitan area for years while representing country districts. At the last seven elections in which I have participated I have never lived in my electoral district. However, earlier I did live in the district for many years. Regarding the seven elections I have referred to, I was opposed at the first election by three candidates, two of whom lived in the district (I do not know where the other candidate lived). Since that first election I have been opposed twice by a Communist candidate who lived in the Adelaide District, and I was twice opposed by a Democratic Labor Party candidate who lived in the Adelaide District. All the other candidates who opposed me were independent, D.L.P. and Communist candidates who lived outside the district. At the last election I was opposed by a Liberal and Country League candidate who, again, did not live in the district.

I did not have any advantage over them because I did not have the right to vote. It would not have made any difference if I had voted. At the last election when, for the first time ever, I was opposed by an L.C.L. candidate I still had slightly better than two votes to every vote he gained, and I have every reason to believe that I would have received the preferences of the other candidates because they asked the voters to give me their No. 2 preferences. So, from experience at seven general elections I can say that living out of my district has never affected me. I have never wanted any advantage over my opponents, and I do not ask for any advantage in the future. I have no intention of taking advantage of this provision. There is no reason for giving ourselves a privilege that is not shared by every other person in the community at a general election. I am forced to conclude that the only reason for this provision is that it has been inserted to enable members of the Legislative Council, instead of voting in metropolitan electoral districts, to vote for districts in the South-East and in the Far North, despite the fact that they have been living in the metropolitan area for many years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill also provides that where in future there is a tie between two candidates the matter shall be determined by putting their names into a hat and picking one name out. I have never heard such a ridiculous thing from allegedly responsible people. Here is a Government of this State suggesting, in such a vital issue as an election for a member of this House or of the Legislative Council, that in the event of a tie the names of the two candidates should be put into a hat and the person whose name comes out first should be the successful candidate.

Mr. Clark: The Commonwealth Government uses this system for selecting boys to go to Vietnam.

Mr. LAWN: This seems to be the policy of the Liberal Party, both here and in the Commonwealth sphere. Under this policy a person's future is determined by a lottery.

Mr. Jennings: They believe in raffles.

Mr. LAWN: Members of that Party kicked up a big hullabalo here in 1965 when a Bill to give the people the right to vote on a lottery was before the House, yet the people of all districts of the State, with one exception, voted overwhelmingly in support of a State lottery. The exception was your district, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the honourable member does not hold that against me.

Mr. LAWN: No, I do not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people in your district have a right to their opinion, and if they are opposed to lotteries I have no quarrel with them or with you, Sir. However, one or more members of the Party opposite, despite the wish of the people to have their own State lottery, still opposed the wishes of their constituents in this House when the Bill to establish the lottery was introduced following the referendum.

Mr. Clark: They said it was like putting poison in the hands of children.

Mr. LAWN: Yes, at least one Liberal member used that expression. The Liberal Party in the Commonwealth sphere draws names out of a hat to decide which boys will be sent to Vietnam to be maimed or even possibly killed. Now we have the Government in South Australia telling us that in the event of a tie between two candidates at an election of members of the South Australian Parliament we should determine by lottery who is to be successful. I challenge the Liberal Party opposite to go a little further, if they believe that this provision should be inserted, and say that when there is any tie in the voting in this House we should use a hat and determine the question that way.

Mr. Clark: That might be better than the present method.

Mr. LAWN: It would not be any worse than the present position. In any event, if the Government put the names into a hat I would

not trust it. I certainly would not let this Government toss a penny before I examined it to see that it did not use a double-headed one. There are ways of rigging the putting of names in a hat, too.

Mr. Burdon: That wouldn't be beyond them.

Mr. LAWN: Regarding trusting this Government, I know the Attorney-General will agree with me that a dog is a good judge of character. He has said this before, and I agree with him. I think the Attorney went so far as to say that all dogs were good judges of character. I know that the German shepherd dog is very intelligent, because I have one that spends some time inside our house every evening. He comes and sits down alongside members of the family and watches television with them. Some time ago, at about the time of the election, the Speaker and the Premier appeared on television, the dog barked and made for the screen and I had to dash after him and pull him back. Although I know he would not eat a member of the Liberal Party or the Speaker, I was disappointed that he would even bite them. A few weeks ago, quite unexpectedly, the Speaker made a sudden appearance on television regarding the present wheat surplus. The dog got away from me, ran over to the television screen, and justified my high opinion of his sagacity. He was not trying to bite the Speaker or to eat him but, as members can now realize, a dog with his intelligence did what I should have realized at the time: he tried to use the Speaker as he would a tree. He will not trust either of the participants in the Stott-Hall coalition, and I will back his judgment.

I agree in principle with the amendments in regard to postal voting, but again it was the Labor Party that gave the lead. The amendments this Government introduced in 1968 were almost the same as we introduced while in Opposition in 1961. Following the Frome by-election, at which the member for Frome (Mr. Casey) was elected, we told the House what happened regarding the postal voting at that by-election. It is anyone's business what went on. We suggested that the only way out was for postal votes to be in the hands of a returning office on the day of the voting, but the Playford Government threw out our suggestion without even considering it. Now, in 1968, the Liberal Party realizes we were right in 1961. In the same way it has recognized in 1968 that our proposals regarding electoral reform, which we made over 20 years ago, were justified. I may have something more to say in Committee. I will vote against some of the clauses and support others.

Mr. BROOMHILL (West Torrens): I believe this Bill clearly bears the seal of the Attorney-General. Some aspects we can support, while others we can strongly oppose. Once again, in line with most Bills introduced by the Attorney-General, this Bill is notable for omissions. In the first paragraph of his second reading explanation, the Attorney-General said:

> Following consideration of the Millicent electoral petition by the Court of Disputed Returns it seemed desirable to examine the Electoral Act to see what modifications should be effected in the light of the judgment of the court and of the matters which arose during the hearing.

I believe this is where the Attorney-General made his major mistake with this Bill, because I should have thought he would recognize that the Millicent election was not the only occasion on which the State has had problems with the existing Electoral Act. We have only to look at what has happened at elections for Frome, Chaffey, Murray and many other districts to see that the existing Act is badly out of step. I agree with the member for Adelaide that in 1961, while in Opposition, the Labor Party sought to remove from the Electoral Act one of the major confusing factors, which was in relation to postal votes. The Opposition then sought to have postal votes within the electoral system by 8 p.m. on the day of the poll. I consider that, if the Government had taken notice of the point of view of the Labor Party at that time, as now accepted by the Attorney-General, we would not have had the problems that have occurred since.

However, I consider that the second reading deserves support, even if for no other reason than that we are now having a provision that postal votes must be in the electoral system by 8 p.m. on the day of the poll. Further, we will have a provision to enable an 18-year-old person to be an authorized witness, and this goes a long way towards meeting many of the difficulties we have had in the past. These two provisions will remove many of the difficulties that we have had about disputed votes.

It is strange that the Attorney-General now seeks to substitute for the Returning Officer a legally qualified person to decide the acceptance or rejection of disputed votes. I do not consider that the Attorney has been particularly confident in submitting this provision as a genuine alteration, because he devotes only

about 12 words to it in his explanation. If he was sincere about making this important change, he would have provided sufficient reasons to justify it. Because there will not be disputes about the time of lodging of postal votes in future, whoever decides disputed votes will consider mainly only those votes in respect of which there is doubt about whether the number is in the square, or about whether a figure is, say, a "4" or a "7".

In these circumstances, it is obvious that the Returning Officer for the State and his staff are more competent, simply because of their experience, to decide on this kind of vote. Because of the number of votes that they normally deal with, they are able to determine validity or otherwise much better than could a legally qualified person, who would be required to deal with such matters only from time to time. In the past I have never had complaints from scrutineers about the decision of a returning officer on a matter of this kind, and the Attorney-General should provide a much stronger argument than he has provided before this alteration is made.

The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) has said that, in terms of one provision, the returning officer no longer will have a casting vote. The returning officer is given an ordinary vote and his casting vote is being taken away. In the extremely rare case when there is an equality of votes, the matter is to be decided by lot, and the member for Adelaide also expressed my opinion when he said that the Attorney-General had introduced an extremely foolish and unacceptable provision. This Parliament would become a laughing stock if the election of members were decided, even in the extremely rare case, by a form of lottery. Not only would the public react jokingly to this provision but also some serious consequences could result from it. In recent years in South Australia the two Parties in Parliament have been approximately equal in numbers; in fact, in the last Parliament only one seat decided who would govern and who would not. Imagine the public reaction if at the next election in Gouger, for instance, the Premier and his opponent polled equal votes and the returning officer simply by drawing a name out of a hat or by flipping a coin determined, by luck, that the present Premier would not retain his seat. It would mean not only that the member would be defeated by the flip of a coin but that the Government would be determined in the same way. That is intolerable.

It is not easy to find an answer to this problem, but the returning officers, who apply themselves in all cases diligently to their duties and have no real interest in the result of an election, should be given an ordinary vote, and, on an occasion when the voting was equal, it should be ruled that the sitting member had not been defeated; he should be declared re-elected. If there are new members or there is a new area and the votes are equal, the only fair way to tackle the problem is for a fresh election to be called for that seat. That might not be completely foolproof but it would provide a satisfactory answer to the problem, certainly more satisfactory than the strange provision that the Attorney-General has introduced in this Bill.

I support the clause reconstituting the Court of Disputed Returns, which provides that only a judge will sit in that capacity. No good purpose has been served in the past by members of Parliament being able to hold positions on the court. In his second reading explanation the Attorney-General said:

> While it is not suggested that the non-judicial members of the court took a narrow Party view, it was, I understand, widely said before and during the hearing, "The two Government members will be on one side, the two Opposition members on the other and the judge will decide. What's the good of having the politicians on it?"

I agree with that thought. I, too, have heard it widely said that members of Parliament served no good purpose by taking their place on the Court of Disputed Returns. The new provision is far more acceptable.

I am not at all happy about candidates being unable, under the new provision, to witness postal voting applications in the future. The very fact that the Attorney-General proposes this change suggests that candidates could use or have used this situation for their own personal advantage. I ask the Attorney-General whether this is so, whether he has any facts to substantiate such a claim, because the members of the community look for candidates during elections to help them with their postal vote applications. I do not blame them because, when we look at the current application form for a postal ballot paper, we find it is much more confused than it should be, and is particularly difficult to follow. In almost every case where an elector applies for an application form and receives the current form he needs some assistance to complete it. The first problem is that he has to declare that he is enrolled on the electoral roll and has to state the name of the subdivision and the district for which he is

enrolled. This information is not readily known by many members of the community. Then, he has to state the ground on which he is applying for a postal vote, and the form shows reasons (*a*) to (*e*) why he will not be voting at a polling booth and why he is applying for a postal vote. The elector has to strike out the grounds that do not apply to his or her case, and this is confusing. It is opposite to what is generally required when people are asked to complete a document.

Perhaps 90 per cent of people receiving an application form would require some assistance, and they generally assume that they can obtain this help from one of the candidates. In some cases it is the local member with whom they have had some contact and it is proper that they should seek this assistance from the honourable member or from a candidate. The candidate obtains no personal gain by assisting the voter to fill out the application form, because it is merely an application for a postal vote, the ballot paper being posted to the address the elector nominates after the form is completed. I see no reason why there should be any suggestion that it is improper for candidates to take this step and, unless some real evidence is provided by the Attorney that it would be undesirable, then no change should be made. The Attorney-General makes no reference in the Bill to preventing political party workers from assisting electors to complete the application form and the same thing should apply to any candidate.

Another clause provides that persons making postal votes can use an authenticated mark and that a witness can carry out certain duties for an elector who is incapable. The current provisions have never caused any real problem although perhaps they have caused some inconvenience, but I believe that this alteration will not remove the overall difficulty of people who want to take advantage of the provisions the Attorney seeks. It has been my experience that many people in hospitals and rest homes, particularly elderly people, because of their state of mind and health are not particularly interested when an election is being held. They are more concerned about their own health, and they treat an election as something of a trial. Therefore, we should not provide the opportunity for another person to assist the voter to the very marked degree possible under this new provision. I do not think the Attorney-General attempted to show that there was any real reason for a change in this direction. If this change is made it could lead to charges of malpractice or, certainly, to suspicion of malpractice. Therefore, I suggest that the Government should further consider this matter.

Regarding misplaced postal votes, sections 78 and 79 of the principal Act provide that, if a person does not receive his postal vote certificate and ballot-paper after he has applied for them, if time permits he can, by visiting the polling booth within his subdivision and satisfying the presiding officer that he has not received a postal vote certificate and ballot-paper through the post, vote at that polling booth. In most cases this is not practicable for a person who, after having applied for a postal vote certificate, has gone to another State and then finds that the papers have not been forwarded to the address named in the application. Such a person, of course, would not be able to reach a polling booth within his subdivision.

I know of cases where this has happened. A man and wife applied for postal vote certificates and ballot-papers, named the address where they would be residing in another State but, after a week, the husband had received his postal vote certificate and ballot-paper but the wife had not. They telephoned the presiding officer and told him what had happened but, despite the fact that the returning officer was satisfied that the ballot-paper had not been received, he was powerless to issue a fresh one. Had this taken place in a district near the voter's subdivision, she could have returned to it and cast a vote. Only one vote can be counted: if two ballot-papers were completed and forwarded to the returning officer, he would quickly observe that there were two ballot-papers from the same person. He would have to check the signatures, but only one of those envelopes could be opened and only one vote could be counted. I hope that some of the matters raised by the Opposition during this debate will be fully considered in Committee. I support the second reading.

Mr. McKEE (Port Pirie): I do not want to delay the passage of this Bill. However, some matters concern me, although most of the measure is fairly good. I support the provision that postal vote certificates must be in the hands of the returning officer at the close of the poll. This will certainly short-circuit much of the skulduggery that went on after the Frome by-election and after the recent Millicent donnybrook. Honourable members will agree that the latter was a very costly issue and one which should never have occurred, because the postal votes involved in the hearing were very doubtful votes indeed.

As this situation could recur, I hope that this provision will rectify the position.

When I consider this Bill I am reminded of a conversation I had recently with a very wealthy grazier. That person said to me, "By Jove, I just cannot go along with this one vote one value that you blokes are continually putting up." Probably he had been talking to the member for Eyre (Mr. Edwards), because I know that those are his views, and this is the line of thinking this chap took. He said, "I have never agreed with the one vote one value system, and I never will." When I said to him, "What causes you to follow that line of thought?", he replied, "We could not win; it is as simple as that." Their idea is that if they cannot win it is crook.

Mr. Clark: Self-protection!

Mr. McKEE: Yes. He said that if they could not win it was no good. He believes that the people who make his machinery and the surgeons in our hospitals are not as important as he is and that they are not worth as many votes as he is.

When commencing his second reading explanation, the Attorney-General said that, following consideration of the Millicent electoral petition to the Court of Disputed Returns, it seemed desirable to examine the Electoral Act. Well, I think those who sat on the court (the member for Whyalla was one) and any others who followed the proceedings would agree that as well as an examination of the Electoral Act a medical examination of some of the witnesses might also be desirable. It seemed to me, as an observer, that the witnesses suffered frequent attacks of amnesia but that on various occasions they would very quickly recover. One thought that during the period of their recovery they were about to place the facts before the court, but suddenly when things did not appear to be going very well they would have a relapse and be overcome by a sudden loss of memory again.

One witness, who appeared to be a reasonably bright young fellow (he gave his occupation as a grazier), continually said during the course of his examination that he was not sure about certain things. When he was told that it was necessary for him to be sure of the facts that he was placing before the court, he replied to further questions by again saying, "Well, yes, but I am not sure." Counsel then said:

When you say, "Well, yes, but I am not sure", does this mean that you are sure?"

To this the witness replied, "Yes, that means I am sure". Therefore, when he said he was not sure he meant that he was sure.

Mr. Clark: That sounds a little bit confused.

Mr. McKEE: I have done the best I can to try to put this over so that the House can understand it. He endeavoured to confuse not only himself but also everyone else associated with the court. I think most members would agree that this poor, unfortunate fellow should be medically examined, because I am sure he would find it difficult to carry out his occupation as a grazier and to sort the sheep from the cattle or, as the member for Eyre (Mr. Edwards) would say, the wombats from the crows. I believe the judge made a fair decision in the Millicent case. I do not think he had any problem in making a decision, because I think he made up his mind after hearing the first witness. I have referred to this case because the provision in the Bill relating to postal voting will eliminate these problems and we will probably find that this skulduggery does not occur again, because it is fairly costly and I think it should be avoided.

Clauses 4 and 5 provide for a person with legal training to act as referee. I object to this, for I believe it will give great power to one person. Members can doubtless foresee the problems that could arise if certain people were appointed to act as referee. One must consider whether the person selected as referee would favour a particular political Party. If he did he would find it difficult to bring down a decision against the Party which he supported or of which he was a member.

Mr. Jennings: It would be difficult for him to be as impartial as you or I would be.

Mr. McKEE: Yes, and I admit I would have some difficulty. Imagine if the member for Eyre, for instance, were appointed referee. I use him as an example because he has made certain statements about one vote one value and has made it clear that he is a true-blue Liberal. I make it clear that I am a true-blue Labor supporter. However, in view of the honourable member's references to one vote one value, I use him as an example. Of course, I could equally use as an example the Attorney-General, the member for Rocky River or any other member opposite.

Imagine any of those members being placed in the position of referee and having to make an honest decision. If they were required to decide against the Liberal Party, can we imagine their doing so? I have nothing against the member for Eyre, who is not a

bad bloke, but imagine what would happen to him if he were in this position. If he had to make a decision against his Party, it could kill the man, and no-one would wish to see that happen. Therefore, I think it would be unwise to place one man in this position.

I believe the Returning Officer for the State has done a most satisfactory job in the past, and I hope all members would agree with that. Although I am not sure that all members would agree, I am certain most voters would agree. As the returning officer is a taxpayer (and under this Government he is paying plenty), I believe he should be entitled to a vote, as is an ordinary citizen. If there is an equality of votes, the sitting member has not been defeated and ought to retain his seat. There should be no casting vote.

Mr. McAnaney: What happens if there is not a sitting member among the candidates?

Mr. McKEE: If two new candidates obtain an equal number of votes, that is a different matter. I am referring to instances in which there is an equality of votes and one candidate is a sitting member. Most of the issues in the Bill seem to have been dealt with reasonably and, as the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) has said, the provisions have been stolen from Labor Party policy. Therefore, I support them.

Mr. CASEY (Frome): In my opinion, this Bill is more a Committee measure and, doubtless, the various clauses will be debated at that stage. I cannot understand why the Attorney-General is making some of these changes. I agree with several provisions and disagree with others. First, I commend the Attorney for altering the postal voting system, which has had a detrimental effect on elections in this State for a number of years. I went through a period of suspense in 1960, when certain postal votes were counted in my district. I thought then (and I am still of the same opinion) that those votes should not have been counted. However, there were loopholes in the Act and the Premier of that time could wield the big stick, and was able to have those votes counted.

This Bill provides that only postal votes that are received by the returning officer before the close of the poll will be considered and, if formal, counted. Votes received after the close of the poll will not be formal and will not be counted. I agree wholeheartedly with this provision. We do not want a repetition of what has taken place regarding postal voting at the last few elections. Because of what I have said, I do not think there will be any difficulty about passing that provision in this House. The other provision with which I agree is that a judge will be appointed (and solely a judge) to the Court of Disputed Returns. When the Court of Disputed Returns sat last year, it was obvious to me, from the proceedings that I attended, that having two Government members and two Opposition members on the court was unnecessary, because in point of fact the judge had the final say anyway, and could do the job efficiently on his own.

I shall now deal with the clauses with which I disagree. The first of these appoints a referee to determine exactly what markings on ballot-papers render the ballot-papers eligible to be counted and what do not. It is a personal affront to any returning officer in the State, or indeed in the Commonwealth, to ask for a referee to be appointed to determine exactly what votes are to be counted and what are not, just because they are marked. Many voters mark their ballot papers in an unusual way, to say the least. As an official scrutineer, I myself have seen a number of counts carried out. Many of these ballot-papers are not very difficult to deal with. A few are on the borderline but the returning officer for the district usually has little difficulty in determining what shall be classified as formal and what as informal. If he is in difficulty, they are referred to the Returning Officer of the State, who is capable of determining exactly what votes are formal and what are not.

I do not see that a lawyer, for example, will be any more capable (in fact, I think he would not be as capable, not by a long shot) than the returning officer. I cannot see why the Attorney-General even suggests that he would be. Does a man need legal training to be able to tell whether the number "1" is shown on the ballot-paper, or the number "2" or the number "3", as the case may be? If two lawyers get together and are asked to give a definite opinion on a certain matter, nine times out of 10 they will disagree. It is their legal training. It is absolutely nonsensical to appoint a lawyer, as the Attorney-General proposes in this Bill, to determine whether a marking on a ballot-paper will make that ballot-paper formal or informal. The returning officer is quite capable, and I believe the Attorney-General realizes this but, unfortunately, he, being a legal man, decides to put some little extra into the Bill. I do not know what he satisfies—perhaps his own little whims—but it is unnecessary. I hope he

looks again at this provision, realizes the folly of it and deletes it when the Bill is in Committee.

I disagree, too, with the provision about a member of Parliament who is not living in the district in which he stands as a candidate having the privilege of voting in that district. Very few Labor members of Parliament have ever lived outside their own district, whereas a number of Liberal members do live outside the districts they represent. Whether this is a sop to allow these Liberal members to vote in the districts they represent I do not know. I do not think it is.

Mr. Hurst: They should live in the district they represent.

Mr. CASEY: I agree with that. If they do not, in my opinion they have no earthly right to vote in that district. I have no idea what prompted the Attorney-General to raise this matter. I should like him to give me one good reason why a member of Parliament who does not live in his district should be entitled to vote in that district, and I would be pleased to listen to him. However, I will take much convincing on this point.

The SPEAKER: This is the second reading debate, but the honourable member seems to be inclined to take the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. CASEY: I referred to a particular clause.

The SPEAKER: I do not wish to curtail the honourable member in any way, but the clauses are dealt with separately in the Committee stage.

Mr. CASEY: I have not referred to clauses individually, but referred to the provisions of a particular clause. I disagree with the Attorney-General's suggestion that a member of Parliament should be entitled to cast a vote for a district in which he does not live. It is a privilege to be able to vote in elections in this country, and voting is compulsory. The Attorney shakes his head: perhaps he is getting technical. Although it is compulsory to vote in Commonwealth elections it is not compulsory to vote in State elections unless a person has placed his name on the roll, and he does not have to do that unless he wishes to do so. However, once his name is placed on the State roll he is bound to vote. The Attorney now nods his head.

This Bill has several good points but other aspects are not in the interest of Parliamentarians nor in the interest of the people of this State. Should there be a tie between two candidates the Attorney suggests that they cast lots. This is one of the most stupid suggestions I have heard, and I think this principle is wrong for an election. If a sitting member is competing against another candidate he should be automatically elected if there is a tie, because he has not been defeated. That would be a fair system. Many Government members who have represented their district for years would be disappointed if an outsider competed against them and the result was a tie. Would they be happy to cast lots?

In fairness to the sitting member he probably thinks that he is entitled to the seat, because he has not been defeated, and I think his argument would be correct. Is it suggested that the names should be put in a hat? Who draws a name out? This is a ridiculous idea. Would they play crow? Perhaps they will play two up! We should be sensible about this matter. Why not leave it to the returning officer? I am certain that he would definitely give his casting vote in favour of the sitting member, because the whole point is that the sitting member has not been defeated. It is as simple as that.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: What if there is no sitting member?

Mr. CASEY: In that case I suggest that there be another election, because there has been a dead heat. It does not matter whether we are considering sporting fixtures or other kinds of event; if there is a deadheat the prize is split. Unfortunately, in the case of people standing for official positions, that solution cannot be applied: the contest must be declared a draw and there must be a re-run. If the Attorney-General can convince me otherwise—

Mr. Virgo: Why not toss a coin right at the start?

Mr. CASEY: It comes back to the absolute folly of the Attorney-General's suggestions: they just do not make sense. You can have only one winner and the people are entitled to elect a member—it should not be done by tossing a coin. We must be realistic about this serious matter, so the Attorney-General should convince the Minister of Lands that it is about time he came down to reality. If, at the next election, the Minister drew with his opponent and, after drawing lots, the Minister dipped out and the Labor Party candidate was elected, I can imagine that, deep down in his own mind, the Minister would say, "Well, I was not defeated anyway. We drew, but it was bad luck I drew the wrong straw." This is ridiculous. The people of

this State must decide. Unless a person gets a majority he is not entitled to sit in this House.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order. The honourable member for Frome.

Mr. CASEY: The Minister of Lands knows that, if he squared the card, he would react in this way. This is a very serious matter. The people of this State are given an opportunity to elect members to this House, and I say that, unless we give those people the opportunity to decide who is to come in here and who is not, we are not doing the right thing by them.

Mr. Clark: You would have to think of the people who lost on the toss of a coin.

Mr. CASEY: Yes. This provision just does not make sense to me. I say that in the event of a dead-heat between two candidates who were not previously members, there must be a re-run. In the event of a tie involving a sitting member, that member should be entitled to the seat. This would be fair to everyone.

I shall have more to say during the Committee stage. I merely voice my disapproval of some of the amendments that have been introduced by the Attorney-General. As I indicated earlier, I approve of some of the amendments. I sincerely hope that the Attorney will heed what I have said this evening and consider this matter a little more thoroughly than apparently he considered it before the Bill was introduced.

Mr. EDWARDS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.29 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, February 13, at 2 p.m.