

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Tuesday, September 30, 1969.

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

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)**

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

**PETITION: ABORTION LEGISLATION**

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE presented a petition signed by 27 persons stating that the signatories, being 16 years of age or older, were deeply convinced that the human baby began its life no later than the time of implantation of the fertilized ovum in its mother's womb (that is, six to eight days after conception), that any direct intervention to take away its life was a violation of its right to live, and that honourable members, having the responsibility to govern this State, should protect the rights of innocent individuals, particularly the helpless. The petition also stated that the unborn child was the most innocent and most in need of the protection of our laws whenever its life was in danger. The signatories realized that abortions were performed in public hospitals in this State, in circumstances claimed to necessitate it on account of the life of the pregnant woman. The petitioners prayed that the House of Assembly would not amend the law to extend the grounds on which a woman might seek an abortion but that, if honourable members considered that the law should be amended, such amendment should not extend beyond a codification that might permit current practice.

Petition received.

**QUESTIONS****PETROL PRICES**

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It has been widely reported in Australia that the price of petrol will be increased. During the period of office of the Labor Government an increase in price was granted to meet the temporary conditions that we were told then existed because of the Suez crisis and the necessity to obtain tankers in the short term at exorbitant charter rates to supply petrol to Australia. That increase was expected to be temporary, but the price has not come down, although the freight rates should

have reduced by now because the condition for which the increase was allowed was stated at the time to be only a short-term condition. I know of no increases in cost to the petrol industry that would justify an increase in price at this stage, and at present many discounts are being offered by wholesalers, who are selling at far below the controlled prices. In these circumstances, can the Premier say what the position is in relation to submissions made to the Government on petrol prices (because the price fixed in South Australia normally becomes the price throughout Australia) and what factors have led to an approach by the oil companies for an increase in the price of petrol?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Leader knows that much progress has occurred in Australia since his Government left office, although, apparently, he uses his term in office as a yardstick. Much has transpired since then, including increases in costs, and I am surprised that the Leader should say that he cannot recognize any increases in cost since then that would affect the cost structure of the petrol industry.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: What are they?

The SPEAKER: Order! Only one question may be asked at a time.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Leader knows that there have been substantial discoveries of oil in Australia that are to be shortly exploited, and this new form of crude oil will be processed by Australian refineries. The effects of these discoveries have different consequences according to the types of petroleum that will be extracted, and this will alter the cost structure of the industry, apart from the general increase in prices. I am not apologizing for the increase in the price of petrol, a matter which is being considered by the Prices Commissioner and which, no doubt, is a subject that he keeps under constant surveillance. The Leader is using the word "fixed" in a precise manner, because the price fixed by the Commissioner is freely accepted by the industry throughout Australia. From my observations of the industry, this price fixation is welcomed; it is seen not so much as a control but as a rationalization of prices. That view has been firmly expressed to me by at least two of the leading figures in the petroleum industry in Australia. As the Leader's question concerns a matter of some importance to South Australia and to Australia, I will get the latest information in relation to the consideration by the Prices Commissioner about any price alteration for petroleum in Australia.

## COPPER

Mr. ALLEN: Members may recall that during the last session several questions were asked concerning the proposed re-opening of the Burra copper mines. As local residents have been asking what progress has been made with the negotiations for re-opening the mines (which will mean much to this town and district), will the Premier obtain from the Minister of Mines a progress report on investigations being made in relation to the proposed re-opening of these mines?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I know from conversations that I have had with the Minister of Mines that there has been considerable activity in relation to investigations into the Burra copper mines and the prospect of extracting metal from the somewhat difficult ores there. However, I will obtain from my colleague the latest information for the honourable member.

## ELIZABETH GIRLS TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Mr. CLARK: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about classifying the Elizabeth Girls Technical High School?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: As the honourable member may be aware, first-year classes of the new Salisbury North Technical High School have been held this year at Elizabeth Girls Technical High School. At the beginning of 1970, these classes will be transferred to their own school, and Elizabeth will not then have the enrolment requirements to qualify for a higher classification.

## MARTIN BEND

Mr. ARNOLD: On August 11, in company with the Minister of Works and the Chairman of the Berri District Council, I inspected the deterioration of trees, vegetation and land generally at Martin Bend, near Berri. Officers of his department having studied possible means of preventing this deterioration, can the Minister say whether their investigation has been completed and whether there is a solution to this problem?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: After my visit to Berri and Martin Bend, in company with the honourable member and members of the council, this matter was taken up, and a personal inspection was made, by the Director and Engineer-in-Chief and some senior officers when they were investigating other matters associated generally with the Murray River. The Engineer-in-Chief reported to me on this matter on his return from the area. The Government, having much sympathy in this matter,

is trying to overcome the situation. This is not the only part of the river suffering from salinity. However, in an effort to find a solution regarding Martin Bend we are looking closely into the whole aspect concerning the river, and I hope to be able to give the honourable member a reply shortly, probably within a week's time.

## SHOPLIFTING

The Hon. C. D. HUTCHENS: I have noticed a newspaper report to the effect that the Juvenile Court Magistrate (Mr. Wright) has announced that he intends to name publicly girls brought before him on shoplifting charges. In the knowledge that many retailers display their goods in a tempting manner (in fact, they are aware that a certain percentage of their goods will be stolen because of this, and they lightly refer to that percentage as "five-finger discount"), will the Attorney-General ask Mr. Wright to consider publicizing girls' names only in extreme cases so that, generally, a girl's future will not be ruined because she has been tempted beyond her power to resist?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I query the last part of the last sentence of the honourable member's explanation: I am sure that that is not always the case, although I agree with him that the way in which goods are displayed in stores today is a standing temptation to people to steal them. Since I came into office, I have discussed this matter from time to time with the Retail Traders' Association and with individual storekeepers. The answer given is that this is the modern method of merchandising and that it is employed all over the world; that the storekeepers realize the temptation it is; that, because it is the way in which most customers want to be able to see their goods prior to purchase, they cannot alter it; that the answer from their point of view is a greater staff/customer ratio; and that they are endeavouring to achieve this so that there is supervision and customers are not kept hanging about. Thus the temptation is reduced, although it will not altogether be eliminated.

Regarding the question of policy that the magistrate has announced, as I said to the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday when he asked me a question about the corporal punishment of, I think, two offenders last week by their fathers in the precincts of the court, I cannot interfere in any specific case. These are matters for the magistrate exercising his judicial responsibility. Also, I cannot direct

the magistrate as to the general policy that he shall follow in these matters. As that again is a judicial matter, it would be wrong for me, as Attorney-General, or for the Government as such, to interfere with the policy adopted in the courts. If this were to be done, the independence of the judiciary would at least be threatened and that would not be right. I intend to discuss (I hope this week) with Mr. Wright the matter of corporal punishment, as I announced last Thursday. I also intend to discuss with him the announcement he made regarding the publication of the names of girl shoplifters, because the publication of names in every case, which he has announced, is not in conformity with the policy laid down in the Act by Parliament with respect to the treatment of juvenile offenders.

As I say, I intend to discuss these matters with him. However, he is the Magistrate of the Juvenile Court and his is the judicial responsibility for these things. I would have discussed these matters with him already were it not for the fact that from early last Friday morning to yesterday afternoon I was in the Far North of the State, as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. During this week I hope to be able to see him and discuss with him both these matters, and the matter of the jurisdiction with regard to juveniles generally.

#### GOOLWA CROSSING

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Attorney-General obtained from the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my recent question about the Goolwa crossing?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: An investigation was made in July, 1968, into the cost of a bridge to link Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island, and a complete series of structures to form a continuous link between Goolwa and Meningie. For the former scheme a bridge of 800ft. span would be required with extensive approach works at each end, and the cost is estimated at not less than \$600,000. No foundation investigation was carried out, but conditions were assumed to be similar to those elsewhere on the Lower Murray, requiring deep-piled foundations. The present occasional congestion is expected to be substantially eliminated by the provision of a duplicate ferry at Goolwa. This duplication is planned, but construction of the new landing ramps is dependent upon a decision regarding the future of the railway line, which crosses the ferry approach near the head of the existing ramp. This matter is at present under consideration by the Transport Control Board.

#### HOUSING TRUST RENTS

Mr. JENNINGS: Recently a constituent of mine living at Klemzig told me that, when he sought an inspection by a Housing Trust inspector regarding a new electric stove for the constituent's rental house, the inspector said, "There will be no need to worry about this, because all of the houses in this area will soon be transferred to gas, after the natural gas gets here." Will the Premier, in the temporary absence of the Minister of Housing, inquire whether this applies to all Housing Trust houses in appropriate localities and whether it presages another increase in Housing Trust rents?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will refer the question to my colleague.

#### BOLIVAR EFFLUENT

Mr. GILES: The area north of Adelaide, on the Adelaide Plains over the Adelaide Water Basin, is ideally suited to vegetable growing, although lack of water is a limiting factor. Restrictions have been placed on the use of water from the Adelaide Basin so that the supply will not be completely ruined by the influx of sea-water. Will the Minister of Works say whether any investigation has been made into the use for vegetable growing of water from the Bolivar treatment works which, after treatment, at present goes out to sea, because if this water could be used it would relieve the drain on the supply taken from the Adelaide Basin and vegetable growing could be extended considerably?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: An investigation has been carried out to some extent on this matter and, when the original investigation was carried out, the Public Works Committee recommended that an inter-departmental committee be formed to investigate the possible use of this water. That investigation has been carried out and a pilot plant has operated for some time with local growers and the council in the area. However, further work has been done, and I will obtain a detailed report on what has occurred in the area. The Government is aware of the value of reusing the water from the Bolivar treatment plant. Regarding the part of the question relating to the relief given to the drain on the underground basin, I will also obtain a report.

Mr. EVANS: I believe that the Victorian Agriculture Department, in conjunction with at least one other Government department, is conducting an experiment similar to the one being conducted at Munno Para. As the

Victorian experiment has been conducted for a longer time than the one at Munno Para, will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture to obtain a report from the Victorian Agriculture Department on its experiment, particularly whether the water is chlorinated after it comes from the sewage treatment plant and how the salt content in the Victorian effluent compares with that in the South Australian effluent, as such information would be of considerable advantage to the growers who are conducting the experiment at Munno Para?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will inquire. I am almost sure from the brief discussion I had with the Minister of Works that that information is available.

### SECONDHAND VEHICLES

Mr. RYAN: On several occasions I have asked the Government whether it intends to introduce legislation to provide for a certificate of roadworthiness in respect of all motor vehicles, especially secondhand cars being sold. Recently, representations have been made to me by people who have bought secondhand cars, only to find that they have been taken down completely. It would seem that, if there is any racket, the used car dealers have it. Some car dealers even make a delivery charge on secondhand vehicles because it is permitted on new ones. Recently, when I was in New Zealand I noticed that every car on the road carried a very small disc (about half the size of the South Australian registration disc) on which appeared a date. Each such disc must be renewed every 12 months. This is something that is accepted by both the motor vehicle industry and motorists generally as they consider that for their cars to be roadworthy and to carry the certificate is something to be proud of. Regarding the charge, they do not consider that this is unreasonable in return for the benefits they derive. As the used car racket is becoming worse each day, can the Attorney-General say whether the Government will consider the implementation of a system whereby each car must carry a certificate of roadworthiness?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: The problem of whether goods sold are up to standard is age old and, although the sale of secondhand motor cars is perhaps the problem first thought of nowadays, it is by no means the only problem that we have.

Mr. Jennings: Land salesmen aren't very good, are they?

The SPEAKER: Order! There can be only one question at a time.

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I know that the Minister and all other members of Cabinet have this matter before them and that it has been considered from time to time. I will bring the honourable member's question to the attention of the Minister of Roads and Transport.

### ANDAMOOKA POLICE

Mr. EDWARDS: Last night, when watching the *Today Tonight* programme on Channel 2, I was shocked by what opal miners said when being interviewed by Mr. David Flatman. It was apparent from the interview that grave unrest and much apprehension were being experienced in this mining town. Gougers and miners have to sit by their mines for the 24 hours of the day to keep sneaking pilferers from going into the mines and taking opals. One man said that his marriage would break up if he did not get home more often, and threats about the use of booby traps, explosives, and shotguns were mentioned in the programme. Will the Premier ask the Chief Secretary to investigate these serious allegations and to consider assigning more police to clean up these bludgers who seem to be causing the trouble on this mining field? I should like the House to know that, after the next election, I will be representing Andamooka.

The SPEAKER: Order! That part of the question is out of order.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Having visited Andamooka, I have seen the mines operating and have seen opal being extracted underground. The opal industry is extremely valuable to South Australia, and I am keen to promote it. When I returned from my last visit I discussed with my colleagues the possibility of improving conditions in the area. I shall be disturbed if there is a foundation for the allegations that have been made and if it is difficult to maintain security in the area. I am also disturbed to think that persons have to maintain a vigil on their mines for the 24 hours of the day, and, as the honourable member also says, that marriages are endangered because of this and that shotguns may be used. I will refer the matter to my colleague, who is not only the Minister in charge of the Police Force but also Minister of Mines. I am sure that he will be able to give me an up-to-date report that I can give to the House.

**HENLEY BEACH SCHOOL**

Mr. BROOMHILL: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the introduction of composite classes at the Henley Beach Primary School?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: A considerable disparity in the size of classes at Henley Beach Primary School had been noted and had been caused by a desire to keep all single grades and to avoid composite classes. A reorganization to even up the size of the classes (which would have involved some composite classes) had been contemplated to take effect from yesterday. However, because of the lateness in the year, it will not now take place but class sizes at Henley Beach Primary School will be reviewed at the beginning of 1970.

**WHEAT STORAGE**

Mr. FERGUSON: Last week the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry announced that the Commonwealth Government would grant \$10,000,000 for the provision of storage facilities for 60,000,000 bushels (including 20,000,000 bushels in South Australia) of non-quota wheat from the coming harvest. It has also been suggested that the Wheat Board might finance the construction of silo space for non-quota wheat. Will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture who will finance construction of this silo space and, if the Wheat Board is to do so, what funds that board has accumulated to enable it to do so?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will ask my colleague. I have a reply to a question asked by the member for Eyre about additional storage for 60,000,000 bushels and that reply is relevant to the honourable member's question. My colleague states:

Until I receive details of the Commonwealth plan for financial assistance for the construction of additional grain storage, I am unable to announce what South Australia's share of the total sum will be. All I can say at this stage is that I have been informed that of the 60,000,000 bushels for which storage is to be financed under the scheme, this State's allocation will be 20,000,000 bushels.

I think we can take it from that report that my colleague is also uncertain at present about the other matters raised by the honourable member. However, my colleague will get the information as soon as possible.

**BETHESDA CENTRE**

Mr. BURDON: Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked during the Budget debate

last week about the conditions under which \$6,000 would be given to the Bethesda Centre at Mount Gambier?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I have a reply from the Treasurer, who states that the proposed capital grant of \$6,300 to Bethesda is in respect of the building of a six-room accommodation unit, estimated to cost about \$10,000. The basis is subsidy of \$2 for \$1 on actual payments made. Conditions applying to such subsidies require that the plans be submitted to the Chief Secretary's Department and approved by the Chief Secretary before building commences.

**LAMB SALES**

Mr. VENNING: This morning's newspaper contains a report that Mr. Heysen (Livestock Officer in the Agriculture Department) has drawn attention to the high proportion of rejection this season of lambs slaughtered for export. Mr. Heysen has said that the rejections are caused by bruising from wool pulling, prodding with sticks, and similar rough handling. He mentioned figures of 14 per cent at Gepps Cross abattoirs and 18 per cent at Port Lincoln freezing works. Much publicity has been given to the handling of lambs, and these figures are alarming. Will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture whether a vigorous campaign can be launched to prevent this loss of export income by the man on the land which we all know is a loss to the community in general?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will do that.

**TEROWIE TOWNSHIP**

Mr. CASEY: Recently, the Terowie Citizens' Association was formed by people concerned with problems that will arise in Terowie because of the conversion to the 5ft. 3in. gauge of the line from Terowie to Peterborough, as this will mean that the break of gauge is at Peterborough and not at Terowie. As the first problem concerns railway houses at Terowie, will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether these cottages are to remain in Terowie or will they be moved elsewhere? The other problem concerns the Terowie water supply. In the past the Railways Department has supplied water for these railway cottages and also to some parts of the township but, if the department transfers certain of its operations from Terowie as is contemplated, these houses may not have a reticulated water service available to them.

Will the Attorney-General ask his colleague whether that water supply will be maintained and whether the Engineering and Water Supply Department will take it over, because it is most important for the town that the reticulated water supply be maintained?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I will ask my colleague what his plans may be.

#### FAMILY COURTS

Mr. FREEBAIRN: As I understand that during the last nine or 12 months the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General has discussed a proposal for the establishment of a system of family courts, can the Attorney-General say whether he has any plans to introduce such a system in South Australia?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: This matter has not been formally discussed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, although this system operates in some parts of the world and it has been suggested that we could introduce it in Australia. As I understand it, the system of family courts is more a grouping of jurisdictions rather than any new departure in the law. For example, matters that affect juveniles, matrimonial matters, and so on are grouped together and dealt with by the same judicial officers whether judges, magistrates, or other legal officers, so that like matters are dealt with. It is considered that in this way those handling these matters get more experience and perhaps a deeper insight into the problems involved. This is something of which we are aware and something that we shall examine, but at present there are no definite plans for doing anything about it here.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

Mr. HUDSON: On September 18, I asked the Attorney-General, as the Minister of Education was ill on that day, whether he would obtain details of scholarships, exhibitions, and bursaries that had been discontinued, and ascertain how the means test provisions applied in relation to these previously-made awards. In his reply, the Attorney-General said he would ask his colleague whether she was prepared to supply the information. Can the Minister of Education say whether this information has been prepared and whether it is available?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: I do not have the information today, but I could have it tomorrow. I will try to expedite the matter for the honourable member.

#### HORMONE SPRAYS

Mr. WARDLE: I have asked several questions about hormone spraying, and officers of the Agriculture Department have been in my district testing plants in strategic places. It is considered by the local committee that damages this year are greater than last year, as possible damage to the tomato crop could be about \$77,000 and to the cucumber crop about \$15,000, making a total of about \$92,000. Although it is realized that part of the damage could be caused by factors other than hormone spraying (although it is considered that most damage is caused by this spraying), will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture whether a technical report is available from the officers who have been investigating this matter for some weeks?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will take that question up with my colleague.

#### WALLAROO HOSPITAL

Mr. HUGHES: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the theatre lamp to be used at the Wallaroo Hospital?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: The theatre light for the Wallaroo Hospital that was obtained overseas arrived at Port Adelaide on September 23, 1969, and cleared customs on September 29, 1969. It is expected to be installed at the hospital on October 6, 1969, or shortly thereafter.

#### LOTTERY

Mr. EVANS: Has the Premier a reply to my recent question about the possibility of a lottery for the benefit of the festival hall project?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Lotteries Commission has forwarded a report to me, and references to that report are made in the following report from a Treasury official:

I would supplement this—  
referring to the report from the commission—  
by saying that if in fact the aggregate of all lottery profits could be increased by the introduction at a favourable time of a special large lottery for the festival hall, it must be expected that the Lotteries Commission could and should also introduce such a lottery at such a time for the benefit of hospitals. I think the conclusion is unavoidable that a lottery conducted for the purpose of the festival hall would reduce funds for hospital purposes by nearly if not entirely a comparable amount. The consequence would be equal to a further direct grant from State revenues to the festival hall and, accordingly, I could not recommend such a lottery.

The report from the commission indicates the decrease as shown in absolute terms of patronage given to smaller lotteries when larger lotteries were introduced in New South Wales. These figures are available and members may peruse them if they wish. In New South Wales the net decrease in sales, made on a yearly comparison for the period 1957-58 and 1959-60, is equal to 23 lotteries and represents a reduction in surplus revenue of \$500,000. In the light of experience in New South Wales, the Lotteries Commission believes that it would not be possible to introduce a special lottery without producing a reduction in revenue to the Government that would result, in effect, from it making a direct grant in addition to the present arrangements for the festival hall.

#### GAUGE STANDARDIZATION

Mr. VIRGO: I refer to an article and photograph appearing on the last page of last weekend's *Sunday Mail*, which shows the Premier receiving a cheque for \$200,000, as a surprise, at a Liberal and Country League function arranged in the southern districts for the benefit of an L.C.L. candidate.

Mr. McKee: A publicity stunt?

Mr. VIRGO: Yes. Although I am sure that all persons associated with the Festival of Arts will be delighted to know that the Commonwealth Government has so promptly produced the \$200,000 promised on September 15, I am sure that there will be alarm at the fact that this was done at a political meeting. As a result of apparent discussions he has had with the Prime Minister, will the Premier confirm that the Prime Minister will, as an election gimmick, announce between now and October 25 the standardization of the Adelaide to Port Pirie railway line?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I know that the honourable member is a recent entrant into politics and that, because of the seclusion of his previous activities, he does not understand the implications and working of politics. As his experience increases, however, he will understand that it is the normal system in Australia to hold a Commonwealth election every three years. At the appropriate time, the Government announces its policies and, in the ensuing three years, tries to fulfil its promises. If the honourable member studies the local situation, he will know that the present Government of South Australia is effectively fulfilling the promises it made prior to the last election.

Mr. Virgo: We will build Chowilla!

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the Premier is starting to debate his reply.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The honourable member having shown what I consider to be a normal lack of appreciation of the system, I was explaining it to him. The honourable member will appreciate that there is to be an election on October 25 (I think he has heard about that), and the electors of Australia will then choose whichever Government they want. It is therefore evident that a policy must be put before the electors. Hence, the Commonwealth Government is telling the people of Australia what it intends to do in the next three years. The Prime Minister said, in referring to this railway matter weeks ago in South Australia, that he and his Government accepted the responsibility of standardizing the Adelaide to Port Pirie link.

When I told the Prime Minister on Saturday evening that his statement had not received the prominence it should have received, he was rather surprised. I am sure he will put this matter right and make a substantive statement soon. But the fact remains that he has accepted this report, and we have since been discussing the details of construction of the line. No-one need apologize for making promises prior to an election. The honourable member's own Commonwealth leader is busily engaged in making promises but—

Mr. Virgo: Such as what?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: —whether or not he will fulfil them is another matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is getting into debate, and I ask the Premier to conclude his reply.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: If the honourable member cares to note the announcements made, he will find that over the years they will be carried out by the Government.

Mr. CASEY: A report appeared in yesterday's *Advertiser* to the effect that there would be a rail link between Port Augusta and Whyalla. I understand that a question was asked about this matter last January in the Commonwealth Parliament, when the reply given stated that the Railways Commissioner had indicated to the Commonwealth Government that this project was ready to proceed then. Less than six weeks ago I said in this Chamber that the Commonwealth Government would, within three weeks, announce that this work would proceed. (I was a little out in my calculation, although not far out.) Can the Premier say

whether yesterday's report is one emanating from the *Advertiser* itself or whether it is an authentic report received from the Prime Minister of Australia by the Premier of this State, indicating that the work will be undertaken in South Australia immediately? On the other hand, is the report merely something that has been released to the press half-heartedly, and will a further announcement be made at some future date? I shall be pleased if the Premier will explain the real situation concerning gauge standardization and other railway works to be carried out within the State.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: It surprises me that the honourable member should ask this question, because he is always confident, according to what he says in the House, that he knows what is going to happen. Indeed, perhaps I should be asking him a question. However, as he himself admits, the honourable member has been out in his prediction, and perhaps it will serve both him and the House if I obtain further information on the matter. The honourable member knows that there is no statement in the paper to the effect that work will begin in South Australia immediately. I know he appreciates the progress that this Government has been able to make regarding negotiations on gauge standardization. If the honourable member casts his mind back, he will know that negotiations have been going on for years. However, we are reaching some finality in this regard and are all pleased to see the type of report to which the honourable member has referred.

I directed the attention of members previously today to the facts as I know them, and I think the honourable member was present at that time. I referred then to the facts surrounding the newspaper item and to my knowledge of them. The Prime Minister has previously in this State verbally accepted the responsibility for converting the Adelaide to Port Pirie rail link. The honourable member will know that this Government, having placed top priority on that project, would not be pleased to see the northern line work announced and undertaken in isolation from work on the southern link. Bearing in mind his detailed questioning in the House, the replies I have previously given, and the progress that has been made in this regard, I think the honourable member should be pleased to know that this work is being undertaken during the life of this State Government and the Commonwealth Gorton Government.

### SHEEP EXPORTS

Mr. McKEE: I understand that wool-growers in South Australia are concerned at the Commonwealth Government's proposals to lift the embargo on the export of merino rams. Although I realize that this is a Commonwealth matter, I ask the Premier whether he has been approached by members of United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated and the Stockowners' Association of South Australia regarding their concern in this matter. If he has, will he comment on the attitude expressed by them?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: In framing his question, the honourable member has not indicated whether he has been approached by these people, and I do not know what has prompted his question. However, I have not been approached on this matter by any organization representing the woolgrowers, unless there is at present a letter in the mail yet to be attended to. As I have received no active approach, I have not taken any part in connection with this matter, which is one of policy.

### HEPATITIS

Mr. HURST: I read in Saturday's newspaper that action had been taken to counter an outbreak of hepatitis which had apparently occurred at the Largs North Primary and Infants Schools, and I understand that nine cases have been reported. Will the Premier ascertain whether the cause of this outbreak is known to the Minister of Health and whether any further cases have been reported? If they have been, will the Premier see what further steps can be taken to try to counter this outbreak?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will get a report from my colleague.

Mr. BROOMHILL: The Minister of Education will probably be aware that this is not the first time in the last few years we have had a report such as the one of which we have just heard. I have previously asked the Minister to see whether her department could consider providing paper towels in all schools. As part of their schooling, we teach children about hygiene, yet most schools have no towels on which the children can wipe their hands, and this discourages them from even washing their hands. Will the Minister again consider having disposable paper towels supplied at all schools?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: I shall be pleased to obtain a further reply for the honourable member.



### INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION

Mrs. BYRNE: Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on September 18 about industrial promotion and land available for this purpose in the area covered by the city of Tea Tree Gully?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I have a reply concerning the availability of industrial land, and it is in two parts, referring to Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully, as follows:

Tea Tree Gully: The trust's existing industrial land at Holden Hill is affected by the proposed Modbury Freeway and, on present planning, would yield about 50 acres for industrial purposes. The trust is unable to subdivide the area until the completion of the further revision of the Modbury Freeway, and is therefore unlikely to be able to offer industrial sites until January or February, 1970.

Salisbury: The trust currently holds nearly 20 acres immediately north of the aerodrome at Parafield and more than 200 acres at Salisbury South. Both areas lie within the boundaries of a proposed industrial zone.

### FISHING VESSELS

Mr. BURDON: In the absence of the member for Millicent (Mr. Corcoran), I ask the Minister of Marine whether he has a reply to the question about fishing vessels asked by my colleague on September 23.

The Hon. J. W. H. CUMBE: The Marine and Harbors Department is faced with a formidable task in surveying all fishing vessels, irrespective of size, before November 1 next, but will make every effort to carry out the work with the number of surveyors at its disposal. However, the department is well able to cope with the number of applications being received, as the applications are not coming in very fast. Provided a fisherman has applied for the survey of his vessel and enclosed the necessary fee, the department will not take legal action against him if he uses his boat for fishing before it is actually surveyed. The names of all fishermen who so apply will be passed on to the Director and Chief Inspector of Fisheries for his information in connection with the issue of crayfish and prawn fishing licences, but such fishermen are urged to make their applications for survey immediately. All survey certificates issued will indicate an expiry date based on the time of the actual survey. I emphasize that this course is being taken in this instance as this is the first time that these men are being covered, and this will assist them in the transitional period.

The only action sought from the fishermen for this concession is that they make their boats available for survey on the day nomina-

ted to them, and every effort will be made to get them all surveyed before November 1, or as soon thereafter as possible. The current manning regulations for fishing boats came into operation in April, 1966, and are still extant. However, they are shortly to be reviewed and discussions will be had with interested parties before the revised regulations are drafted.

Both certificates of competency and certificates of service have been issued under the current regulations since 1966. The latter were necessary in the early stages to enable some sort of certificates to be issued to fishermen who, whilst actively engaged in the industry, did not have all the requisite qualifications for a certificate of competency at the time the regulations came into force. It was the intention, however, to phase out the certificates of service after a period, and it is felt that this time has now arrived, as most of the fishermen have now had over three years in which to gain the qualifications, which they lacked at the time the regulations were first introduced and which prevented them from qualifying for a certificate of competency. The department has not as yet actively policed the manning regulations in the sense of carrying out spot checks on craft putting to sea to ascertain whether the crew are correctly certificated, but this will be done in due course.

### TINTINARA BRIDGE

Mr. NANKIVELL: I have addressed two questions to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Roads and Transport, regarding the Tintinara bridge. He has said that he can now reply and, although I do not know to which question he refers, I shall be pleased if he will give that reply.

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: The honourable member will recall that in *Hansard* this question is headed "Tintinara Bridge": in fact, it concerns the contract for the Tintinara bridge. The reply states that the specification for the construction of the new Tintinara overpass bridge, together with its road approaches, is in the final stages of preparation. It is expected that tenders will be called in October.

### ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. HUDSON: Considerable public interest has been shown in the electoral commission's report, which redistributes boundaries for the House of Assembly and provides for certain adjustments to Legislative Council boundaries.

As all members are aware, these recommendations cannot be put into effect until the Government introduces a Bill to amend the Constitution Act, that Bill then needing to be passed by Parliament. Can the Premier say when such a Bill will be ready to be introduced into this House?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: No, I cannot, but, as a matter of urgency, the Parliamentary Draftsmen have been instructed to draw up the necessary legislation and that will not take very long.

#### WATERVALE WATER SUPPLY

Mr. FREEBAIRN: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question of September 23 about the Watervale water supply?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Of the total number of property owners in the Watervale district, 70 per cent has been interviewed and 37 per cent has indicated opposition to the proposed water supply scheme. Within the township of Watervale the same percentage of property owners has been interviewed, with the slightly lower opposition of 31 per cent. As the survey is not yet complete, I will notify the honourable member further when it has been completed.

#### TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the number of teachers shown on the departmental pay records and whether such details indicate an increase in the number of teachers in the department?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: I assume that in his question the honourable member referred to the number of teachers actually paid. These figures are circulated regularly within the department but are not published. In themselves they have little significance as they are affected by people who may be on leave without pay. They therefore do not indicate effective gains or losses of teachers.

#### SURREY DOWNS SCHOOL

Mrs. BYRNE: Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked on September 24 about additional asphalt playing areas at the Surrey Downs Primary School?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: Surrey Downs has been provided with a sealed area sufficient to provide assembly areas, enough space for physical education activities, parking for motor cars and access to the buildings. Plans are in hand for the reticulation and grassing of

the school oval during the spring of 1969. The asphalted area at the school has been provided on the same scale that is used in all other primary schools. Some areas have been left in the front of the school for grassing and the planting of shrubs to beautify the property. The asphalted area at the school is not designed as a play area, and it is appreciated that during wet weather there must be some restriction of the movement of children but, when the grassed playing fields are established, conditions should be much improved. If and when additional buildings are required at Surrey Downs, further sealed areas will be constructed adjacent to these. In the meantime, it is not proposed to extend the existing asphalted surfaces.

Mrs. BYRNE: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my question of September 24 about the need for a covered walkway to link existing buildings at the Surrey Downs Primary School?

The Hon. JOYCE STEELE: The proposal to erect covered walkways to connect buildings has been considered many times. After careful investigation, it has been decided that such walkways would achieve little unless completely enclosed and would involve the department in a huge expenditure for the achievement of little, as there would have to be a general policy concerning all schools in South Australia. In the Samcon building all facilities such as ablution, drinking, and toilet facilities are included within the building, and there is no need for children to go outside or from one building to another, except occasionally. The cost of erecting walkways would be much better employed in meeting other more pressing needs in schools.

#### COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

Mr. ALLEN: Has the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Local Government, a reply to my question of September 17 regarding council amalgamations?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Up to the present, amalgamation of local government bodies has occurred in four locations. As mentioned by the honourable member, the Corporation and District Council of Clare and the Corporation of Burra and District Council of Burra Burra have amalgamated. In addition, the Corporation of Quorn and the District Council of Kanyaka have united to form the District Council of Kanyaka-Quorn, and the Corporation of Maitland and the District Council of Yorke Peninsula

have amalgamated under the name of the District Council of Central Yorke Peninsula. Of these four amalgamations, the new District Councils of Clare and Kanyaka-Quorn have retained mayoralties, while the other two new councils are operating with chairmen. The opportunity is available under the Act for a district council to adopt a mayoralty, but the two new councils have chosen not to do so.

The District Councils of Upper Wakefield and Saddleworth are at present involved in the procedures necessary to achieve union, and it is understood that the proposal has been put to ratepayers of both areas to ascertain their reactions. Discussions have taken place in other areas, but no official moves have been made. With the rapid improvement of communications and transport, one council can now administer a larger area without losing the value of contact at a local level. The pooling of resources of councils can result in savings and permit better overall planning for the future. In many cases, amalgamation could take place with advantage, but in other areas attempts to bring together separate centres of interest may not promote smooth administration. It is difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule. The four amalgamations mentioned all took place this year and, while the united councils have been operating for only a relatively short time, there is no reason to believe that they have not been successful.

#### DISCRIMINATION

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It has been reported to me that a complaint was made to the Attorney-General about the exclusion of Aborigines from a hotel in Port Augusta in May this year. The exclusion was of a prominent Aboriginal in South Australia who is well known to the Attorney and of a former female officer of the Aboriginal Affairs Department but, so far as I can discover, no action under the Prohibition of Discrimination Act has been taken in relation to the complaint. Will the Attorney-General say what it is intended to do about that matter? In addition, I draw his attention to a complaint made in a letter in today's *News* concerning a dance at Woodville, where it is alleged that Aborigines were excluded on the ground that, as Aborigines, they were essentially trouble-makers, even though they were not previously known to the managers of the dance. This, again, appears to be a breach of the Act and, if it is,

will the Attorney-General have investigations made immediately and prosecute if an offence can be shown to have been committed?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I have not seen today's *News* so I do not know the facts but, if they are as the Leader suggests they are, action will be taken. In any case, I will have the matter investigated as a matter of urgency. Regarding the Port Augusta incident, we have not been given the full facts on which the complaint was based. The first complaint in this matter was made to the Commonwealth member for Grey (Mr. Jessop) and the matter was then referred to me and (although I am speaking from memory of the fine details) I asked that full details be supplied so that an investigation could take place. Those details have not come to hand, so we have not been able to do anything. It may be said that I am at fault here because one of the Aborigines concerned is, as the Leader has said, well known to me and I see him frequently. Although I have had him to lunch at Parliament House since this occurrence, he has never mentioned it to me and I have not discussed it with him. That is where the matter rests and, even though much time has passed, if the details are given me the complaint will be investigated.

#### LAND SALESMEN

Mr. JENNINGS: I have been told by a licensed land salesman in my district that he has received (and he imagines that all land salesmen have received) a questionnaire, which he assumes has come from the Attorney-General's Department or from some other Government department, seeking all kinds of information that he considers the department should already have. Apart from that, I cannot take the matter any further, but if the Attorney-General is responsible for this action he will know about it. If he does not know about it, will he inquire?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: This matter does not immediately come to mind, but if the honourable member will give me the name of the person concerned I will inquire.

#### SEISMIC SURVEYS

Mr. HUGHES: On July 15, the Premier addressed a public meeting and, among other things, he referred to the two seismic surveys that had been carried out at Port Lincoln and at Wallaroo. A report in the *Advertiser* of September 27 states that the Premier told people at Port Lincoln that the seismic survey tests conducted on behalf of the Marine and

Harbors Department had proved that large ships could be accommodated in the channel there. As both surveys were made within a few days of each other, will the Minister of Marine say when similar information on the seismic survey conducted at Wallaroo will be available?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: The surveys were conducted within a few days of each other: at Port Lincoln first; then the vessel crossed the gulf and carried out a survey at Wallaroo that I had authorized. The first information available related to Port Lincoln, and processing of that was started immediately. Since the information on Wallaroo came to hand we have done preliminary work on it. The work on the Port Lincoln project has been much easier than that on Wallaroo is likely to be. Although I have seen only preliminary charts regarding Wallaroo, I know that much assessment will have to be made, probably including further work on the site to get the interpretation necessary in that area. Port Lincoln had greater depth and was much clearer. The Premier's announcement in Port Lincoln on, I think, Friday evening that that town will have the first "super" port to be built in South Australia has been greatly welcomed by the people in that town. However, I assure the honourable member that the Government and my department are most anxious to proceed with the investigation into Wallaroo, and the work will not be delayed. However, I expect that further physical work will have to be done in a boat in the harbour, and the honourable member will realize that to do that at this time of the year is difficult: it may be necessary to wait for summer weather before this work can be concluded.

#### WILD TURNIP

Mr. EDWARDS: When travelling along the railway line just south of Darke Peak on Sunday, I was amazed at the big growth of turnip along that line. When a growth of this weed occurred last year, I asked that it be looked into but, apparently, either a survey of this kind is not made each year or the growth is beyond the width of the boom attached behind the railway truck to spray along the railway line. If spraying by the present method is difficult, the Railways Department may have to use what is known as the blower type of spray to get the spray out wide enough to kill the turnip alongside the line. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether an inspector from the Port Lincoln Division can travel the

railway line and have the weeds treated when they appear, before their growth gets as vigorous as it is at present?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I will see what my colleague thinks about the matter.

#### T.A.B. ROBBERY

Mr. VIRGO: Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked several weeks ago about female managers in Totalizator Agency Board branches?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: No information is available to the T.A.B. that indicates a correlation between the number, age or sex of staff employed in any business at the time of robbery or armed hold-up. Any staff changes made by the T.A.B. have been designed to increase total efficiency. However, in the two and a half years of operation of T.A.B. in South Australia the proportion of male permanent staff to the total permanent staff has risen. The proportion of male staff in July of each of the following years was as follows: July 1967, 36.3 per cent; July 1968, 38.5 per cent; and July 1969, 41 per cent. Because of the variable hours of operating, a particular agency may be in the charge of a competent male or female officer at a given time.

Mr. VIRGO: I wish to ask a further question of the Premier.

Mr. Hudson: Do you think you'll get anything out of it?

Mr. VIRGO: I hope I get a little more than I got last time. In fact, it is because I did not get what I sought last time that I am forced to ask this question. On August 14, at page 983 of *Hansard*, I concluded my brief explanation by saying—

The Hon. R. S. Hall: You mustn't refer to *Hansard* of the same session.

Mr. Hudson: Rubbish!

Mr. VIRGO: It is no wonder that the Premier does not get the information for me, because he neither listens nor reads.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Edwardstown must ask his question.

Mr. VIRGO: The question I asked on August 14 was:

Will the Premier obtain from the Chief Secretary or, alternatively, from the Treasurer, particulars of the number of agencies in South Australia where female managers are now in control?

The Premier has brought back a garbled reply, part of which he did not read, and this is a letter from the General Manager of the

Totalizator Agency Board which is an insult to a member. I refer particularly to that part of the letter where Mr. Hatton says, "The basis of Mr. Virgo's comment appears to be in conflict with the question asked." As I do not think the Manager of the T.A.B. should assume the right to make such comments, will the Premier obtain the information which on August 14 he undertook to obtain?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The honourable member should learn one lesson in this House: the Government takes the responsibility for statements of this sort and does not load it on to public servants, members of statutory bodies or organizations associated with Government. The honourable member is wrong in attributing an insult to a person who is serving the Government in all good faith: I take the responsibility for such remarks. Having said that, I will take his rather garbled question back and see whether we can decipher it.

#### RENMARK HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. ARNOLD: The Minister of Works will recall that a deputation from the Renmark High School Council and the Parents and Friends Association, introduced to him on Tuesday, July 22, by the member for Victoria (Mr. Rodda) on my behalf, requested that the Minister consider providing a water supply to the school from the Engineering and Water Supply Department main instead of by the proposed method, namely, from the Renmark Irrigation Trust. Has the Minister received a report on this matter from the Public Buildings Department?

The Hon. J. W. H. CUMBE: As I recall, the deputation's request for a review of the proposed method of supplying water to this school involves more work than had first been thought necessary to investigate the whole matter thoroughly. I will find out what stage the investigation has reached and try to get a reply urgently for the honourable member.

#### WEST LAKES SCHEME

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: When the Premier tabled the indenture for the West Lakes scheme, he did not move that it be printed. Many bodies concerned with this scheme have not seen the indenture in detail and, on my instructions, do not know the full effect on them of some of its provisions. Because it has not been printed, it is not readily available to them. Will the Premier move that the indenture be printed, so that it will be available for all parties concerned?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will find out what is involved in getting the document printed, regarding need (which prompts the Leader's question) and expense. In the meantime, if the Leader desires that anyone have the information urgently, I will get it for him today, or as soon as possible.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have noted the Premier's reply. I should have thought that the procedure on the matter, which involved an amendment of a previous indenture, was that the indenture should be included as a schedule to the amending Act. I am glad to know that the Premier is taking action on the matter.

#### MOUNT GAMBIER WALKWAY

Mr. BURDON: Representations were made to me at the weekend concerning a proposed walkway over the railway line to connect the southern and northern sections of Wilson Street. I understand that this matter was raised many years ago. I believe that a walkway across the railway line at this point would have many advantages for people wishing to shop in the northern area and that it would benefit children living in the southern area who attend the Mount Gambier High School. I know that having both ends of this road open would create traffic hazards, and I appreciate that the road has been closed at each end as a safety measure. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether it is possible to provide an overhead walkway across the railway line at this point?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I will ask the Minister about this.

#### HIGHWAYS ENGINEERS

Mr. VENNING: During the last 12 months many engineers have been lost to the Highways Department, and I am concerned about this situation, because these engineers are resigning and taking up employment with private enterprise. Recently, the engineer for the Northern Division resigned, and he will take up a job with private enterprise towards the end of this year. Expensive equipment is available for various projects and activities throughout the State but, if the present employment situation is not rectified, the planned programme will not be able to continue. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport what action will be taken to rectify the situation causing the loss of engineers from the Highways Department?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I shall be happy to pass on the question to the Minister, but I point out that this is not a new situation.

This sort of thing has been happening, not only in the Highways Department but in all Government departments, for many years and the Mines Department has been badly affected. However, as the honourable member has asked about the present situation in a particular department, I will certainly try to find out.

#### GLENSIDE ROAD

Mr. GILES: Has the Attorney-General a reply from the Minister of Roads and Transport to my recent question about the possibility of leaving Glenside Road open after the freeway is constructed through Stirling?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: The member for Gumeracha asked me about this and so did the member for Onkaparinga. It is essential that this access road be closed off in the near future. The connection between this road and the freeway has been the cause of some confusion and several accidents. Safety has so far been achieved by impeding and slowing down the through traffic, but this is not at all satisfactory. In the design of freeway ramps, the clear distance available between the divergence from the freeway and the point of contact with local traffic is critical. A sufficient distance could be provided only with difficulty at Stirling, because of the difficult topography, with the ramps remaining clear to a point south of the freeway. Any road joining within this distance, with the freeway in full, high-speed operation, would be undesirable and dangerous.

No special provision has been made for fire-fighting. With the pedestrian underpass available between Glenside Road and Stirling main street there is no danger of residents being trapped and, in case of extreme emergency, it is not considered that a continuous chain wire fence would form any obstruction to a firefighting unit. Pedestrian access to Stirling has been provided by means of an underpass between Glenside Road and Stirling main street, and it is considered that the few residents of the Glenside Road area who are sufficiently far from the main street to make a journey by car desirable will not be unduly inconvenienced if that journey has to be made via Pomona Road.

Mr. EVANS: Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport how many accidents have occurred at the Glenside Road junction other than those which have been caused by motorists hitting the glorified light poles before reaching the junction, as I believe that there have been few accidents at this junction?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I will try to get that information.

#### SERVICE STATIONS

Mr. HUDSON: I understand that most service stations obtain a licence from the Department of Labour and Industry to store flammable liquids. It has come to my attention that proprietors of several service stations in my district have been charged an increased fee for this licence. A typical case involved a rated storage capacity at one station of about 10,000 gallons: there has been no change in the storage capacity at this station, for which the licence fee was previously \$15, but the proprietor is now being charged \$20, although there has been no alteration in the storage facilities for petrol at this service station. The proprietor has communicated with the oil company that supplies him and he is under the impression that some agreement has been reached between the oil companies and the department to alter the storage capacity rating of various service stations. In the circumstances, will the Minister of Labour and Industry ascertain to what extent licence fees for service stations have been increased and the basis on which the increases have been made?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUNBE: I will do that.

#### LEASES

Mr. ARNOLD: Has the Minister of Lands a report on progress being made in processing applications by landholders to convert from miscellaneous to perpetual leases?

The Hon D. N. BROOKMAN: No, not at the moment. When I obtain further information, I will give it to the honourable member immediately. The department is at present considering many applications.

#### FARM VEHICLES

Mr. EDWARDS: Has the Attorney-General obtained from the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my recent question about tractor permits?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: The legal position is not as suggested by the honourable member. Section 12 of the Motor Vehicles Act provides for unregistered farm implements to be used on roads within 25 miles of a farm occupied by the owner. Farm implements, as defined in the Act, include an implement or machine for ploughing, cultivating, clearing or rolling land, sowing seed,

spreading fertilizer, harvesting crops, spraying, chaffcutting, or other like operations, and also include a trailer bin constructed for attachment to a harvester for the purpose of collecting grain in bulk and a grain elevator, but do not include any other vehicle wholly or mainly constructed for the carriage of goods. The bulk fuel tanker referred to is not a farm implement but a trailer and is therefore not exempt from registration. The same applies at present to bulk grain field bins, but, because of their particular use, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles has recommended that the Act be amended to include them within the definition of "farm implement" and thus exempt them from registration. It is not intended to extend this amendment to other types of trailer, which can be registered cheaply by primary producers.

### QUARRYING

Mr. BROOMHILL: In recent weeks there has been publicity for complaints about the spoiling of the Adelaide Hills because of quarrying. Indeed, we are constantly apologizing to visitors from other States for the effects of those activities. Will the Premier say what control the Government has over quarrying in the Adelaide Hills and whether it is possible to provide for the discontinuance of the practice?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Although I will get a report for the honourable member, I point out that the Government does not apologize for South Australia to people from other States: in fact, it is busy promoting the State.

### HONEY

Mr. EVANS: Through the kindness of Senator Martin Cameron—

Mr. Hudson: Is that the current Senator Cameron or the future Senator Cameron?

Mr. Nankivell: There is only one Senator Cameron.

The SPEAKER: Order! There can be only one question at a time.

Mr. EVANS: I repeat that, through the kindness of Senator Martin Cameron, I have been given information on the imports of honey into Japan for the last three calendar years and until May this year. I will refer to figures and also to a reason given by the Japanese Ambassador for the slight reduction in imports. In 1966, Japan imported 10,893 metric tons of honey, of which only 177 metric tons came from Australia; in 1967, the total imports were 14,356 metric tons, of which 87 metric tons came from Australia; in 1968, the total

imports were 11,186 metric tons, of which 330 metric tons came from Australia; and in 1969 (January to May), the total imports were 3,951 metric tons, of which 114 metric tons came from Australia. The Ambassador states:

Admittedly, there has been a little reduction, first of all owing to the drought in the southern part of Australia, and secondly the average import price is much higher in Australia than in other countries. Also, there is a bigger demand for the lighter colour than the dark. As Senator Cameron has been kind enough to give me that information, will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Agriculture to find out from the South Australian Honey Board whether these are the only reasons why Australia exports so little honey to Japan?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I will obtain a reply for the honourable member.

### AIR POLLUTION

Mr. McKEE: Has the Premier a reply to my recent question about the report of the Senate Select Committee on Air Pollution?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The report of the Senate Select Committee on Air Pollution has recently been tabled and arrangements have been made for a few copies to be dispatched to my office as soon as possible. I will see that the member for Port Pirie obtains a copy.

### CARPENTER ROCKS ELECTRICITY

Mr. BURDON: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question recently asked by the member for Millicent (Mr. Corcoran) about the electricity supply at Carpenter Rocks?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUNBE: The Electricity Trust plans to improve the voltage levels in Carpenter Rocks by increasing the conductor size on the 12-mile line between Kongorong and Carpenter Rocks. This work is programmed for completion by October 31, 1969, and is expected to coincide with the start of the crayfish season. Voltage fluctuations at the fish processing factory and at residences in the town will be greatly reduced when this work has been completed.

### NOARLUNGA FREEWAY

Mr. HUDSON: The Commissioner of Highways has written to the Marion council a letter giving information about the 1962 freeway route for the Noarlunga Freeway and the route set out in the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study. In the course of that letter, the Commissioner states:

Similarly, equivalent interchange facilities on each route have been provided, involving some extensions of the route based on the M.A.T.S. plan to include connections to the Foothills and Reynella Expressways.

People in the Darlington area are particularly concerned about the interchange connection, which is proposed in these modified plans, from the 1962 freeway route to the Reynella Expressway. That modification was never set out in the original plan and has been introduced only recently. This could also cause difficulty, as this proposed interchange, should the 1962 route be adopted (and I hope it is not), goes through the same street in Darlington, namely, Ridge Crest Avenue, which has been the subject of controversy. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Roads and Transport when modifications were made to the proposals for the 1962 route? Also, what other alternatives are there to either the M.A.T.S. route or the 1962 route for connections to be made to the Reynella Expressway, without the necessity of disturbing Ridge Crest Avenue, Darlington?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: I point out to the honourable member that the town of Reynella is named after a very old South Australian family, Reynell, whose name is pronounced with a short first syllable, and Reynella is pronounced similarly.

Mr. Hudson: I am sorry: it has been Brightonized, and there is a local pronunciation for it which you would not understand.

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: However, I shall be happy to seek the information the honourable member has sought.

#### HACK BRIDGE

Mr. EVANS: Has the Attorney-General obtained from the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my recent question about the Hack bridge at Mylor?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Tenders for the construction of the new bridge have been called and these will close on October 7, 1969. Any relaxation of the present load limit on the existing bridge could result in its total failure.

#### PORT PIRIE HOUSING

Mr. McKEE: In the temporary absence of the Minister of Housing, has the Premier a reply to my recent question about Housing Trust rental houses at Port Pirie?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The General Manager of the Housing Trust has advised that the trust has recently let further contracts at Port Pirie for the erection of 23 single-unit houses and 16 double-unit houses. At present, all of the single-unit houses are under construction, and it is expected that

work will commence shortly on the double units. Furthermore, a contract will be let shortly for the erection of a further four houses, making the current programme 43 houses to be completed. At least 20 of these houses will be for rental purposes. The trust is aware of the demand for houses in Port Pirie and will in the future let additional contracts to keep pace with the demand.

#### HORTICULTURAL ADVISER

Mr. GILES: Has the Minister of Lands obtained from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to my recent question about the appointment of a horticultural adviser for the Adelaide Hills district?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Steps are being taken to recruit an appointee to the vacant position of district horticultural adviser for the Adelaide Hills. Meanwhile, inquiries are being handled and other services provided by the southern hills district adviser (Mr. R. M. Cowley) and other departmental officers. Dr. Moller, research officer in plant pathology, is giving personal attention to the black spot warning service which is critical to apple growers at this time of the year.

#### BRIGHTON ROAD

Mr. HUDSON: Some time ago the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Roads and Transport, told me that work on widening Brighton Road would commence at the southern end this year. Will the Attorney-General ask his colleague whether there has been any delay in the commencement of this work?

The Hon. ROBIN MILLHOUSE: Although I cannot see why there should be, I will try to find out about this.

#### HOLDEN HILL SEWERAGE

Mrs. BYRNE: An area at Holden Hill has been omitted from approved sewerage schemes, particularly Waninga Drive and Karina Crescent. As some residents in this area have expressed concern to me about the unsatisfactory condition in that area because of the lack of sewerage, will the Minister of Works say whether this area may be seweraged soon?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Much work is being done on sewerage schemes, particularly in the honourable member's area. I will ascertain what is the position in the location to which she has referred and obtain a report.



## AIRDALE INFANTS SCHOOL

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence, on Port Pirie (Airdale) Infants School.

Ordered that report be printed.

## ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

## THE ESTIMATES

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from September 25. Page 1800.)

## TREASURER AND MINISTER OF HOUSING

Treasury Department, \$122,163.

Mr. HUDSON: I draw attention to the absence of the Treasurer and Minister of Housing, which makes any adequate discussion of the Estimates difficult. He may be ill or absent on Government business, but it hampers and inconveniences members considerably if the Minister responsible for the introduction of the Budget is not present to deal with any questions that members raise or to answer any of the points made in debate. This means that general discussion of the Budget by members is made much more difficult. Has the Minister in charge of the Committee any information on the absence of the Treasurer and can he say whether he will be back later?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: (Minister of Lands): The Treasurer is not able to be present at the moment for very good reasons and I am not sure when he will be available, but I suggest that the debate proceed and I will do my best to answer the honourable member's questions.

Line passed.

Prices Branch, \$156,453.

Mr. BROOMHILL: As there have been increases on other lines, can the Minister explain the reduction in the proposed expenditure on salaries of the investigating staff?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: One officer has been transferred to another department. Whether a replacement officer is being sought, I do not know but that is the major reason for the reduction.

Mr. VIRGO: I am amazed at the Minister's reply. I sympathize with him in his difficulty in having to stand in for the Treasurer, but surely he does not suggest that the transfer of one officer results in a reduction of only \$596.

Is that all the officers of the Prices Branch are paid? I suggest that the wisest thing to do would be for the Minister to refer this matter and give the member for West Torrens a more satisfactory reply later. I express regret at the operation of the Prices Branch because, frankly, we badly need adequate price control in South Australia and in the whole of Australia. The Prices Branch and the Act are insufficient to meet the situation. Only last night, we were told (and this matter was referred to by the Premier in Question Time today) that the price of petrol was likely to be increased for the second time this year. The prices of bread and milk have been increased and fares have risen. We have the stupid system in Australia where one end of the price structure is rigidly fastened and the other end is allowed to wave around in the breeze. In these circumstances nothing but dissatisfaction will result.

I refer to the line "*Ex gratia* pension to former Prices Commissioner". I am not aware of why the former Prices Commissioner should get an *ex gratia* pension and not an automatic pension. There is a decrease of \$108 in this item. Will the Minister obtain information on both these matters?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: True, the reduction of \$596 does not represent the full salary of an officer. In the explanation I said that the transfer was the main reason for the change, but the complete story is that, after adjustments are made for marginal increases and increments, the \$596 is arrived at.

I think it fair to give credit to the Prices Branch for what it has done over the years regarding petrol prices. In general, the branch has supervised changes in the price structure in this State, whereas no other State has done that. South Australia has achieved many useful things by having a Prices Branch but no-one assumes that, simply by making its operations more extensive, general price increases in the State can be held back. In the federal system, one State alone would find it impossible to control all prices.

Mr. Jennings: I remember what was said in 1948.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Whatever was said then, control by only one State is not effective in holding prices down. However, the Prices Commissioner has effectively supervised all price increases, regardless of whether the item is controlled. He decides whether an increase is reasonable and, if it is not, he reports to the Government. Regarding the *ex gratia* pension paid to the former Prices

Commissioner, officers of the Prices Branch now come under the Superannuation Act, whereas there was no such provision when the former Prices Commissioner held that position. This payment gives him the benefit that is now available to officers of the branch.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Leader of the Opposition): I trust that the Minister is aware of the interesting submissions made by the South Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce regarding motor spirit pricing. In that submission, made to the Prices Commissioner a few days ago, the chamber deals with the inflated wholesale price of petrol and with discounting practices in South Australia, and these submissions do not lead to the conclusion that the Minister has arrived at. The chamber states:

In submissions made to the Premier earlier this year evidence was supplied of the ability of one industrial user to sell to certain members of his staff at prices 5.5c per gallon below the maximum wholesale price fixed by you. It could have been considered that this was an isolated case and in a special category because of the size of the company involved and its association with the particular oil company. The ability of the oil industry to supply selected users at prices which show, irrespective of volume used, the controlled price to be quite ludicrous has now however been confirmed. In this regard we have appended photostat copies of detailed quotations submitted by all oil marketing companies to the Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide.

I have photostat copies of those quotations, too. The submission continues:

It is pointed out that the total quantity of motor spirit used by this council is as a maximum 1,000 a month or one-eighth of the average monthly throughput of a metropolitan service station. The quotations reveal prices that range from 8.39c a gallon below the con-gallon below. In summary the figures are as follows:

Cents a Gallon Below the Controlled Maximum Wholesale Price

Company	Super Motor Spirit	Regular Motor Spirit
Ampol . . . . .	8.39	8.39
B.P. . . . .	7.95	7.05
Shell . . . . .	7.90	7.10
Caltex . . . . .	7.45	7.55
Mobil . . . . .	6.70	6.70
Golden Fleece . . . . .	6.40	6.40
Amoco . . . . .	5.90	6.00
Eso . . . . .	5.20	4.50

Inquiries of the Department of Customs and Excise have confirmed that petroleum products sold to local government and semi-government bodies are subject to the same duties as those applicable to all other users. In addition to the prices quoted for motor spirit it will be noted from the attachments that all other petroleum products are quoted at prices substantially below the controlled wholesale price.

Some typical examples are: lubricating oil, 20c a gallon less; lighting kerosine, 7.79c a gallon less; and distillate, 6.99c a gallon less. The direct evidence of these quotations substantiates the findings of the chamber as regards the sponsoring of discounted sales of motor spirit. In all major cases of discounting investigated the discounts, ranging up to 5c a gallon, are fully paid for by the sponsoring company. These are summarized in some little detail below. Whilst it is geographically outside your sphere of influence, we have also attached a photostat copy of an extract from a circular detailing the ability of the Victorian Hospitals and Charities Commission during 1968 to purchase petrol at 11.66c a gallon below the wholesale price.

The Victorian price is based on our price, because our Prices Commissioner fixes the price for South Australia, which then becomes the general price for other States. It has been the practice in South Australia not to grant a price increase until the companies undertake that in other States they will maintain their margin above the rate of this State. The submission continues:

Discounting practices: Reference is made to our letter of March 20, 1969, in which a report was given on a number of areas of sponsored discounting. The widespread nature of this practice is further evidence of the oil industry's ability to reduce prices substantially. In addition to the areas covered by our earlier letter, we bring to your attention the following known areas of discounting on retail sales of petrol:

Taxi Companies:

Enfield Taxis—Esso site—Broadview: The discounting covered in the previous correspondence continues. Advice of circulars to warders at Yatala Prison offering 4c a gallon discount.

Yellow Cabs—Amoco—Gawler Place: Discount to members of Public Service Association at rate of 5c a gallon on production of membership card. All social clubs within large area of Adelaide have been contacted with similar offer. Agreement negotiated between Amoco and Yellow Cabs, it has been reported, will mean \$27,000 additional earnings to the company a year.

Black and White Taxis—Shell—West Terrace: This co-operative has recently taken over this location and investigations have revealed the availability of petrol at a discount of 5c a gallon.

Car Washes:

Rub-a-Dub—Shell—Anzac Highway: 4c a gallon off as discount on car wash; refer attachment "B" showing discount card.

The giving of that 4c as a discount is a blatant breach of the Trading Stamp Act, apart from anything else. The submission continues:

Auto-Magic Car Wash—B.P.—Unley Road: Similar moves taken in competition with Rub-a-Dub but price of wash is reduced by 20c each time petrol is purchased.

That is another breach of the Trading Stamp Act. The submission continues:

**Tyre Companies:**

Beaurepaire Tyre Service—Golden Fleece—Port Adelaide: I.C.I. social club members 4c, similar to M.T.T. employees.

Port Adelaide Tyre Service—Amoco—Port Adelaide: General offer of 2c a gallon but also in competition with Beaurepaire.

Main Tyre Co. Ltd.—Esso sites at Norwood, Richmond, Sturt and Windsor Gardens: Discounting at rate of 3c a gallon continues.

**Transport Depots:**

Hi-Speed Trading Co.—Mobil—Renown Park: Detailed report given in earlier letter.

Lake City Freighters—Mobil—Largs Bay: General discounting—A. A. Scott Pty. Ltd. are proprietors.

South Australian Nurses' Beneficial and Buying Service: Ampol will pay 3c a gallon to service for nurses' purchases from any Ampol service station.

Shell Training Station—West park lands auto port: Approach by manager of station to Joseph Lucas (Australia) with offer of 7½ per cent discount on all petrol purchases. Station operated by the Shell Company.

National Mutual Life Association: Reference is made to attachment "D", a copy of a circular issued by the Production Secretary of the association concerning negotiations with Ampol.

In addition to sponsored discounting in the retail sphere, a number of reports have been received from country areas, and a typical selection is set out below:

Offer received by retailer in small country town to obtain his supplies through a primary producer at 35.9c a gallon less 3c (2.7c a gallon below retailers' wholesale price); retailers in Naracoorte, Mount Gambier, and other areas purchasing supplies through opposition agents at prices better than that at which their own company will supply them; country agent who is also a carrier, purchasing opposition company's fuel for his own use, because of better price available; and depots in Victorian country areas offering commercial travellers between 5c and 7c a gallon discount on purchases.

Full evidence of this has been supplied to the Prices Commissioner and I have here, in considerable detail, all the circulars, proposals, quotations and tenders. The Opposition is not in the least averse to having the public get cheaper petrol: we are happy to see that, but if discounting can occur as generally as this and it is sponsored by the oil wholesalers (which it is), and if tenders can be made by oil wholesalers to small users, such as have been evidenced, at a price considerably below the maximum fixed wholesale price, the present price is unreal and should be lower, not merely for those who can make special arrangements for special prices but for everyone.

The price of petrol is a basic cost factor in this State. We have heard about increasing costs, but what has been shown here is that

the price to which the oil companies induced the Government to agree as a short-term measure, because of extra oversea freight rates, has continued and has resulted in the companies having money that is now available for the practices to which I have referred. The price should have come down: the companies were told that it was intended that it should come down when the temporary situation at the time of the Suez Canal crisis had ended. But it has not come down, and the companies can make considerable profits and give discounts so that they are selling below the prices fixed and, in consequence, hit the business of South Australian retailers, who have been kept to a tight margin under price control.

Mr. Virgo: They are getting it in the neck.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes, and getting it from both directions. This position is not satisfactory. The original submissions to the Prices Commissioner have been before him for a considerable time, and the most recent submissions were supplied last week. The Government should not allow this situation to continue. There should be no question of an increase in the wholesale price of petrol; we should be investigating the whole of the oil price structure in Australia to ascertain whether there should not be a substantial decrease in the price of petrol to the public.

Mr. HUDSON: Approaches were made previously by, I think, the Automobile Chamber of Commerce on behalf of service station proprietors to eliminate the practice of discounting and the way this practice was being carried out. One feature of the oil industry in this State (and I think it is true of other States) is that the service station proprietor does not get the benefit of any extra profit made in distributing petrol. Invariably, he is placed at a disadvantage by the oil companies, which increase his rent. Many service station proprietors outside the metropolitan area have to work 60 to 80 hours a week to obtain a return equivalent to a normal working wage elsewhere. Also, the average metropolitan service station proprietor is frequently in a difficult position.

We need to make it clear that our argument about the price of petrol is not against the service station proprietor: it is not his fault that the price of petrol may be increased. The issue comes back clearly to the oil companies. It is ridiculous that, with the kind of discounts granted by oil companies (and detailed by the Leader this afternoon), the petrol companies should be applying for an increase, which will

apply throughout Australia if it is granted in this State. This means that the general public will have to pay for the discounts granted to special categories, and this procedure is wrong and unjust.

Concerning the argument being used to justify the approach for an increase in the petrol price, namely, the exploitation of Australian oil resources, apparently the increase is necessary to give a higher return to those companies that have been successful in finding oil. We do not know what kind of return these exploration companies are getting (that is, the successful ones, because they are the ones that will benefit by the increased price), and we do not know the extent to which the refining companies will benefit, if they will benefit at all.

But it seems to me absolutely extraordinary that, only a little over a year after we had to pay more for petrol because tankers coming to Australia could no longer use the Suez route, we were on the threshold of refining Australian oil, and we are being asked to pay more to get the Australian oil refined. Does the Government have any information about the rates of return that the exploration companies (B.H.P.-Esso and the like) will get on oil discovered in Australia? How high a price are we paying in terms of extra profits to the exploration companies? Is it the case that the exploration undertaken so far has not discovered sufficient oil to enable a sufficiently large operation to bring the price of Australian oil down to a level applying to crude oil from overseas?

These questions should be answered; and, in circumstances where the action of the South Australian Prices Commissioner will determine the price of petrol for the ordinary citizen throughout Australia, then even more so should the South Australian Government be given the information, and pass on to the public the information, on these points. How much information is the Prices Commissioner given on the costs of exploration companies and of refining companies? Is he given the appropriate information, or do the oil companies just say, "Our costs have gone up by 4 per cent, and therefore we must get a higher price"? It has been my experience that oil companies almost invariably refuse to give any information to any public officer about their costs of operation. Can the Minister of Lands give us any information on these matters? The previous approaches were

made to the Premier. Why is he not here to give us information that he may have on these matters?

Mr. Virgo: He is treating the whole proceedings with scorn.

Mr. HUDSON: Yes, it is just a pathetic joke. We are not even told the reason for the absence of the Treasurer, although I think we could be told that. I have no doubt that his absence is probably justified. Knowing the Treasurer as I do, I do not think he would miss this debate unless absolutely necessary. But in circumstances where a matter of such importance is being discussed, surely we are entitled to have the Premier here; or does he not know what to say?

Mr. Virgo: He wouldn't know.

Mr. HUDSON: That is probably so. He would have to call for a report, and I have no doubt the Minister of Lands will have to call for a report. The matter raised by the Leader is surely sufficiently important to warrant a reply from some representative of this Government.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I am surprised that this Government, which has the only Prices Branch that controls petrol prices, should be under attack. The operations of the South Australian Prices Commissioner and of the Government, which implements the Commissioner's recommendation, dictate the price of petrol throughout Australia. This sort of debate might well be held in other Australian Parliaments, but there is no reason why we should be under attack. The Prices Commissioner has kept a close watch on the operations of the oil companies, which have to convince him before they get a general price increase throughout Australia.

The discounts that have been referred to have operated, I suppose, ever since petrol was first sold, and I cannot imagine that they will not continue to operate. In the three years that Labor was in office, those discounts certainly operated. Why attack this Government, whose officer is controlling prices and, in this case, affecting petrol prices throughout Australia, when we are keeping such a close watch on prices? If the discounts operating were so bad (and we all agree there are many anomalies) why were they not stopped between 1965 and 1968? The stopping of these discounts might or might not have a big effect on the price of petrol. The theory is that if the discounts were wiped out it would be possible to reduce the general price of petrol. I do not know about that, but there is a good reason for

having at least some discounts. They probably get out of hand, and breaches of certain Acts should probably be investigated.

Certainly, possible breaches of the Trading Stamp Act, if they are not already being investigated, will be investigated. However, there are logical and good reasons for having discounts. Groups of people, including primary producers as well as city traders, receive varying kinds of discount in circumstances where the companies are competing with each other to sell petrol. The Prices Commissioner knows all this well enough and has kept the price of petrol where it is. The important thing concerning the Prices Commissioner is that he be allowed to continue, as will be proposed in this Chamber later in the session, so that he may watch the operations in the future.

I understand that oil from Bass Strait will become available towards the end of the year, when close supervision of the costs of the companies involved will be necessary to see that any price increase asked for is justified. The Bill to be introduced will, I hope, be passed. I do not think one is justified in merely attacking the Government at this stage and in saying, in effect, that the price of petrol should be reduced. The Prices Commissioner has done a sufficiently good job to deserve the Committee's confidence that he would have reduced the price if it had been reasonable to do so.

Mr. VIRGO: I recently received a publication from the Petroleum Information Bureau of Australia which said that control of petrol prices operated not only in South Australia but also in New South Wales. Therefore, we should not think that South Australia is the only State that imposes control over petrol prices.

Mr. McAnaney: But New South Wales follows our price.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Didn't price control operate when the Labor Government was in power in New South Wales?

Mr. VIRGO: According to this publication, price control at the retail level in New South Wales was imposed in May, 1959. The real essence of what the Minister has said and what the member for Stirling (Mr. McAnaney) has said by interjection shows the stupidity of the campaign that their Party conducted in 1948, which is the cause of the present trouble. We are not criticizing the South Australian Prices Commissioner: we know his hands were tied the day the Liberal Party campaigned

against Commonwealth price control. After that campaign we were left with a splintered form of price control in the various States. One by one the States fell by the wayside, and this State fell by the wayside to some extent when the Government decontrolled prices of articles as fast as it could after it took office. It even decontrolled cool drink prices three weeks before the last summer started; consequently, even the children were fleeced.

The real basis of this problem lies with the monopolistic oil companies. In the press and on radio and television programmes we are told that one kind of petrol has boron, another has the benefit of a final filter, and so on. However, at Port Stanvac, the only refinery in South Australia, it all comes from the one tank. Because of the Liberal Party's actions we are now hoping—and it is a vain hope—that one little department in South Australia, which is (on the Minister's own admission) being whittled down, will control the price of petrol for the whole of Australia. It is utterly impossible. If the Government had a better attitude it could improve the situation, but it has a policy of accommodation; if the oil companies want a price increase the Government will see that they get it.

Mr. Hudson: The Government will get some extra revenue because it has increased the licence fees.

Mr. VIRGO: Yes. When the Minister was asked about that matter he did not even know that the fees had been increased, yet he is administering the department. What the oil companies are doing is nothing short of daylight robbery of the petrol resellers. The oil companies are hoodwinking people into leasing their outlets, but these people then find that thousands of dollars are being made by the oil companies, not the resellers, who find that they must work for 70 or 80 hours a week to make a little more than the living wage. It is not a question of charging the department with neglect or not giving credit to it—it is a question of considering the overall machinery. No economy can function properly when one end of the price structure is rigidly tied and the other is left to wave in the breeze, but that is the policy of the present State Government and the Commonwealth Government. The practice of providing discounts for selected people is utterly ridiculous. As the Leader said, if the prices can be reduced for some they ought to be reduced for all.

Mr. Freebairn: Are you speaking of volume discounts?

Mr. VIRGO: I hope the honourable member will let us know where he stands.

Mr. Freebairn: It was a genuine question seeking information.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: You did not listen to what was said about discounts.

Mr. VIRGO: We have assumed that the Minister has the support of all Government members. Let us see whether the member for Light supports the monopoly currently existing in the oil industry and the fleecing of the petrol resellers.

Mr. CASEY: Last week I asked the Premier about the possibility of an increase in petrol prices, because in the past South Australia's petrol prices have been the basis of prices in other States. I asked my question because I thought it was high time that the general public should be made aware of the problems motorists would face if this increase occurred. About 12 months ago I heard the New South Wales Chief Secretary say that he was in favour of an increase in the price of petrol because the oil companies should be subsidized. This is a Liberal Party Government, and apparently the Liberal Party's policy is to subsidize the oil companies—because this is basically what it does when it increases the price of petrol. When the Minister was asked why the oil companies should be subsidized, he said, "Well, they are carrying out offshore drilling, which is a fairly expensive operation; therefore, we should be helping them as much as we possibly can, and one way we can do that is by subsidizing them." These people are already subsidized by the Commonwealth Government to carry out oil search in Australia, whether onshore or offshore.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: The offshore provisions they got were the most generous of any in the world.

Mr. CASEY: The gains to be made from oil are colossal; it is not called "black gold" for nothing. This is the whole crux of the matter. The price structure of petrol in Australia today is vital. I do not believe that this Government is personally under attack by the Opposition, as the Minister of Lands apparently thought; I certainly am not making a personal attack on the Government. I am trying to point out to the Government that this is a matter it should consider seriously. Cabinet cannot pass the buck to the Prices Commissioner in this matter.

I have noted since this Government has been in office that, if it makes a distasteful decision, it always refers the blame to the heads of departments, which is not fair. The people who make decisions of all kinds must take the responsibility for them. If it is a Government decision, the Government must take that responsibility. It can be guided by the heads of departments (that is what they are for), but the responsibility comes back on to the Government. I sincerely hope that, when Cabinet gets the recommendations of the Prices Commissioner, it will examine all the pros and cons of this matter, because the whole system of petrol marketing throughout Australia is chaotic.

I believe in discounts; they are a good thing. The Minister said, "Why did the Labor Government not clean up discounts?" I do not think we intended to clean up all phases of discounting, but we stopped many of these gimmicks of a person being given half a dozen glasses when buying a gallon of petrol. That sort of thing was stopped, but today if a person buys two gallons' worth of petrol he can get his car washed free. People are being enticed into a garage to purchase petrol and then given something for nothing, which is a wrong type of discount.

The cash discount is something quite different. The primary producers of this State, of which I am one, get a concession for purchasing petroleum products for primary production purposes, but a person can buy petrol in Adelaide more cheaply than can the primary producer, which is the stupid part of it. I shall be happy to show members opposite where they can buy petrol more cheaply than can the primary producers. People can get up to 5c a gallon off the retail price of petrol in Adelaide, and in fact anywhere in Australia.

Mr. Evans: What discount does the primary producer get?

Mr. CASEY: On city prices, 3.6c a gallon. As the member for Onkaparinga wants facts and figures, let me give a typical example. As a primary producer at Peterborough I can buy petrol at 38.4c a gallon, and the retail price in Adelaide is 42c a gallon, a difference of 3.6c a gallon. People in South Australia who purchase petrol from retailers in the metropolitan area, and probably elsewhere, can get it at 5c a gallon less than the retail price. What happens is that the oil companies go to the retailers and say, "You have many regular customers coming into your petrol stations, and we want you to

hold them; you give them a discount on the sale of petrol and we will reimburse you to the extent of perhaps 3c a gallon." That is the figure given me by a retailer whom I know personally.

A brother-in-law of mine who was a retailer in Victoria told me that as soon as his sales increased so did his rent, and he was back where he started. He built up a business from practically nothing, even though there were three other garages selling petrol on the other three corners of the intersection. What it means, basically, is that we shall be giving the oil companies a subsidy to help the service stations cover the losses that occur at many of them. In the first place, the oil companies built too many petrol stations; they went absolutely mad. Every day of the week a new service station was erected. Because Ampol built one Caltex or Shell would build one on the other corner.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Nankivell): Order! I remind the honourable member that we are dealing with the Prices Branch, not the sale of petrol.

Mr. CASEY: We have before us today the fact that the price of petrol will be increased; it is in the hands of the Prices Branch now, so I think what I am saying is relevant. I ask honourable members to consider these matters closely. First, any increase in the price of petrol will not be to cover the general running costs of the oil companies: I think it will be an out-and-out hand-out of a subsidy. As the Minister in New South Wales pointed out, Parliament will be asked to subsidize the oil companies. I do not want the Minister who replied a moment ago to think that this is an attack on the Government; it is not. Secondly, I am all in favour of discounts, contrary to what the Minister said, provided they are cash discounts. I do not like these gimmicks, in any circumstances, for they are only hoodwinking the public. The trouble is that not everybody comes in on discounts. As the member for Edwardstown said, they apply only to selected bodies. Only a few motorists will get something out of this, rather than the motoring public at large. It seems to me that the favoured few run their vehicles at the expense of poor old Joe Blow who has a car that he uses at weekends or to go to and from work.

The Government should take a good look at this matter before it starts to give in to the oil companies on the question of the price of petrol. No-one can tell me that we should be

paying more for petrol refined from Australian crude oil than for petrol refined from imported crude oil. There was quite a controversy when Moomba oil was first put on the market, and no-one would refine it. I think that much of it was sent to Singapore for refining and then brought back to Australia. I want all the facts put before me before I will be convinced that this is the true picture. Any increase in the cost of petrol would increase costs generally. I have never agreed with the Government's policy on price control, although I agreed with a former Premier (Sir Thomas Playford), who always said that the Prices Branch was most important to the State because if wages were controlled prices must also be controlled. He was always given our support on this matter, although many of his own Party did not support him. Price control is a means of stabilizing the economy of the State, and it had that effect until the last couple of years, during which the control of prices has been gradually whittled away. This undoubtedly has raised the general cost structure.

Mr. EVANS: Where there are increases in cost, the price of the product sold must be increased. In the past, even with price control, there were increases in prices. Despite what has been claimed, children are not being fleeced as a result of the recent increase in the price of soft drinks. It is the parent who pays the bill, whether it be for soft drinks, beer or anything else. To say that Ministers blame Government officers for any increases or for what happens in the community is wrong, as the Premier said only today that he and his Cabinet accept full responsibility. The member for Frome (Mr. Casey) knows that his statement in relation to this matter is wrong. Can he give any instance of where any Minister has said that something has been the fault of a particular member of a department?

At all times Ministers have accepted full responsibility for their departments, and I believe that the member for Frome realizes this. He gave an instance of crude oil being sent from Moomba to Singapore to be refined and being brought back and sold in Australia at a competitive price. We also export iron ore to Japan to be made into motor vehicles which are brought back to Australia and, after the payment of a 35 per cent or 40 per cent tariff, they are sold at a price lower than we can sell our own product. The solution to the problem is not price control; the fact is that we are increasing our

costs until we cannot compete with other countries. If wages are increased, there is no alternative to increasing prices.

Mr. Virgo: What profit did General Motors-Holden's make last year?

Mr. EVANS: If the Government controlled everything, as the member for Edwardstown would like, articles produced would cost more and their quality would not be as good. We have learned this by experience of most things Governments have handled. I agree with what members opposite have said about resellers of petrol, who are controlled largely by oil companies. I do not like the type of contract resellers sign whereby their rental can be increased as their sales increase. By this means resellers who show initiative can be penalized.

Mr. Virgo: Do you think the oil companies should own all garages?

Mr. EVANS: A similar position applies where the brewery owns hotels. I do not like the method by which the companies assess how much petrol should be sold by the reseller. The companies use the Highways Department's count of traffic passing a particular point and say that as a certain percentage of that traffic will buy petrol from a garage in the locality that the rental of that garage should be allied to that figure. That is completely wrong. Also, I agree that possibly there are too many resellers in the metropolitan area in particular. However, before they sign a contract, resellers know what it contains. Enough publicity has been given by means of press, radio and television to warn any prospective manager or owner of a reseller station that it is doubtful whether a substantial living can be made from that field. If people gamble in other fields and lose all, they are told that it is bad luck. People entering this field know what they are going into. I believe it is necessary to maintain the Prices Branch as a body to investigate the charging of exorbitant prices. However, when an opportunity arrives to remove an item from price control, this opportunity should be taken.

Mr. RYAN: The sum provided for the Prices Branch has been decreased when, in view of the good work done by its officers, it should have been doubled. This afternoon I raised with the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Roads and Transport, a matter concerning secondhand motor vehicles. Although the Prices Branch has no legal authority in this regard, frequent inquiries by the Commissioner and his staff in this field

have saved many thousands of dollars for people involved in such transactions. Over the weekend a constituent of mine showed me a contract which guaranteed that he would receive back his money if he was not satisfied with the article he had purchased. However, when he took the article back the second-hand dealer who had sold it to him told him that the guarantee was not worth the paper it was written on. I should like to see the branch expanded because, over the years, I have received numerous complaints from constituents who have been cheated and rooked by used car dealers. I have referred these people to the branch and, in nearly all cases, the Prices Commissioner and his officers have achieved a satisfactory result. However, as a result of the present Government's reducing the funds allocated to the branch, it is no longer able to deal with all the cases referred to it and must cut down its operations in this field.

I believe that people can get service provided they pay for it. Many people would avoid trouble if they belonged to the Royal Automobile Association and had used cars inspected before purchasing them. However, not all people are conversant with this procedure. Not long ago a person I know bought a car from a used car dealer who had one of the worst reputations in South Australia. This person was told that the car he purchased had a 12-12 guarantee and that, if he was not satisfied, either his money would be repaid or any repairs that he considered necessary would be paid for by the company. He drove the car from Edwardstown towards Semaphore, where he lived. On the way, he was stopped by the police, who immediately ordered the car to the Police Barracks at Thebarton, where they slapped on it an unroadworthiness certificate. The necessary repairs to the car were estimated to cost about \$500. When this man went back to the company, he was told that the guarantee was not worth the paper it was written on and that he had accepted responsibility when he took the vehicle out of the yard. He then came to see me, and I sent him to the Prices Branch. Several weeks later he told me that he had nothing but praise for the work of and the action taken by the branch, that he had received the finest service that had ever been rendered to him by a Government department, and that he would recommend to anyone the action taken by it.

Mr. Broomhill: That wouldn't be an isolated instance.



Mr. RYAN: True. I should like the activities of the Prices Branch extended, but the present Government has curtailed service to the public and will doubtless continue to do so. As a private member, the Attorney-General repeatedly advocated the reduction of the activities of the branch and its ultimate abolition. However, the present Government has only 18 months in which to implement its policy.

Mr. Hurst: Do you think it will be tolerated for that long?

Mr. RYAN: I hope it is forced to go to the people, because then the activities of the Prices Branch will be improved and extended, as the people desire. Within seven days of the price of soft drinks being decontrolled by the present Government, the cost of a bottle of soft drink, regardless of size, increased by 1c.

Mr. Rodda: But they had applied before that.

Mr. RYAN: I am not concerned about that, because the department refused the application. Although it might have been said that that increase was caused by increased costs to industry, the price increased by another 1c within two months and increased still further by 1c recently, again regardless of the size of the bottle.

Mr. Broomhill: They're getting at children.

Mr. RYAN: Yes, and also at small businessmen. Although resellers of petrol received part of an increase in petrol prices, the retailers got no part of the increased price of soft drinks, the wholesaler having got the lot. This Government has not put prosperity back into the State: it has taken it from the taxpayer's pocket.

Mr. Rodda: You've got both eyes shut.

Mr. RYAN: No, I have both eyes open, looking at a Government that cannot be proud of its achievement. That is the history of a Government some members of which have been advocating the abolition of the Prices Branch.

Mr. Venning: That's not right.

Mr. RYAN: The honourable member was not here when Sir Thomas Playford, a strong advocate of the Prices Branch, was able to withstand pressure from his own Government only because of Opposition support. As soon as he left the leadership of his Party the activities of the branch started to disappear. The Prices Branch achieves much for the taxpayer because, although it has no legal authority on certain items, it can threaten to bring

those items under control. When we considered an overcharge of 200 per cent for hearing aids and referred the matter to the Prices Branch, the price of hearing aids was controlled. However, it did not take the present Treasurer long to decontrol.

Mr. Venning: Who sacked Mr. Murphy from the Prices Branch?

Mr. RYAN: I wish members would interject on something they know about.

Mr. Venning: I know all about this.

Mr. RYAN: We are arguing the merits of a department and we on this side will continue to advocate that the activities of the branch be extended, as they will be after the next election.

Mr. VENNING: I am pleased that the policy of the Liberal and Country League is to retain price control in South Australia, and I am also pleased that the line is retained in these Estimates. I am pleased that this department is playing an effective part in the administration of this State, and I know that Sir Thomas Playford was right behind the establishment and the retention of the Prices Branch. Other States have looked to South Australia for a lead on the price of petrol. I trust that the Minister will continue to watch this situation, and to ensure that the effectiveness of this branch will continue.

Mr. HURST: It is disturbing to see the minor allocation made to this department when we consider the scope and magnitude of the work that it should be doing. The Government, by restricting the activities of the branch, has made a token gesture only to satisfy the ever-increasing demand made for investigating charges that are beyond the pockets of working people. This Government has released 60 or 70 items from price control, and when builders' hardware prices were decontrolled it was reported in the newspaper that the cost of a \$10,000 house had increased by \$1,000: this was the result of the Government's action in releasing these items from price control.

The member for Onkaparinga falsely said that the increase in wages had forced prices up. In some circumstances increased wages do affect costs in certain undertakings, but every wage increase for workers in industry is the result of a long, bitter struggle, and is granted only after much argument and evidence has been submitted to a tribunal. Obviously, wages have risen barely sufficiently to keep pace with increases in prices. I heard the member for Light interject and ask whether

we would favour the pegging of wages: that is absolutely ridiculous. The Prices Branch has a responsibility to consider the price of goods caused by the extraneous factors that make up the overall cost. If the activities of this branch were extended so that it could make various sections of the community run the same gauntlet as did the trade union movement when it applied for a wage increase, there might be more justice but, unfortunately, sufficient money has not been allocated to enable the branch to do this. How can we expect people to investigate these important matters thoroughly and do justice to the people when such a meagre sum is provided? The Treasurer should reconsider this allocation: sharp practices do occur, and until sufficient money is provided so that these activities can be curtailed they will continue.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: From what Opposition members have said, we seem to be debating a reduction in or the elimination of the Prices Branch: we are not doing anything of the kind.

Mr. Hurst: I said the allocation should be greater.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The Auditor-General's Report shows that the net cost of administration of the control of prices met from Consolidated Revenue for 1968-69 was \$158,617, an increase of \$3,962 compared with the previous year.

Mr. Hudson: You know as well as anyone else knows that you have decontrolled a whole range of items.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I know that those figures do not show a reduction in activity.

Mr. Broomhill: What about next year?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The figures show that it is almost the same. Reductions have occurred in long service leave payments, which depend on which officers are retiring, and in other incidental items, including a motor car accident.

Mr. Broomhill: Salaries and wages are down.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The expenses of the Prices Branch are about the same, for all practical purposes. The activities of the branch are assured at least by my statement this afternoon that we are re-introducing the relevant legislation. In the circumstances, I do not see why honourable members should adopt the attitude that either the branch is being eliminated or its activities

are being reduced. Items are periodically removed from the controlled list, and I am happy to say that I agree with those that have been removed. Clearly, in the future more items will be removed from the controlled list, and some will possibly be added—I do not know. However, the Government has a good Prices Commissioner and takes everything he says into account; and we have no intention whatever of discontinuing the activities of the branch.

Mr. HUDSON: The Minister's argument is completely without foundation. First, just on the technical matter, if he wishes to argue about that, I point out that the normal increase in Government expenditure for most departments is estimated at about 7 per cent or 8 per cent. Instead of that applying to the Prices Branch, there is an overall reduction of about 2½ per cent. Therefore, if one tries to estimate the expenditure of the branch in real terms, there is a reduction of about 10 per cent. Surely, the removal from price control of those items to which the Minister referred has involved a reduction in work undertaken by the branch, and one presumes it is the main reason why the branch will employ one fewer officer.

This Government is gradually cutting out price control; indeed, there are members of the Government (and from what the Minister has said, he is presumably one of them) who do not believe in price control and who are awaiting their political opportunity to remove it altogether. The continuation of the Prices Act for another 12 months is purely notional concerning this Government. I register the strongest protest possible at the Minister's remarks. Members on this side are fully justified in pointing to the rise in prices that has occurred as a result of the Government's action. They are fully justified in referring to the large rise in building costs that has occurred, since this Government has come into power, largely as a result of the removal from price control of many building services and building materials.

The consequence has been a substantial rise in building costs. For many people who are well off, that does not mean much at all, but particularly for the younger members of our community who are purchasing their own houses in circumstances where the interest rate has also increased, this adds to the cost of purchasing a house. The additional costs are most severe for those on lower incomes, and are coupled with a rise in the interest rate brought about, no doubt, by those important

colleagues of the Minister of Lands in another part of Australia (those people in Canberra supported by Senator Martin Cameron, who—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Nankivell): Order! He is not employed in the Prices Branch.

Mr. HUDSON: No, but he is a supporter of the Commonwealth Government, which has raised interest rates on loans, and this, together with the action of the Prices Commissioner, has brought about the most serious increase in costs to the house purchaser that has occurred in South Australia for years. It is the view of members on this side that the activities of the Prices Branch should be not reduced but enhanced and that many of the items that the Government has removed from price control should be placed back under control. It is most regrettable that the Minister responsible for this line is not here but busy receiving deputations, so one is told.

Mr. Virgo: There's a blue in the L.C.L. they're trying to straighten out, I'm told.

Mr. HUDSON: I should have thought the L.C.L. was "unstraightenoutable". The Minister of Lands said he could not understand why members were criticizing the Government. We were criticizing the whole procedure in relation to the administration of the price of petrol and the likely rise in price consequent on, so we are told, the discovery of oil in Australia. Oil is discovered in Bass Strait and B.H.P. shares are at a record high level, having gone up to an extraordinary extent since the discovery of that oil. However, we the ordinary people in the community will have to pay more for petrol. We are trying to convince the Minister of the necessity for this Government's backing up the Prices Commissioner and trying to discover whether or not the rise in the price of crude oil, brought about by the discovery of oil in Australia, is justified. I do not believe it is.

I believe that B.H.P. and Esso are getting too big a rake-off from the discovery of oil in Bass Strait and that the ordinary Australian motor car owner will have to pay as a result. That is not justified. I fully expect the Minister of Lands, along with his other colleagues, to vote for a rise in the price of petrol when the Prices Commissioner's recommendation is presented to them. If that does not occur, and if we do not get a rise in the price of petrol, I will get up and apologize to the Minister. However, until he tells me that he will not support such a rise, because of a rise in the price of Australian crude oil, there will be no apology from this side.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Some strange things have been said by the Minister and his supporters opposite, and I want to deal with them briefly. The Minister has said that the situation with the price of petrol is having an effect on price control in South Australia. I do not know whether he thought that was a useful diversionary argument, but it in no way met our argument. We pointed out the necessity of price control in respect of petrol. What I showed the Committee was that there are at the moment quotations given by the oil companies for the supply of petrol to smaller users than the metropolitan service stations at prices well below the fixed price, and that in addition discounting procedures have now become so widespread that they do not relate merely to bulk discounts but are individual discounts given to members of particular groups, not dependent upon bulk sales. For instance, there are the discounts given to members of the Public Service Association on production of their membership cards.

Mr. Evans: Similar to some of the opticians' discounts.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Opticians' prices are not controlled.

Mr. Evans: Should they be?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No; I am not suggesting that. I think opticians should be in a position to get some competition. I believe the honourable member wants to take it out.

Mr. Hudson: Members opposite want not competition but monopoly.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In this industry, as we on this side have pointed out for more than the last decade, the position is that the Government opposite has refused to take action when the oil wholesalers have said, "We do not want any sort of control here; we want free competition, each for himself and God for us all, as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens"—and the poor unfortunate retailer is the chicken in this instance! It is simply not good enough for the Minister to ignore the evidence clearly given, that the retail and wholesale prices of petrol can be lowered, and because of widespread sales at below the fixed price the petrol companies are in a position to sell at less than the fixed price; so they have no justification for a price increase.

Then the member for Onkaparinga said that it was necessary to decontrol cool drink prices because of cost increases in the cool drink industry. I know something about this because,

when I was Minister in charge of the Prices Branch, I granted an increase in cool drink prices, for the industry was able to show that the costs at that time merited an increase in prices. I would not have granted the increase had that not been shown. That happened not long before we left office.

Mr. Casey: Do you mean to say that you and not the Prices Commissioner took the responsibility for that?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Oh, yes. No prices are gazetted without the approval of the Minister; the Prices Commissioner does not do this on his own—he makes a recommendation to his Minister. Most of the cool drink manufacturers are in my district. I know them all. I have very good relations with them. There was no case for the decontrol of cool drink prices. Because of the increase allowed under the Labor Government, they made substantial profits. I know what their position is because employment in my district depends, to a certain extent, upon the cool drink manufacturers: Woodrooffe's, Hall's, Schweppes and Cottee's are all in my district.

Mr. Hudson: A very effervescent district!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: We always like to keep the spirit lively in my district.

Mr. Rodda: You had better be careful what you say!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am always careful about what I say. I have the best relations with this industry, with the employees and the employers. If the honourable member had kept his eye on the newspapers a little while ago, he would have noticed that. I know the position in this industry because I take an interest in it. It employs many people in my district. There was no case for decontrol and there was in fact no suggestion to me by any employers in the district that there was a case for decontrol. They had already been given the necessary increase in their prices for them to make a substantial profit—and they made it, and at the time the decontrol took place their figures were published. They were able to make a profit in the circumstances and with the prices that existed, and their prices should not have been decontrolled.

The case that the member for Onkaparinga has put to this Committee about cool drink prices is wrong; there is no basis for it. I am not at all satisfied with what is happening in the Government's handling of price control at the moment because I do not think the Govern-

ment has maintained it in the way it should have; but most particularly, given what is now occurring in the oil industry, I express my bitter opposition to any case for an increase in petrol prices in this State. Indeed, I believe there should be an investigation to show publicly why there should not be a reduction in price.

Mr. LAWN: I share the thoughts and sentiments of all other members on this side of the Chamber. Particularly do I wish to refer to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition about further price increases for the oil companies, in view of the reduction promised some time ago, and to say something in support of those honourable members criticizing the reduction of staff in the Prices Branch. Like the member for Port Adelaide, occasionally I find it necessary to send constituents of mine to the Prices Branch for assistance. They, too, are full of praise for its activities. Without relating particular instances to the Committee, I say that, when sales are made by the various firms around the city and the agreements appear showing no allowance for trade-ins and a higher price than that quoted, the Prices Commissioner can through his office have these things adjusted much more easily than can the purchaser, who is given all sorts of excuses by the company concerned and all sorts of figures are quoted. The only way to get redress is to have these things dealt with by the Prices Branch; in nearly all cases a substantial reduction is made through an approach to the branch.

Now the Government is quietly eliminating the Prices Branch. For members opposite to say that the Liberal Party believes in price control is just hogwash that they hope will delude the electors. They have said that price increases must take place as a result of wage increases. Assuming that to be a valid argument, one would expect that the provision for the Prices Branch would have increased, but page 48 of the Estimates shows that there is a decrease this year of \$596 for the line "Investigating, accounting and clerical staff".

Although I have not gone through the whole of the Estimates, most lines on pages around page 48 show increases rather than decreases. For example, at page 44 under "Supreme Court Department" an increase of \$10,015 is provided for "Deputy Registrar of Probates, Sheriff (also Deputy Marshal, High Court of Australia, \$90 p.a.), probate, library, reporting, accounting, clerical and other court staff". On the same page under "Local Courts Department" an increase of \$30,278 is provided for

"Clerks of Court, reporting, accounting, clerical and other court staff". On page 45 under "Adelaide Magistrates' Court Department" there is an increase of \$4,657 for "Clerk of Court, reporting, accounting, clerical and other court staff". On the same page under "Registrar-General of Deeds Department" there is an increase of \$1,993 for "Examining, record and noting clerks, other clerical and general staff".

On page 49 under "Superannuation Department" there is an increase of \$7,088 for "Chief Clerk, Accountant, Inspector, accounting and clerical staff". On page 50 under "State Taxes Department" there is an increase of \$52,707 for "Deputy Commissioners, Assessors, accounting, clerical and general staff". That is the clear pattern throughout the Estimates. It is obvious when one goes through the Budget that, even in cases of departments that have not had an increase in staff, increased provision is made for higher wages and salaries, but the one department for which there is a decrease is the Prices Branch. At page 460 of *Hansard* of July 24 the member for Port Pirie is reported as asking the Premier the following question:

In view of the Government's policy to decontrol prices, can the Premier say how many people are at present employed by the Prices Branch and whether there has been, or is likely to be, any retrenchment as a result of the decontrol of prices?

To the amazement of honourable members on this side the Premier's reply was as follows:

In effect, I suppose there is no-one left in the Prices Branch because the personnel have now been attached to the Treasury and operate under the Public Service Act. I may be able to get some relevant facts for the honourable member regarding any reduction of personnel; I think perhaps that information would be easily obtained.

As this was a question on notice, the Premier had plenty of time to obtain the information. When he answered the question, the Premier did not give precise information, but more or less said that the Prices Branch was on the way out and had been absorbed into the Treasury. I will be surprised if this is not the last time that we see provision made in the Estimates for the Prices Branch. Obviously the Government is getting rid of it. It will be interesting to see whether members opposite advocate price control at the time of the next election.

Mr. Venning: It is organizational policy.

Mr. LAWN: The honourable member assures me that it is Liberal and Country League policy to maintain price control. For

years Sir Thomas Playford brought before Parliament a Bill to extend price control for the next 12 months, and we were told by members opposite and by members in another place that, in doing so, he was acting contrary to L.C.L. policy.

Mr. Venning: I am talking about present policy.

Mr. Clark: Tell the member for Rocky River to ask the Attorney-General what he thinks of it.

Mr. LAWN: I assure the member for Rocky River that, every year Sir Thomas Playford introduced his Bill to extend price control, the Attorney-General voted against it.

Mr. Venning: That's all right.

Mr. LAWN: On one occasion, after we extended price control for a further period, the Attorney-General introduced his own Bill, which decontrolled the purchase of land. The Attorney-General has always claimed that he has been upholding L.C.L. policy on price control when opposing its extension in Parliament. Sir Thomas Playford had no end of trouble getting members of another place to extend the operation of price control from year to year. By quoting the Premier's reply to the member for Port Pirie, I think I have shown what the Government thinks of price control.

Mr. BURDON: Contrary to statements made by the Minister of Lands, clearly the activities of the Prices Branch have been reduced.

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

Mr. BURDON: I compliment the Minister of Lands on his handling of this line, in the absence of the Treasurer, and I do not think anyone else on the front bench would be more capable of doing it. The Premier certainly could not do it. The Government has obviously set out to reduce the staff of the Prices Branch in line with its policy of reducing the effectiveness of the branch. Our branch has been recognized throughout Australia as the office in which the prices of petroleum products throughout the Commonwealth are fixed.

It is wrong for the Government to seek to reduce the effectiveness of the branch, yet on all items except provision for the purchase of a motor vehicle the amount voted this year is significantly less than the 1968-69 provision. The Government is going around in circles if it thinks it can convince the people that effective price control is part of its policy. The Attorney-General has always

opposed price control, and he has had a good lieutenant in the member for Light. About two and a half years ago the Labor Government was criticized about a decision by the Prices Commissioner that increased petrol prices throughout Australia. Because of the crisis in the Suez Canal area, the oil companies claimed that their costs had been disproportionately increased because of an increase in shipping charter rates. The increase was allowed on the understanding that it was an interim measure only, but now, following significant discoveries of oil off the Australian coast and in Bass Strait by B.H.P.-Esso, with the product coming on to the Australian market soon, Australians are to be forced to pay an increased price for petrol.

From what has been published in the press recently it seems that the State Government is assisting the Commonwealth Government in preparing the people of South Australia and Australia for an imminent increase in the price of all petrol products. Instead of protecting the people of this State and of Australia by increasing the effectiveness of the Prices Branch here, the Government has allotted to this branch a sum that indicates that its effectiveness is being progressively reduced. A week ago in Melbourne petrol could be bought at any suburban service station and at Geelong for at least 5c below the listed price.

Mr. Lawn: You have been able to do that for a couple of years.

Mr. BURDON: That is so. The difference between the discounted price to distributors and bulk buyers and the price the ordinary motorist is forced to pay for petrol indicates a scandalous situation. I have heard it said that B.H.P. shares are at an all-time high, but this is not so at present, as the profit margin is not as great now. The oil companies throughout the world are not going broke. Indeed, as I believe that \$800,000,000 has been paid for oil wells in Alaska, no-one can tell me there is no profit in oil. We on this side, who represent the ordinary person in this country, believe that he is being fleeced regarding the price he is charged for petrol, particularly bearing in mind the discounts allowed to certain other categories of people. The Government stands condemned for its action in respect of the Prices Branch, about 60 items having been decontrolled over the last 12 months. This has had a detrimental effect on the purchasing power of the ordinary person, who must go to

the arbitration tribunal to have his wages fixed, but no such thing happens in relation to the price of manufactured goods. This allocation should be increased, not decreased, because the effect of the Prices Branch is to deter those who seek to increase the price of their commodities unjustifiably and to protect consumers generally.

Mr. McANANEY: Some futile arguments have been advanced on this matter. Members opposite are saying that the Government is responsible for increasing the price of petrol, but the Prices Commissioner is considering this matter at present, merely having said publicly that he is investigating a claim from the petrol companies for an increase. Claims such as this have been made previously but there have not always been increases in prices as a result. Even before oil was discovered in Australia, we knew that its discovery would be good for the country, because it would result in a saving on oversea exchange. However, anything produced in this country is dearer than that produced in the rest of the world, because the arbitration tribunal gives the worker higher wages, although he does not necessarily enjoy higher living standards. Price control is in existence all the time through competition. I believe in restrictive trade practices legislation. If a group of manufacturers, business people or even farmers combines to fix a price, action should be taken. Price control is a sheer waste of time, if every item is examined individually. The member for Edwardstown referred to the prices of cool drinks. An application for a price increase had already been lodged before price control was removed. There were increases in wages, costs and materials and, because of that, the Prices Commissioner would have increased the price for cool drinks. On one occasion when cool drink prices were increased George Hall and Sons Limited had made a substantial loss, and that firm was fully justified in getting an increase. Some honourable members can recall the rigid price control of 1948 when one could not buy the essentials of life, which were under price control, but one could buy any luxury goods, which were not under price control, because more could be charged for them. That is where price control breaks down: if it is fixed too low for something, that article is not produced; if it is fixed a little too high, more of that article is produced. This results in a wastage of manpower.

Members opposite say that with full employment no man should be dismissed from the Prices Branch. They advocate keeping

people working on the railways when there is no work for them to do. With the present building boom, there is a demand for labour, and men should be used there where their work can be productive and they can assist in raising our living standards. Members opposite say that prices have risen since price control on some items was removed. In the March quarter South Australia had one of the lowest increases in the cost of living of any State. I admit, however, that in June it rose to the top, but the overall increase was about the average for Australia. We were the only State with some form of price control. During the last 10 years the price increase in this State was equivalent to that of the other States, so price control proved to be valueless.

Mr. Casey: Were our wages the lowest of any State?

Mr. McANANEY: The new President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions claims that the wages and the gross national product had remained constant for 20 years because, even though wages increased in that time, the wage-earners had a certain share of the gross national product and, in competition, we hope the increase will be more or less stationary. While some firms make a 15 per cent profit, other firms make a loss, so an average profit is struck. The profit margin is similar to the interest rate. Those people who represent the wage-earner say, "We are looking after you," but as soon as we get down to the basic facts and try to work out a way in which we in Australia can compete on the world's markets in respect of those goods at which we are the most proficient in producing, our working people will have rising living standards. Members opposite have repeated the same thing over and over again, but I hope I have answered the points they have made.

Mr. BROOMHILL: The honourable member has further confused the Committee. Members on this side are disturbed to find a substantial reduction in the provision for the Prices Branch. Regrettably the Treasurer is not present, and this has delayed consideration of this line. The Minister of Lands has tried unsuccessfully to provide the information we seek. Other Government members have addressed the Committee and have confused the position, because two members opposite have said that price control is unwarranted (the member for Stirling said it was valueless), whereas members such as the member for Rocky River have said that the Government intends to continue with price control

and that it is L.C.L. policy. I should have thought the Premier and not the member for Rocky River would put forward L.C.L. policy. About six months ago two other States introduced proposals to protect consumers.

Mr. Virgo: The Consumers Protection Council—the Premier was going to introduce it here.

Mr. BROOMHILL: When he was asked whether the Government intended to introduce it, he said he could not see much value in it and he hoped the price control operating in this State would shortly cease, as there would be no further need for the Prices Branch. Therefore, despite what some back-bench members of the Government say is L.C.L. policy, if we can take it that the Premier is the Leader of the Government, as far as the Government is concerned price control is on the way out.

Opposition members support price control and its extension. However, there has been a 10 per cent reduction in the provision this year. When I asked the Minister of Lands what effect this would have on the investigating officers in the department, he said that the reduction of \$596 would mean that one investigating officer would not be replaced. He was not too certain about the position but, as it is not his department, I do not blame him for this. On July 24, the member for Port Pirie (Mr. McKee) asked the Premier the following question:

In view of the Government's policy to decontrol prices, can the Premier say how many people are at present employed by the Prices Branch and whether there has been, or is likely to be, any retrenchment as a result of the decontrol of prices?

The Premier replied:

In effect, I suppose there is no-one left in the Prices Branch because the personnel have now been attached to the Treasury and operate under the Public Service Act. I may be able to get some relevant facts for the honourable member regarding any reduction of personnel; I think perhaps that information would be easily obtained.

Apparently the information was not easily obtainable, or perhaps the information that was available was not useful to the Government because it showed that there were reductions or proposed reductions. The Premier concluded by saying that he would try to get a report the following week.

I want to know whether or not, as a result of the change in the activities of the Prices Branch, the line we are considering includes payment of salaries to persons who may be engaged primarily by the branch but who are doing work associated with the Treasury, the department to which they are now attached.

Perhaps there has been a considerable breaking down of the operations of the branch. I think we are entitled to know these things. I believe that the Minister who is in charge of the Committee should have obtained this information earlier in the day so that he could have satisfied us about the future activities of the branch. The Opposition views with great concern the reduction in this line and the public statements by the Premier and other prominent Ministers about the future of the branch.

I ask the Minister of Lands once again whether there has been any breaking down in the investigating staff of the Prices Branch or whether any such breaking down is intended soon, and whether the staff reduction shown in the line we are considering means that there has been a reduction of only one officer. I believe we are entitled to press the Minister for this information.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: As I have said, one officer has been transferred to another department. The reduction on this line is affected also by marginal increases and increments. Apart from the \$596 mentioned earlier, the sum of \$1,117 was paid out last year on account of a vehicle accident. The Treasury does not expect another vehicle accident this year, and how could it?

That is the second biggest reduction in the whole line. The other items are all small, except the one dealing with payments to dependants and officers retiring or resigning for long service leave and recreation leave. The answer to that is that no officers are retiring this year. I have said all this earlier. I have said also that a Bill will be introduced this year to extend the operations of the Prices Act for a further year, something that has been done by other Governments in the past and is being done by the present Government. What else does the honourable member wish to know? He had all this information given to him several hours ago, but he seems to want to go on arguing on a thing like this instead of getting on with something more important.

Mr. Broomhill: Are they doing any work for the Treasury at all?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: As I understand, the Prices Branch is attached to the Treasury and comes under the Treasurer, so all the work of the branch is done for the Treasury. The investigations and recommendations will go on as they have done in the past. Members are not entitled to get different answers by repeating the same question. The reply was given three hours ago.

The Government is not dropping price control and the Commissioner is as vigilant as ever.

Mr. VIRGO: Members on this side do not consider the reply given three hours ago to be satisfactory and that is why they have continued to raise the matter. It is no good the Minister's saying that we can argue about this all evening or that we ought to do something more important. What is more important to the pensioners and persons on fixed incomes than to be able to buy necessities at reasonable prices? This is the whole reason for price control. The member for Stirling, instead of clearing the matter up (as he said he did), showed clearly that he (and his Government) does not believe in price control. The member for Stirling has suggested that, by means of competition, we have price control all the time. If that is so, why not have this same form of control of wages, because prices and wages should be controlled in the same way?

Mr. Broomhill: What happens when the worker tries to get higher wages?

Mr. VIRGO: Sections 109 and 110 of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act are invoked to impose a fine of about \$1,000 a day and to force the men back to work. Until prices and wages are fixed by the same means, whether by competition or statement of a case to justify an increase, the economy will not function properly. Competition does not give reasonable prices, because the barons in industry determine a profitable price to which they all adhere.

Mr. Jennings: When there is a combination there cannot be competition.

Mr. VIRGO: Of course, because there is complete liaison between large industries. We need the effectiveness of price control by the Prices Commissioner to apply to the rubber industry, because big business determines the prices to be charged for motor car and tractor tyres, although I have not heard Government members complain that their constituents are being fleeced. Government members cannot escape the fact that this Government has consistently decontrolled item after item and has made the Prices Branch less effective than it was when the Liberals came into office. In the next 15 months this branch will be reduced to a shadow, and the damage will be done so that it will be impossible to restore effective price control. Government members must know of the many price increases that have occurred since they assumed office.



Mr. Freebairn: Salaries have gone up, too.

Mr. VIRGO: But they have not increased in keeping with prices, and people on fixed incomes are getting a raw deal. It is to the everlasting disgrace of members of the Liberal Party that they campaigned against national price control in 1948. That was when the damage was done, and people who campaigned to eliminate price control then must today accept the responsibility for the financial mess that we are in.

Mr. McAnaney: Within a year people could buy goods again: what tripe you are talking.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VIRGO: I do not know whether the member for Stirling came down with the last shower, but I can remember not only 1948 but also the depression years, which left a big imprint on my mind. The capitalist class of this world had the working class down-trodden with the result that many people lost their homes. Yet today we find Government members supporting the barons of finance.

Mr. McAnaney: What sort of Government did we have during the depression?

Mr. VIRGO: It was the Toriest Government Australians have ever seen. That, together with oversea influences, was the cause of the depression. It is the old story of the tail wagging the dog.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member must get back to the line.

Mr. VIRGO: My remarks are associated with the line to the extent that we must have control over the commodities needed by man in order to exist.

Line passed.

Superannuation Department, \$218,962.

Mr. HUDSON: Can the Minister of Lands, in the absence of the Treasurer, explain the reduction in the salary provided for the Manager and Secretary of the Superannuation Fund Board?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Last year, there was the payment of higher duty pay and also paid sick leave of the former Manager and Secretary. No such provision is necessary this year.

Mr. HUDSON: I thank the Minister for that explanation. I think it is probably true generally that the Superannuation Fund is administered in a conservative fashion, with the result that the pension entitlement of former employees may not be as great as it would otherwise be, and also with the result

that, over time, with the inflation of prices, the ex-employee of the Government, who does not get any form of compensation for the rise in prices that occurs, finds that the real value of his superannuation, and any other income that he has, gradually declines and is eroded away. This creates serious problems for those affected. First, they feel particularly vulnerable, mainly because they have no adequate way of protecting the real value of their superannuation. They are completely dependent on their superannuation, on some part pension or on other income, and they are not in a financial position to protect themselves from inflation, as the businessman, the member of Parliament (with his triennial salary review) or the average worker can—at least, partially.

In the past we have been somewhat reluctant to adjust superannuation pensions whenever State superannuation has come under review—at least, for ex-employees. There is a tendency for those people considering amendments to the superannuation legislation to consider almost entirely the position of present employees and not to pay sufficient attention to the position of former employees of the State Government. Now that the Commonwealth Government has eased the means test so that an increase in pension—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the honourable member is going beyond the ambit of this line. He wants to discuss administration, but what he is really discussing is the legislation dealing with these matters.

Mr. HUDSON: The alteration to the means test now means that, if these people are granted an increase in their superannuation, it is not all lost in a reduction of Commonwealth pension, as was the case until the means test was changed recently. Therefore, I request the Government to earnestly consider some amelioration of the position of these people and some fulfilment of the promises made to them at election times in previous years.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Consideration will be given to this matter, which is clearly one of policy. I cannot forecast any change but we are all aware of the problems of people on fixed incomes. There is a direct relationship between that and a further relaxing of the means test. I will refer this matter to the Treasurer, who will consider it closely.

Line passed.

Agent-General in England Department, \$121,650; Valuation Department, \$631,469; State Taxes Department, \$472,466—passed.

Miscellaneous, \$24,828,195.

Mr. HUDSON: I refer, first, to the Builders Licensing Board and note a provision of \$5,000 for 1969-70. A sum of \$5,330 was spent last year, although effectively, because of the Government's lack of decision, the board did nothing. In the brief period of about three weeks while I was Minister of Housing we started a programme and initiated policies not all of which have been wrecked by the current Government. However, the matter to which I shall now refer has been completely and utterly sabotaged by the Government.

One of the first things to be done to get the Builders Licensing Act operating was to appoint the Builders Licensing Advisory Committee, and the regulations for that committee and the initial appointments to it were made while I was Minister. As soon as the new Government came into office, all of that was scrapped and the further appointments necessary to the committee were not made. The Master Builders Association, the Architects Board of South Australia and one or two other groups had to make nominations, and I had written to them asking for their nominations, but no further appointments have been made. The Builders Licensing Board cannot operate and introduce building licences until such time as the advisory committee functions and, as far as I know, the advisory committee has never met.

Over a year ago the Minister of Housing said that a subcommittee of Cabinet had been appointed to look into the whole question of the administration of the Builders Licensing Board. I do not know whether that subcommittee of Cabinet has met; I think it is just a convenient way for the Government to pigeon-hole the whole business. When in Opposition, members opposite did not like the legislation and did their best to sabotage it. Now they are in office they have set about sabotaging it in earnest. The consequence of all this has been, first, that the builders' licensing asked for by the industry has not been instituted and, secondly, the public, which is entitled to protection from shoddy building, has not had that protection. This is simply not good enough. The Government has had many months more than necessary to reconsider this matter if it thought that reconsideration was necessary, but it has done

nothing. All the people in the industry who need protection and the buyers of houses have not had protection at all.

This is the worst kind of administration one can possibly imagine. Not only is it incompetent administration but it is also uncaring administration. I presume that some hide-bound reactionaries of the Government have managed to have this legislation pigeon-holed to avoid implementing it. Yet for two years we have seen the appearance in the Estimates of the provision of \$5,000 for the Builders' Licensing Board, a board that has been effectively prevented from doing anything at all. That is a complete and utter waste of money in those circumstances. However, quite apart from that, the real question is that this \$5,000 is money that should be spent in providing proper building standards within the industry and proper protection for the public.

I consider that the Government's actions in this matter can be subjected to the most serious and damaging criticism. It is involved in a waste of money, and it has exhibited an attitude of not caring at all for the members of the public who need the protection of this Act. The Government has given no satisfactory explanation at all for these delays, for its incompetence, and for its lack of care for the public, and it is time we had such an explanation; in fact, we want one this evening.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: This legislation is being considered: it has not been dropped. I remind the Committee that many objections were raised to this legislation. At the time of the change of Government, some members of the committee had been appointed; the remainder were left for the new Government to deal with.

Mr. Hudson: That is not altogether true; I had written to the various organizations that had to submit nominations.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Well, the new Government had the legislation to deal with, whilst part of the committee had been selected. This legislation, as it passed, contained grave defects. We have been told that the legislation was introduced to protect the public. However, the cost of protection under it was too great. Some of its provisions were so restrictive that we as a Government just could not agree to them, and many people in the industry could not agree to them, either. Although it is true that the building industry generally wants to have legislation dealing with this matter, some of its members are by no means happy with the provisions as they now appear on the Statute Book.

Mr. Hudson: Not from what we hear.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The Minister of Housing has been dealing with this matter, and in fact the matter has been discussed by Cabinet on a number of occasions. However, so many flaws have been detected in the legislation that it is just not possible to put it into operation straight away. I think we all know that there are bad builders and that shoddy work should be prevented; but on the other hand the legislation has so many disadvantages that it would raise the cost of houses considerably.

Mr. Hudson: Why?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: It would raise the cost of houses in many ways by the effect it would have on the building industry because of the requirement of licences for almost every form of building activity. The Government cannot agree to the legislation in its present form. The Minister is dealing with the matter, and has had many discussions with Cabinet on many aspects.

Mr. Hudson: It's taken you 18 months to do nothing.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The legislation has not been in operation in that time, and that is to the benefit of the people, because they do not like the measure as it was passed.

Mr. Broomhill: What nonsense! Parliament passed the legislation, and surely the measure was what the people desired.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The honourable member has said that the legislation has been dropped and I am saying that it has not, that it is being considered. If the consideration takes too long, that cannot be helped. Many meetings must be held before finality is reached and it is better to deal with the matter this way than to put it into operation as it stands.

Mr. VIRGO: I am amazed to hear the Minister speaking in this vein. In the past 12 months the Minister of Housing has stated fairly consistently in reply to many questions that the matter is still being considered. However, on August 12, apparently after the Minister had asked the member for Onkaparinga to ask a Dorothy Dixer—

Mr. Rodda: That's not fair.

Mr. VIRGO: I do not know whether it is fair, but the member for Victoria will see in *Hansard* that the member for Unley, the member for Barossa, and I, as well as other members on this side, have consistently asked

questions and that not one question has been asked by a Government member on this matter until the death knock, when the member for Onkaparinga asked a question and put his foot right in it. On August 12 the Minister of Housing stated, in reply to a question:

Yesterday Cabinet authorized the drafting of amendments to the Act.

If that was true, why is not provision being made for the advisory committee? I suggest strongly that that was a deliberate untruth.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I object on the Minister's behalf to an accusation by the honourable member that the Minister spoke a deliberate untruth.

The CHAIRMAN: Objection having been taken to the use of the words "deliberate untruth", I ask the honourable member to withdraw those words.

Mr. VIRGO: For one reason only, I will withdraw them: that reason is that the Minister of Housing is not here for me to say it to his face. As soon as the Minister is able to be here (I understand he is suffering ill health) I will repeat the statement to his face so that he can repudiate it or otherwise.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member has not withdrawn the remark, as requested by the Chair.

Mr. HUDSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Do you rule that this remark is unparliamentary?

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the words "deliberate untruth" are unparliamentary.

Mr. VIRGO: Mr. Chairman, I do not think you heard what I said. I said that as the Minister of Housing was not here to defend himself I would withdraw my remark and repeat it again when he was present to defend himself. I do not know how you can get around that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the honourable member to withdraw these words. If they are withdrawn the honourable member has done what the Chair has requested. The other matter is hypothetical and I am not interested in it.

Mr. VIRGO: I said that, as the Minister of Housing was not here and as the allegation I was making was against him, I would withdraw it and repeat it when I got the opportunity to do so in his presence. If the Minister of Lands wants to take issue he can do so.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: It is clear that there is confusion in the way the honourable member is speaking. If he is prepared to withdraw these remarks I have no objection, but are we to understand that he will repeat the remarks when the Minister is here, or that he will repeat the withdrawal? Frankly, I took that remark to mean that he would repeat the offensive remarks when the Minister came back.

Mr. VIRGO: That's right.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: As long as he is prepared to withdraw, I have no further objection.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I requested the honourable member for Edwardstown to withdraw the words "deliberate untruth". If there is an unequivocal withdrawal of the words, that is what the Chair is asking. I am not concerned with what the honourable member intends to do on another occasion.

Mr. VIRGO: I am still at a complete loss. We are going around in circles. I have convinced the Minister, and I hope by repeating it again I can convince you, Mr. Chairman. What I am saying is that, because of the absence of the Minister of Housing and in accordance with your request, I am withdrawing the remark, but I will repeat it when the Minister is present, because I believe what I have said to be true.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member is not unequivocally withdrawing the words?

Mr. VIRGO: I have already withdrawn about six times: *Hansard* will be sick and tired of taking this down. I have indicated to you, Mr. Chairman, that, because of the absence of the Minister of Housing, I will withdraw the remark to which objection has been taken.

The CHAIRMAN: If the honourable member leaves it there, I accept that withdrawal.

Mr. VIRGO: I do not see why I cannot indicate what I intend to do later. It is hypothetical, as you have said.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the later stage now. I have asked the honourable member to withdraw these words.

Mr. VIRGO: Have we cleared up the issue, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: If the honourable member is withdrawing the words to which I have referred, I accept that, but if he is going to add a rider and it is not an unequivocal withdrawal, I cannot accept it.

Mr. VIRGO: I think you answered the point, Mr. Chairman, when you said that anything occurring afterwards was hypothetical and that you were not concerned about that. I am merely saying what I intend to do. However, I may not get the opportunity, as the matter may not be before the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the honourable member withdrawing the words "deliberate untruth"?

Mr. VIRGO: I have already done so about eight times.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has not acceded to the request of the Chair.

Mr. VIRGO: I have not acceded to it?

The CHAIRMAN: No. The honourable member must withdraw the words "deliberate untruth".

Mr. Hudson: He has withdrawn those words.

Mr. Venning: But he added a rider.

Mr. VIRGO: I am at a complete loss to understand what you desire me to do. You asked me to withdraw the comment I made that the answer given by the Minister of Housing was a deliberate untruth. I said that in the absence of the Minister I would withdraw the remark, and I then indicated that at some future stage I would repeat the allegation that, as you have said, is hypothetical. In the absence of the Minister, who was not here to defend himself, I had withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: All right; if the honourable member has said he withdraws the remarks, I accept that.

Mr. VIRGO: That is about the tenth time I have done it. May I now proceed?

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member may proceed.

Mr. VIRGO: On the second to last occasion on which this matter was raised in the Chamber (August 12), the member for Onkaparinga asked the Minister whether he had a reply to his question about suggested amendments to the Builders Licensing Act, and the Minister of Housing replied:

Yesterday, Cabinet authorized the drafting of amendments to the Act.

On the one hand, the Minister of Housing has said that amendments to the Act are being drafted; on the other hand, the Minister of Lands has said that the matter is not dropped and that it is still being considered. However, not one cent is provided in these Estimates.

Mr. Clark: You aren't suggesting he is not being truthful?

Mr. VIRGO: No, I would not say that, because that would get me into trouble again. I understand the difficulty of the Minister of Lands, who has had a pretty torrid day trying to handle another portfolio. Although I am sympathetic towards the Minister, however, I think he has to keep cool, calm and collected and has to give members the information to which they are entitled. It is no good his saying that the matter is still under consideration when there is not even 1c on the line. This shows conclusively that the Government does not expect this Bill to come into operation this financial year. The Government does not want the Bill; it does not want the licensing of builders. That is shown clearly by what the member for Glenelg said earlier, that because only part of the appointments had been made to the advisory committee (which, after all, is the teeth of the whole Act) the Government seized the opportunity of using the axe on the Act.

Mr. Hudson: Remember how the present Government opposed it.

Mr. VIRGO: I was not here then so I do not know whether or not it opposed it but, if it ran true to form, it must have indulged in a donnybrook and used unparliamentary language of the sort it has objected to tonight. The Government should realize what is involved here. It fears that this is just a further case of trying to provide some form of protection for the workers in the building industry. It is lukewarm about it or hostile to it. I have a dossier that was produced in 1965 by the Master Builders Association, an organization that everyone should acknowledge. It states in its first submission that the South Australian Government was approached by deputation to the Premier in 1939. Another approach was made in 1945. It again approached the Government in 1947, but this time it tried the back-door method; it went to the Liberal and Country League and asked it to put pressure on the Premier, but that did not work, either. Then in 1952, with the Municipal Association, it made a further unsuccessful approach. It had to wait for a Labor Government to take office before it could get anywhere, and this is what rankles with the present Government. The Labor Government enacted popular legislation designed to protect the people in the greatest asset that any ordinary person can accumulate in his lifetime, but this Government wants to destroy that legislation. Yet, despite the inactivity of the advisory committee, we still retain the

Builders Licensing Board. The Minister of Housing 12 months ago, following the Budget debate on this matter, told me that the amount shown in the Estimates for 1968-69 covered the fees of the Chairman and members and the Secretary of the Builders Licensing Board: the Chairman received \$1,300 a year, the four members received \$800 each, and the Secretary received \$300. The total is \$5,200, because there are 13 monthly payments to be made this year as the payment due in June, 1968, was delayed until July, 1968.

The Government, which is crying poverty, is throwing away \$5,000 to pay a Chairman, members and Secretary of a Builders Licensing Board that can do nothing whatever until the advisory committee is appointed, meets and does its work. Not one builder has been or can be licensed by the board, yet the Minister of Lands just wants to fob off the matter, saying that the legislation has grave defects and that the cost of protection for the house builder is too great. We have not found out what any of these grave defects are.

On August 7 a letter to the Editor from Mr. K. C. West, Executive Director of the Master Builders Association, appeared in the *Advertiser*. This was prompted by a stupid remark in a Dorothy Dixer asked in this place by the member for Onkaparinga who, in asking the question, said, "I think it is a shocking measure," when referring to the Builders Licensing Act. The Executive Director does not think it is a shocking measure. I will not read the letter, for I am sure it is still clear in the mind of the member for Onkaparinga, because Mr. West really took him to task, as he should have been taken to task.

I believe we have every justification for taking the Government to task for wasting \$5,000 of the taxpayers' money. The Government should either say when it will introduce legislation to amend the Act or say that the \$5,000 will not be paid, because it is just a waste of good money to pay a board for work it cannot do. I do not believe the Minister of Lands when he says that the Government intends to go on with this legislation, for I believe it wants to drop it. I do not think we will ever see the legislation during the lifetime of this Government; I believe we will have to wait 18 months before licensing of builders can operate. My only regret is that during that 18 months many hundreds of people will be seriously harmed by having built for them new houses

that are defective and have been constructed by incompetent persons. This type of thing happens every day.

Not only will builders' licensing protect purchasers of houses but it will also stop other rackets that go on in subcontracting. Only the other day I learned of two carpenters who entered into a subcontract, and then the builder would not pay. That sort of thing happens continually. When this legislation becomes effective, it will put an end to all of this. For those reasons, I believe that the greatest emphasis possible ought to be put on this matter.

Mr. EVANS: I admit that I said that this was shockingly drafted legislation. As the member for Edwardstown has said, Mr. K. C. West answered my comments through the press.

Mr. Virgo: You said it was a shocking measure.

Mr. Jennings: He did not merely answer you: he annihilated you.

Mr. EVANS: The comment published in the press was a comment I made at the annual general meeting of the Master Painters, Decorators and Signwriters Association, at which meeting I said that in its present form it was a shocking piece of legislation that ought to be thrown out the window. I still believe that. Mr. West had the decency to ring me before the letter was published and, after our telephone conversation, he said, "Well, I must apologize; I was a bit harsh on you."

Mr. West came into this building to discuss the matter with me, and after doing that he, too, was convinced that the legislation was not correctly drafted. He said that he would make representations to the Minister of Housing, and I think that, through his association, he would have done so, as did the members of the Master Painters, Decorators and Signwriters Association, because they also realized that it was a shocking piece of legislation and that it would have a detrimental effect on the industry as a whole.

I defy the member for Edwardstown to say that this legislation in its present form would not result in increased costs in the building industry. Somebody has to supervise legislation such as this, and the only people that can pay for that supervision are the people who are building houses. The only way that regulations associated with legislation like this can be implemented is by having inspectors, and the cost involved will inevitably be added to

the cost of the houses and will be borne by the home builder. Certainly the average taxpayer cannot be expected to meet this cost.

When Mr. West left me he was satisfied that I was not ill informed, as he had stated in his letter in the press. He was satisfied, too, that I knew a little about the industry and about the repercussions that would occur if the legislation was passed in its present form. I assure the Government now that if the legislation is re-introduced in its original form I will raise the same objections to it as I raised earlier. Despite what the member for Edwardstown said, I did not put my foot in it. I know that what I said is true, and so now do the members of the industry.

Mr. HURST: I am appalled by the efforts of members opposite to try to defend this Government's attitude and its apathy towards this very important question. My Party, when in Government, introduced this legislation with the endorsement of all sections of the industry. However, the present Government has done nothing about it. We have only to look through *Hansard* to get evidence of the tardy approach by this Government and its insincerity in trying to find excuses. The last person to attempt to defend the Government's tardiness in this matter had the effrontery to try to convince this Committee that this was a shocking piece of legislation. What qualifications has the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Evans) to say this? Many people in South Australia have seen evidence of shocking workmanship in houses on which they have spent much money to try to provide shelter for themselves and their families. Any member that tries to justify the Government's failure to do justice to the legislation is going backwards. I do not know any qualified person who opposes the licensing scheme and we will progress when we have a Government with the courage of its convictions that will give effect to legislation endorsed by the majority of members.

The member for Edwardstown has been seeking legislation such as that provided in the Builders Licensing Act for 30 years and it is disheartening for people, after such a term of agitation, to be hamstrung by a Government that is not prepared to take action to protect building standards. On August 27, 1968, the member for Edwardstown drew the Government's attention to the fact that the Builders Licensing Bill had been assented to on November 16, 1967, and that on April 11,

1968, regulations were gazetted (page 1196 and other pages of the *Government Gazette*). The honourable member also stated:

Among the matters contained in the regulations is the constitution of the Builders Licensing Advisory Committee, the personnel of which is set out on page 1196. On page 1194 of the same *Gazette* is an intimation of the appointment of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, who is a person with extensive experience in local government, and four other persons who, I understand, are representatives of the building trade unions.

On August 29 the Minister of Housing stated in the Chamber:

The function of the advisory committee was not to consider amendments to the Act or to make recommendations thereon, but to consider procedural and detail matters and to advise the board how the Act should be administered. Although the honourable member said that the component structure of the advisory committee represented all parts of the industry, that statement is disputed by people who have seen me and who have written to me complaining that they have no representation on the advisory committee.

We all know that many people possessing no qualifications as builders were interested in personal profits. We are concerned about the people who apply their labour and workmanship to constructing houses and other units. It is people using inferior workmanship who should be controlled under the licensing provisions. Many people wanted to be represented on this committee, but the Bill provided for the appointments of people who were most concerned with the welfare of those who purchased houses, because they would ensure that a proper standard of building was maintained. The only way to obtain this standard is by using skilled tradesmen. Apparently, the Government has lost sight of the fact that this Bill was part of the policy of the Labor Party, and introduced by it. If this is the way the Government continues to manage the State's affairs and to ignore public opinion, it will find that its attitude will not be accepted by the public. The Minister of Housing has an obligation to Parliament and to the people to give a sensible and reasonable explanation. There can be no explanation for the delay, but we should be told why the necessary provision is not being made for this committee to operate. This shows the Government's contempt for public opinion, and its attitude is not warranted.

Mr. LANGLEY: The Opposition has always tried to protect builders and the public in some way. I was surprised to hear the member for Onkaparinga say that the original Bill

was a shocker: when introduced, the Bill to provide for the appointment of this committee was thoroughly debated, amended in Committee, and finally settled.

Mr. Hudson: There was an extensive conference with the other place, too.

Mr. LANGLEY: When the Bill was passed we thought something would be done, but little progress has been made in the licensing of builders. Many tradesmen have been licensed: this has proved of great benefit to the building trade and has resulted in a decrease in the number of complaints of poor standards of construction. For many years those concerned with the building trade have striven to have builders licensed under an Act of Parliament. Although not all Bills suit everyone, it is considered that this Bill would go a long way towards protecting builders and members of the public alike. Even if, as the member for Onkaparinga suggested, building prices rise, it will be gratifying to know that a particular job has been done properly. The firms of many builders, including subcontractors, over the last few years have gone into liquidation, while others in the industry have simply been fly-by-night operators, who have gone elsewhere.

Bearing in mind the letter that members recently received from the Minister of Labour and Industry concerning apprentices, I think that by employing more apprentices we will ensure that many more builders in the future are first-class tradesmen. The licensing of builders applies in Western Australia and includes even painters, so that people having houses built or repaired and painted are assured of first-class work. I hope the Government will soon proclaim the Bill which, if it is such a shocking measure as some claim it is, can be amended. Indeed, the legislation is generally desired by those engaged in the industry; it is only those whose work is not up to standard who do not want it.

If the measure is implemented, the rights of builders will be maintained, and those purchasing houses will know that they have a building that will last for life. I hope our fears in this matter are unfounded and that the Government will proclaim the Bill. The member for Onkaparinga will then have an opportunity, if the Government is so inclined, to move amendments. Indeed, few Bills considered in this place are not amended at some stage or other. However, this would start the ball rolling and would ensure better housing for the citizens of this State, because they would have something concrete for the future.

Mrs. BYRNE: Like other members on this side, I am concerned about the Government's lack of action in this matter. The Builders Licensing Act, which was designed to preclude operators unable to measure up to certain standards, was assented to by the Governor on November 16, 1967, and on April 11, 1968, regulations under the Act were gazetted. This happened while the Labor Government was in office. Since then, many questions have been asked by members on this side, particularly by the member for Edwardstown. The replies suggested that some action would be taken, but so far nothing has been done. The last occasion was when the member for Onkaparinga asked the Minister of Housing a question, which was prompted by remarks in the Address in Reply by the member for Unley, the member for Edwardstown and me. I spoke in the debate on the Address in Reply on this matter and pointed out that there was no reference to any amendments to this Act. On this line, instead of a proposed increase, a decrease of \$330 is contemplated.

It is impossible for members on this side to accept the assurance given tonight by the Minister deputizing for the Minister of Housing that something will be done this session. The first time I spoke in this Chamber I referred to the need for legislation of this kind. I regret that four and a half years later I am again on my feet talking in the same vein. Thanks to the action of the previous Labor Administration, we now have an Act, but I cannot understand how any Government can say that it should be amended when it has not even been tried. I wonder how many similar Acts have been amended before they have been put into operation. The Minister of Lands said that implementing this Act would raise the cost of houses because licences would be needed for almost all the work to be done, but that is debatable. I find it hard to believe that it will increase the cost of housing, but what certainly will increase and is at present increasing that cost is the fact that some houses being erected are substandard. Consequently, after the owners get their bank loan and their second mortgage and after the normal three months' maintenance period has expired, the people have to pay for any repairs unless the builder accepts responsibility in that direction. They engage the services of someone to do the repair work and then in 12 months' time the cracks often open up again, further defects show, and the work has to be redone.

I have repeatedly spoken in this Chamber about various houses I have inspected and what has been wrong with them. Again, I invite the Minister of Housing (and the Minister of Lands, too) to come into my district to see some houses that I am sure will convince them that immediate action is necessary. The only reason I can suggest for the Government's inaction is that no members opposite are affected. If members opposite had purchased some of the houses I have seen, I am sure they would realize the necessity, if the Government intends to go ahead with amendments to the Act, to put them before Parliament so that the Builders Licensing Board can commence operating. Unfortunately, the Government does not appear to want to do this but is procrastinating.

Another reason for added costs of housing is the Government's action in decontrolling the price of building materials, which has caused the cost of an average house in this State to increase by \$1,000. The Minister has said that licensing builders might cause the cost of houses to increase, but any such increase would be infinitesimal when compared with the sum involved for some people in maintaining houses that will never be a worthwhile proposition. Some people saddled with houses of this type find them difficult to sell. As people can see their life's savings going down the drain, nervous complaints result. I can cite one instance where I believe the worry of buying such a house caused a person's death, but I suppose members opposite would say that I was exaggerating.

The Minister has also said that people do not like the legislation, but I do not know to whom he is referring. Many people have asked me what is being done about the matter, as they realize how necessary this legislation is. For the Government to amend an Act before it has been tried is most unusual but, if the Government is sincere in saying that the legislation needs amending, then let it bring those amendments before Parliament so they can be debated and, if necessary, carried. The member for Onkaparinga said that the cost of licensing would be passed on to house builders, but he did not say how this would take place.

Mr. Evans: Can you say how it will not take place?

Mrs. BYRNE: I cannot say how it will take place and, if it does, the sum involved will be small indeed compared with the costs of repairs that people who own some of these substandard houses have to meet. They would find this a worthwhile additional expense.



Mr. HUDSON: We deserve a little more than we have had from the Minister or the member for Onkaparinga. We have heard only the vaguest of charges about the Act's being a shocking measure and about its increasing the cost of houses. The Act provides that the Builders Licensing Board can charge various fees, which have to be prescribed by regulation. Section 28 provides:

All moneys paid to or recovered by the board under this Act shall, except to the extent to which the board is required or liable to disburse the same, be paid to the Treasurer of the State and shall form part of the general revenue thereof. The moneys required for the purpose of the administration of this Act or the affairs of the board shall be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for those purposes.

Even assuming that the Government of the day required the board to cover the costs of its operations by means of the licence fees charged, it is ridiculous to suggest that there would be any significant effect on the cost of housing, compared with the kind of effect created by this Government's action in relaxing price control or the effect created by this Government's colleagues in Canberra raising the rate of interest.

Let us imagine that the general builder's licences proposed in this Act cost, say, \$100. I suppose the average builder would build 20 to 25 houses or more a year. Therefore, even if he passed on the full licence fee, the extra cost would be about \$4 to \$5 a house. Just what is the member for Onkaparinga talking about? Of course the Act will require supervision. However, considerable revenue would be obtained through licence fees, which would not significantly affect the cost of a house. Even if the cost of a house increased by \$5, the 6,000 or 7,000 houses built in South Australia a year would provide, at \$5 a house, a revenue of \$30,000 a year, more than enough for the administration of the board (currently only \$5,000) and the employment of a considerable number of inspectors.

Mr. Broomhill: What would be the saving to a house owner?

Mr. HUDSON: The saving would be considerable, particularly for those who have experienced shoddy building, which can cost the individual thousands of dollars and against which he gets no protection, unless he has sufficient financial backing to go through some heavy expenses at law. Even that might not work, because he may be challenging or taking to court a builder who has no capital at all, and even if costs are awarded him by the

court and the decision is in his favour it might do him no good because the builder might be in the process of going bankrupt.

No effective protection is provided for the consumer by this legislation at present. The member for Onkaparinga seems to think it is shocking to supervise something. How on earth are we to ensure adequate building standards without some form of supervision? If that makes it shocking, either I must have my values wrong or (and this is more likely) the member for Onkaparinga and the Minister of Lands are looking at this problem in a reactionary way.

The argument we have heard so far has almost no foundation. The average cost of a house has increased during the term of office of the present Government by probably almost \$1,000, mainly as a consequence of this Government's action in relaxing price control on building materials and on certain building services. This has come about through the action of this Government, yet the member for Onkaparinga has the gall to tell us that if this Act is proclaimed and administered it will increase the cost of housing. Secondly, the increase of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent in the interest rate means an extra \$40 a year in the early years of the mortgage to a person borrowing \$8,000. The administration costs of the Act, if not subsidized by the Government, would not be more than \$5 for each house.

The Minister of Lands and the member for Onkaparinga referred to the measure as being shocking and unsatisfactory, yet they and their colleagues in Canberra are responsible for increasing building costs by about \$200 a house, which is much greater than the cost of administering this Act. I suppose the member for Onkaparinga thinks that the increasing of the cost will result in no-one being able to buy a cheap, shoddy house. It is that type of house, which causes much concern and worry to the purchasers, that we want to eliminate. Surely the Minister of Lands knows constituents in Morphett Vale who have suffered as a result of shoddy building practice, and surely the member for Onkaparinga knows people who are similarly placed. The Premier would know the position of people at Parafield and Parafield Gardens.

An Act of this kind, whether amended or not, will cost something to administer and will involve payment of a licence fee, but no-one can say that these fees, if passed on, will be more than a few dollars for each house, and that is worthwhile insurance. The

legal principle that applies to the purchaser of a house is *caveat emptor*, which means, "Let the buyer beware." If the buyer does not beware, in most cases it is too bad, regardless of who the seller is. Years ago a person rented instead of buying a house. However, today he buys a house, involving himself in the biggest transaction of his life, and he deserves the protection of the law, but he does not get it. That was the reason for putting this measure on the Statute Book. The Premier, the Minister of Lands, or the member for Onkaparinga cannot specify the provisions in the Act that do what they say the measure does. Their argument is without foundation and they are exaggerating to excuse the Government's inaction and incompetence.

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier): The member for Glenelg would know much about hardship and worry as it applies to house owners and builders in South Australia because he, as a member of the former Government, was responsible for a tremendous amount of hardship and worry. He must bear his responsibility as a member of Parliament for the tremendous sag in the building industry during his Government's term of office, a recession in building that will be long remembered. As angry as he may be, he cannot shirk that responsibility.

Mr. HUDSON: Mr. Acting Chairman, I rise on a point of order. These remarks are completely out of order with respect to the line we have been discussing. We have been discussing the Builders Licensing Board and not the alleged recession that the Premier, whenever he is in trouble (and that is often), always speaks about.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Acting Chairman. The member for Glenelg entered into wide range of debate and criticized the Government, saying it had caused hardship and worry.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. McAnaney): Order! There has been a wide range of debate on this subject, but I ask the Premier to relate his remarks to the line being discussed.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will do that, but the member for Glenelg attributed certain things to this Government. However, this legislation was introduced as a diversion, because the then Labor Government was in trouble with the building industry. The present Government has a real concern for house purchasers and house owners in this State.

Its actions in the past have made South Australia the best State in the Commonwealth in which to purchase or build a house.

Mr. Hudson: Rubbish!

The Hon. R. S. HALL: It is not rubbish. The member for Glenelg is playing with figures and, if he tries to prove that this is not the best State in the Commonwealth in which to build a house, he would be wrong. To say that this is not the best of any State would be untrue.

*Members interjecting:*

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Every other Government in Australia admits this, and admires the lower cost of housing in South Australia. We use this fact continuously in promoting South Australia and in bringing industry to this State. We are an example to Australia in that field.

Mr. Virgo: Rubbish!

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Opposition members have spoken on this debate for some time, and the remark of the member for Edwardstown is the type of remark that they have been making. As a Government we are not interested in driving people out of this State by this sort of legislation: thousands of people left during the last year of the Labor Government. We are trying to build and are building confidence in this State, and the practical results can be seen by everyone. Our overall policy of housing has had dramatic and continuous results. We do not move recklessly into a complete tie-up of the building industry: restrictions cannot be placed on builder and tradesmen alike in this industry. We are carefully considering the matter, and the Minister of Housing has reported from time to time. We will be bringing the measure into the Chamber, no doubt after Cabinet has given it final approval, if it gives it final approval. But that will be a long time from now if members opposite filibuster as they are doing now, because we will never have an opportunity to introduce the measure.

*Members interjecting:*

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Nankivell): Order!

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The Opposition is deliberately filibustering and delaying progress.

Mr. HUDSON: Mr. Acting Chairman, I object to the remark "deliberately filibustering", and I ask for a withdrawal.

Mr. McAnaney: That's not unparliamentary.

Mr. HUDSON: I say it is deliberately untrue.

The Hon. R. S. HALL: Obviously, the member for Glenelg can give criticism but cannot take it. Time after time we have heard criticism coming from members in this place which has not been anywhere near as severe as that being directed against the Government by him. As I say, the Government is anxious to introduce many Bills for members to consider but it will be a long time before this occurs if the Opposition's attitude continues. The Government is considering amendments to the Bill in question and in due course, if members can consider certain other legislation to be introduced, we may eventually be able to consider the measure. However, at the moment no final decision has been made on the matter and there is no point in saying when the legislation will be introduced before it has been considered in detail. That is about as far as it is proper for me to go in outlining the Cabinet's attitude to the legislation.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Government is a Government which, when it was in Opposition, treated the Builders Licensing Act as a piece of Socialist regimentation. Those were the Premier's words at the time, even though the legislation was supported by the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association and the Employers Federation, none of which could really be called harbingers of Socialism. However, the Bill was passed with the support (the vociferous support) of the housing industry in South Australia. It was a Bill on which every section of the housing industry had been fully consulted. Indeed, because during the course of considering the Bill consultations took place, as a result of which I moved for changes in the measure, the Premier said I was vacillating and changing my view. When I do not change my view on some things, according to him I am—

Mr. Jennings: Obdurate!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: —stubborn and obdurate and not responsive to public pressures. However, whatever one does in this business, according to the Premier one is never right if one is not on his side.

Mr. Hudson: He can never give you a substantial reason for that.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No; he is not prepared to be charitable unless it is the views of his colleagues that are at variance

with his. However, the Bill, whether with his charity or not, passed, and the members of the Builders Licensing Board were appointed. They were eminent people, well qualified to do the work of the board. Can it be suggested that the board does not consist of people well versed in the problems of the housing industry? Of course not! Those are people well qualified to advise the Government on the regulations necessary under the Act. After all, the Act was not entirely new legislation, because it had been modelled on legislation elsewhere, albeit with modifications to suit local conditions. Because some of the regulations had to be worked out and the advisory committee had to be appointed, time was given for the proclamation of the Act, which was necessary to bring it fully into force; but it was due to be brought into force in June of last year.

This is a Government which, when in Opposition, could brook no delay in anything to be done by the Labor Government. According to members opposite, everything we did was done far too slowly. The Government has had sufficient time to prepare the regulations necessary to make the appointments and to bring the legislation into force four or five times over, yet the Premier still cannot tell members that he knows what will happen.

Mr. Broomhill: He knows it has been shelved.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Certainly, that is the view of the majority of those in the building industry.

Mr. Virgo: And his answer is contrary to the views of the Minister of Lands.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Well, that is not new. Nobody in this Chamber can be satisfied with the kind of answer we have just heard from the Premier. He said that at some time in the unspecified future amendments of an unspecified nature were to be introduced to this Chamber and members might then have time to consider them.

Mr. Virgo: By that time the houses will have fallen down.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In the meantime the houses of many people will have fallen down. The protection that this measure was designed to give the people is being ignored. All we have is the line "Builders Licensing Board" under which so far we can see nothing being achieved, because the Government will not allow anything to be achieved. Not only members on this side but also the people for the protection of whom this legislation was designed by the people in the building industry want to know when something

will be done about it. The longer the Government delays the operation of this measure, the greater will become the ire of this section of the industry and its workers and the general public, who should be protected by the Government. The Premier talks about having achieved in Government dramatic results for South Australia. The drama in this case is that not of a bang but of a whimper.

Mr. VIRGO: I address myself to the remarks of the Premier and his untrue allegation that the Opposition is filibustering on this matter. The real reason why these matters are dragging on is the kind of stupid remark made by people like the Premier, whose contribution has amounted to exactly nothing. We are trying to get information about what is happening to the Builders Licensing Act. The Premier treated us with the scorn he usually has for us when we direct questions to him. Fancy a person who holds the position of Premier accusing the former Labor Government of introducing a Bill as a diversionary measure to take the heat off the building industry. Had the Premier been in this Chamber earlier, as he should have been, he would have heard me say that representatives of the building industry approached former Liberal Governments about this matter in 1939, 1945, 1947, and 1952, and got exactly nowhere. If the Premier takes a careful look at this matter he will see that it was not introduced as a diversionary measure; surely he will take note of the Master Builders Association, which set out in this dossier to which I have previously referred why registration of builders was needed. We are not talking about this for the sake of having a filibuster: we are trying to protect people who invest their life's savings. Obviously the Premier and other members of his Government do not give one jot for people who are investing their all.

The Minister of Housing said 12 months ago that he was looking at the question and hoped he would soon be able to come up with something definite. On August 12 he said, "It was before Cabinet yesterday." Is Cabinet like an animal that hibernates for six months? It is now September 30 and yet the Minister of Lands says the matter is still being considered, while the Premier has virtually said that we will never have builders' licensing. So we have two Ministers giving different views. Is it any wonder the Government cannot get its lines passed if it is not prepared to give the Opposition the answers to which it is entitled? No protection at all is afforded the building industry today. Land agents set up in business

not only as land agents but also as house brokers, and they build houses without having the faintest idea whether the bricks go on the top of the foundation or below it. This type of person will be taken care of by the legislation. What do Government members care about a person whose house is jerry-built and who has to work the rest of his life to pay off the cost and to pay for its repairs? The member for Onkaparinga talked about increased costs, but Government members were not worried about increased costs when they imposed a \$200 licence fee on abalone fishermen. Apparently they think it is more important to license those people than it is to protect the home buyers of this State. Protection in the building industry is long overdue, and I believe that the Committee is entitled to receive civility in this matter from either the Minister of Lands or the Premier.

Mr. EVANS: The member for Glenelg said he believed that I thought that any measure that required the appointment of inspectors was a shocking one or that this was the reason I objected to the legislation. This is not the case. In making that statement, he also referred to the Minister of Lands. I assure the Committee that I do not think along those lines. I believe that inspection is necessary. However, I repeat that if this legislation is re-introduced and passed in its present form it will eventually increase the cost of housing. Whether that will be to the detriment or the good of home builders remains to be seen.

I am as interested in the welfare of the home purchaser as is any member opposite. The Housing Trust, as well as many private builders and many other speculators, made the error of trying to build houses on poor soils with average-type foundations that would not stand up to the changes in the nature of the soil through the seasons. We have learned by this error, and the standard of housing in this State in the last four or five years has improved. Members can inquire about this of the master builders or the unions that perhaps some members opposite represent, and they will find out that that is the case. We do not have the complaints with the later homes that we had in the past.

There were complaints about poor houses immediately after the Second World War, in the first instance, because there was then a shortage of houses and some people would use any type of material to build a house and would build in any area, as long as they could obtain a block of land at a reasonable price.

Many people then did not consider the soil types. The Housing Trust bought hundreds of acres of land of bad soil types and built hundreds of houses, many of which cracked badly. We have learned our lesson from that.

One of my friends, a foundation contractor, spent thousands of dollars in an effort to save his house from cracking, but it is now so bad that he is ashamed of it. Incidentally, this house is on a good site and in what he thought was a good area. Therefore, even if houses are subject to inspection and even if the builder guarantees a house for a certain period, we will find that, unless a builder or house owner is prepared to go to terrific expense, many houses in these bad areas will crack. Of course, the average workman would never be able to afford to go to this expense. We have to be assured that we build the houses on good soil types.

Mr. Casey: What would it cost to do that?

Mr. EVANS: It costs up to \$5,000 or \$6,000 to put in good foundations in bad soil types, and there is still no guarantee that a house would not crack. Members opposite have claimed that there has been an increase of \$1,000 in the cost of an average house. What type of house are they talking about: the average house, the average large house, or the house that the person on the smallest income tends to buy? I say there has not been a \$1,000 increase in the cost of the average house in the last 12 months.

Mr. Broomhill: There has been such an increase on a \$10,000 house: that is an assessment by the Housing Industry Association.

Mr. EVANS: The whole cause is not the releasing of building materials from price control but the fact that for about three and a half years the building trade was in the doldrums, builders being prepared to tender a price lower than cost to stay in business and to keep their employees in this State until the industry improved. When conditions did improve, the only way to survive was by tendering at a reasonable price. Even today many builders are tendering at a cost below a paying proposition in order to stay in business. Members opposite will find that that is true if they speak to members of the Master Builders Association.

True, we had a drought in this State, but the then Government did nothing to improve the situation in the building trade. Although the Leader of the Opposition has said that the Master Builders Association is satisfied with the Act, members of that association and of

the Master Painters, Decorators, and Sign-writers Association have told me that they are not satisfied with the measure and have asked me to note amendments they desire. These people may have made representations to the Minister of Housing on the matter. It is not true to say that they are satisfied with the Act: they may agree in principle but they disagree to facets of it.

I have never said that I do not believe in registration of some type in the building trade but the Act, as passed, is not satisfactory. Nobody can deny that implementation of the Act will add to the cost of a house, although an exact cost cannot be fixed now. That cost may be justified but we must ensure that the regulations under the Act will give the purchaser a better house than many purchasers are getting now. The Act does not provide that a bond will be available to protect the purchaser for a time, but there should be such a provision, whether the house is built on a labour-only basis or under contract.

It is no good saying the Act protects the purchaser when it only imposes controls, without providing for standards. The Act is not acceptable to me or to those in the industry to whom I have spoken. I object to the statement that I do not like the Act because it allows for inspection. That is not the reason, and the reason is not that I want shoddy housing, although the member for Glenelg said that it was. When I built my house I sub-contracted and did certain work myself, although I am not a master builder, and my house has not cracked. I hope everyone will have a house that is up to standard. Anyone who says that I do not believe in this is pulling the wool over his eyes and the eyes of the people.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF LANDS, MINISTER OF REPATRIATION,  
MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND MINISTER  
OF IMMIGRATION AND TOURISM

Department of Lands, \$3,571,003.

Mr. CASEY: Can the Minister of Lands explain why the allocation for the purchase of town lands has increased by \$54,025, and for what this money will be used?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Lands): The department's largest subdivision matters are concentrated around Whyalla; this provision is to purchase land in Whyalla.

Line passed.

Immigration, Publicity and Tourist Bureau  
Department, \$913,446.

Mr. CASEY: I draw to the Minister's attention the following large increases in the following items: National pleasure resorts—maintenance, improvements, etc., \$2,030; Adelaide Festival of Arts, \$12,500; and National Flower Day, \$6,122. Can he explain why these allocations have been so increased?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Immigration and Tourism): The increase for National pleasure resorts, mainly for caravan parks, has been caused by increased patronage. Increased costs for electricity, water, and so on, follow from increased numbers of visitors. These increases have been noticeable, particularly at Fort Glanville and other metropolitan caravan parks. Generally, caravan parks are well controlled and give satisfactory service to the public, but to maintain their high standards urgent repairs have to be carried out. The other items refer to the 1970 Festival of Arts. The increase of \$12,500 is a portion of the State Government's contribution of \$75,000 towards the expense of this function. A committee is organizing the 1970 National Flower Day, and \$3,500 is provided for flood-lighting. I think the honourable member would agree that all those items were justified in view of the coming festival.

Mr. BROOMHILL: The sum provided for purchase of equipment and construction of improvements, under "National pleasure resorts", represents a decrease of \$3,347. Can the Minister say whether this relates to toilet provisions, etc., for which there is a fairly heavy need? If it does, will he say why there is a reduction this year?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: This sum covers the purchase of a tractor, and includes also the balance of the cost of constructing a toilet block in Wilpena Pound, as well as the balance of the cost of a building constructed at the Naracoorte cave reserve. Unfortunately, since this estimate was prepared, fire has caused damage at the Naracoorte cave reserve, as a result of which additional work will have to be undertaken.

Mr. BROOMHILL: I am disappointed that only \$5,000 is again provided this year for the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (South Australian Centre). Last year, the member for Glenelg and I drew the Minister's attention to the fact that this sum, which did not compare favourably with the sums provided by other State Governments for the association, was insufficient for it to continue the work expected of it by members of the community.

In view of rising costs and greater demands being made on the association through increased population, can the Minister say whether the Government will increase the sum provided for this item next year?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: If it is possible, an increase will be provided. The present Government increased the allocation last year by 25 per cent, incidentally, over that of the previous Government, the sum having, I think, been static for some time prior to that. The fact that the Government has declined to increase the allocation this year does not mean any loss of confidence in this movement; indeed, the Government strongly supports it. The State centre allocation does not represent the only contribution being received by the association. This is a contribution to the State centre only. The various clubs are eligible for assistance if they submit projects of their own.

Mr. HUGHES: For the item "Subsidies towards swimming pools and sundries" \$162,345 is provided, which is an increase of \$12,428. Can the Minister say how much of this money is to be spent outside the metropolitan area?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I can give the list of contributions. The sum of \$110,000 is provided for the new pool in the north parklands; \$3,000 each is provided for swimming pools at Coonalpyn, Elizabeth, Kingscote, Lock, Millicent, Nangwarry, Payneham, Strathalbyn, Tea Tree Gully, Waikerie, Woodside, Wudinna, Jamestown, Lameroo, Minnipa and Salisbury; and \$1,345 is provided for Peterborough. A little balance is left for further projects.

Mr. HUDSON: I support the remarks of the member for West Torrens about the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia and the support given for the South Australian centre. The association's State centre performs an excellent role in the surf life saving movement in South Australia and has been the body responsible for successfully encouraging the development of surf life saving in South Australia in recent years. The number of clubs established and the growth of existing clubs have been phenomenal. The regular competitions now organized are becoming more and more important and are assisting greatly in raising the standards of surf life saving in South Australia.

In many respects surf life saving here is still in its infancy and our standards have not been as high as those in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, where there are

greater opportunities for its development. Nevertheless, it is an important activity in South Australia. It has developed and become much more popular. The annual State championships are now a big affair. The last championships were held in the Minister's district. I attended the carnival and was most impressed by the way in which it was organized and the general standard reached. It is the State centre that is responsible, basically, for the organization of this event.

While individual clubs have other sources of funds, the State centre is peculiarly dependent on the support it gets from the Government. The degree of support given in South Australia to surf life saving is probably lower than that given in any other State. Most members believe there is a case for greater support of this association's State centre. The percentage increase in the financial provision when the Labor Government came into power was greater than the percentage increase given last year.

If the Minister has not been to the State centre of the Surf Life Saving Association, I suggest that he visit it. When one visits the centre at Henley Beach, one can see a great need for additional funds to develop the old home the association has purchased. The association has gone only part of the way in developing it and much has yet to be done. One gets the impression of an organization forced to live very much on the smell of an oily rag, and having to be maintained and developed largely through the enthusiasm of those involved in it.

I believe that this is a worthwhile organization and that the State centre, in particular, could be given capital assistance of a non-recurrent kind to help the association develop the building to a proper standard. Any money given the association will be well spent, because this activity involves younger members of the community in an essential way. One of the problems of our modern society is to find sufficient of these activities to occupy the youth of today. Therefore, this body should receive every encouragement to ensure that it develops fully.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, \$591,175.

Mr. CASEY: Under "National Park Commissioners—national parks and wild life reserves", an increase of \$14,900 is provided in the grant towards running expenses. It was brought to my notice some months ago that a certain body of people was interested in the

building of a path at National Park where horses could be exercised. I understand that these people ran into some difficulty because an embargo was placed on the path's being constructed. I think areas should be provided in national parks where horse riding can be encouraged. Close to Sydney horses are exercised at Centennial Park during the weekend and, possibly, on other days of the week. I think horse-riding is one of the finest sporting activities, and its popularity is increasing. I sincerely hope that no restrictions will be placed on those areas that will be detrimental to the horse lovers concerned, who are prepared to observe any necessary safety regulations.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Lands): Much discussion about horse-riding in national parks has taken place. The National Park Commissioners have a set of by-laws that they will submit to Parliament, and included in them is a partial prohibition on horse-riding in national parks. There were some protests in respect of this matter, and a deputation waited on me, as a result of which the Commissioners have reconsidered their draft by-laws, which have now been considerably modified. In general, they provide that certain areas may be set aside for horse-riding.

I have left this matter for the consideration of the horse-riding interests before going any further. However, probably within a few days I will hear what they think of the regulations. I do not expect that there will be any more difficulty, for the organizations concerned have a sense of responsibility and understand the need for control, particularly of the type of person who probably has not been associated with an organization or had much to do with horses. I think that this matter will be satisfactorily settled soon.

Mr. EVANS: I refer to the Minister a report by the Council of the South Australian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, which has gone to considerable trouble to investigate the Sturt Gorge. I refer the Minister particularly to the recommendation that the Sturt Gorge be preserved in its present state. I do not know whether the Minister's department has a copy of this report, but I strongly urge the department to take steps to see that this area is not developed. It is really too steep for development, and it should be preserved as a national park or wild life reserve.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I cannot recall this proposal offhand. However, I will check on it and consider the matter the honourable member has raised.

Mr. HUGHES: The grant towards running expenses for the Botanic Garden this year is \$176,370, an increase of \$7,155 over that of last year. I am pleased to see that this sum has been allotted towards the running expenses of one of our beauty spots in Adelaide. I notice that the grant towards improvements and additions to the garden has been increased by \$4,070 over last year, and I would have liked to see even more money allotted on this line. Our lovely gardens of trees, shrubs and flowers are an asset to our people and to visitors. The Botanic Garden is becoming more popular each year for reunions, particularly of country people. I compliment the Director on the way he is running the Botanic Garden.

Mr. CASEY: I am pleased that the provision for the Dog Fence Board has been increased by about 75 per cent. The condition of the dog fence is causing concern to pastoralists in the Far North and on the West Coast. Only two weeks ago pastoralists in the Far North told me that they were concerned about the number of dogs coming in at points in that area. The subsidy to the Wild Dogs Fund is \$6,204 more than payments last year. Naturally, this provision would have to be increased because of the increase in the scalp bonus from \$2 to \$6.

Although the wild dog fee in South Australia is only a small sum (about 75c) it is a sectional tax, and I remind members that the previous member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip) always was extremely concerned about such taxation. This tax has been imposed on only the small section of pastoralists in the North, North-East and North-West of the State. I think the whole purpose of a dog licence fee is to prevent dogs from entering the areas where most of our sheep graze. I do not understand why the tax is not imposed on a State-wide basis instead of being restricted to the areas to which I have referred. A line has been drawn (I do not know when) and everyone north of the line pays the licence fee, while everyone else does not. As we in the north are mainly responsible for restricting the entry of dogs to the State, the Minister should reconsider the method of imposing this tax, because it should be paid by everyone.

Mr. EDWARDS: Can the Minister say whether the money granted to the Dog Fence Board is being spent to replace the fence in the

North-West that was destroyed by fire last year? Also, can he say whether there has been an increase in wild dog scalps forwarded since the increase in the bounty?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I do not have details of the effect of the increase in the scalp bonus on the number of wild dogs killed, but I will obtain that information. These increases have been provided in order to secure protection for property and to encourage the destruction of wild dogs. The question of spreading the payment of this fee over the whole State has been debated for many years, but the present situation is not unreasonable and I have not received any protests about it.

Mr. VIRGO: Can the Minister say what work was intended last year on the control of erosion of the Torrens River bank in Botanic Park but was not done, and what work is intended this year? Also, money is provided for the Botanic Garden, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia and similar organizations, for water and sewer rates, although they are not Government departments. Can the Minister enlighten me on this matter?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I think that the honourable member's point that they are not Government departments in the same sense as are the Lands Department and the Marine and Harbors Department is the probable explanation. If the board of the Botanic Garden did not have to consider the bill for water and sewer rates, it might lead to the unwise use of water. The probable explanation is that the board was established on the basis of a semi-government organization. The \$5,000 is provided to control erosion along the Torrens River bank in the Botanic Park. This involves an arrangement with the Adelaide City Council, which I think probably undertakes the necessary work but which, for one reason or another, was unable to perform the work last year. However, the council now being able to proceed, we have told it that the sum will be available. The work involves shoring up the bank; as the honourable member will probably know, without providing reinforcement, the river banks between the Hackney bridge and the zoo (through Botanic Park) are falling in.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 10.43 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 1, at 2 p.m.