

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, August 5, 1970.

The SPEAKER (Hon. R. E. Hurst) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Mr. HALL: Will the Minister of Roads and Transport reveal to the House the terms of reference that the Government has given or will give to Dr. Breuning regarding his study of the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study proposals?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: When the Leader asked this question last week, I undertook that I would take it to Cabinet. Having done that, I now have the following information: The Government has engaged Dr. S. M. Breuning, Executive Vice-President of Social Technology Systems Incorporated, Massachusetts, United States of America, to carry out the following work: (1) conduct a preliminary inquiry into what work needs to be done for revision of the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study to ensure adequate movement within the projected development of the city, leaving the way open for the maximum use (within the financial competence of the State) of developing flexible systems of public transit; and (2) report on what work needs to be done to provide that South Australia will develop experiments in new systems of public transit with the aim of providing an additional base for industry in this State. To facilitate the work involved, Dr. Breuning and his associate, Mr. Kettaneh, will be working in close co-operation with the Metropolitan Transportation Committee, which consists of representatives of the State Planning Authority, the Municipal Tramways Trust, the South Australian Railways, the Highways Department, the Adelaide City Council and local government. In addition, Dr. Breuning has been informed that the Government would be grateful for his consideration of the involvement of local traffic engineers and researchers. His attention has been drawn to the function and purpose of the South Australian Committee on Environment and the Community Values Committee, and he has been told that the services of both committees are at his disposal, as also are the services of any other committee, Government department, etc. The Government has stressed to Dr. Breuning that the most important factor in revising the M.A.T.S. plan is that all the proposals recommended in the revision

must be within the financial competence of the State and that the well-being of the people must be adequately and properly catered for. To make him aware of the attitude of the Government, Dr. Breuning has been provided with a copy of the policy speech delivered prior to the last State election by the Premier.

Later:

Mr. HALL: I was interested to receive a statement about the terms of reference that will be provided to Dr. Breuning for his investigation into the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study. It would appear that the policy speech given by the Premier for his Party is to be the guiding factor in that investigation. That speech says that freeways will be needed from north to south of the city, to Tea Tree Gully, Port Adelaide and Glenelg. In fact, it is saying that most of the M.A.T.S. freeway recommendations are required. It would therefore appear that the Minister of Roads and Transport has been overridden by his Cabinet colleagues in the opinion he expressed in the House strongly implying that the major portion of the M.A.T.S. programme would not be implemented. In order to try to define this question and to get something definite from the confusing picture that still exists from the information the Minister has provided, first, does he know the financial level that the Government has set to guide Dr. Breuning in his investigations in relation to the phrase twice mentioned "within the financial competence of the State"? The Minister will understand that a financial figure was previously used to gauge the competence or otherwise of the State to afford the M.A.T.S. proposals. It would now appear that a new limit has been set—"within the financial competence of the State". Obviously, the doctor will be unable to make these studies effectively unless he knows what this is. Does the Minister know what this is and, if he does know what this figure is that he set for the doctor, will he reveal it to the House?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It appears that, when the Leader is given a clear and concise statement, he is so determined to make confusion out of clarity that he waffles on about things that have nothing whatever to do with the matter before us at the moment. They certainly had nothing whatever to do with the financial question. To suggest that my attitude has been overridden by my colleagues in Cabinet is utter rubbish and completely untrue, and the Leader knows it. The present position is clearly and simply set out in the

answer I gave the Leader at about five minutes past two this afternoon. It has taken him an hour to see how he could confuse the issue.

Mr. Coumbe: What is the figure?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the member for Torrens will allow me to answer the question asked by the Leader and just keep out of it, I think we will get on a little better, because all he is—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister must address the Chair and not the member for Torrens.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I bow to your ruling graciously, Mr. Speaker, and hope you will adopt the same attitude to the member for Torrens, who, I regret, side-tracked me. The position in relation to the question asked by the Leader, where we said in this statement about the terms of reference given to Dr. Breuning that his investigations would need to be made within the financial competence of the State, is that it has been repeated because we believe this is of prime importance to any proposition put forward. In this regard, arrangements have been made for Dr. Breuning to consult not only the people referred to here but also, as has been indicated, a number of other people, who, of course, include Treasury officials. These officials are fully apprising the doctor of the financial position of the State, the method of raising finance and the way in which it can, and in certain instances must, be spent. It is in the light of this that the doctor has been asked to consider as of paramount importance, in the report that he subsequently brings down, the phrase "within the financial competence of the State".

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

Mr. LANGLEY: As it is usual at this time of the session for the Premier to announce whether there will be any adjournments of the House in the near future, can he give the House any such information for the benefit of all members?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes. It is proposed that the House will adjourn on Thursday, September 3, when I will deliver my speech on the Revenue Estimates, for the normal show week. The House will resume on Tuesday, September 15. We expect to complete the Budget debate by Thursday, September 24, and to adjourn until Tuesday, October 13, after which I imagine we will be sitting until fairly late in the year. I will expect honourable members to sit at night for the remainder of the session.

TRADING HOURS

Mr. HALL: The Government has announced restrictions on the trading hours of butchers in the areas of the State which are outside the metropolitan districts and which do not have restricted trading. It has also announced that it will take some action on the baking of bread. In addition, there has been a general reference, I believe by the Minister of Labour and Industry, to an overhaul that the Government may make of the general conditions of trading hours in the State. This has produced tremendous alarm in the community, especially in those districts that now have unrestricted trading facilities. In many areas it is seen as a general threat to the livelihood of hundreds of people involved in those trades and, of course, to the convenience of many families whose only time for shopping together is Friday night. In addition, there have been rumours that Saturday morning could in the long term be subject to reconsideration as a trading period. In other words, there is general confusion at the moment in these areas about what the future holds for the privileges and freedom that people now enjoy.

The SPEAKER: The Leader is tending to debate the question.

Mr. HALL: I believe the situation is of great importance to these people and needs to be set out in some detail, but I will now ask my question. As prices in the areas which now have extended trading hours compare favourably with those in areas that have more restricted trading (and therefore tend to negate any charges that Friday night shopping increases prices), and because of the general demand made on these facilities by the tens of thousands of people who use them, will the Premier state clearly the Government's policy and say that this Parliament will not proceed to reduce the present trading hours?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If there are any rumours floating around at present of the kind that the Leader has mentioned, he has contributed to them in marked degree. The only statement the Government has made concerning alterations to trading hours relates to butchery and baking. In both of these trades the specific proposals that we had for altering trading hours were set out in detail in the policy speech and outlined at the time of the State election, namely, that there would be a 5½-day week for butchery over the whole State and a 5-day week for baking. This was the only way we could see of achieving satisfactory rationalization of both these industries.

As for the rest, we said we believed the present position should be held. The Government has made no statement threatening a further restriction of trading hours. We have had submissions from traders who are concerned about the difficulty they face in trading because of anomalies in trading hours between one area and another.

The well-based submissions of the retail traders are that, if trading hours are opened up within the present restricted area, there will necessarily be a marked increase in costs, because from the experience of all major traders there is not an increased sale of goods but there are increased costs of staffing for the sales that will take place, and those increased costs of staffing by the engagement of casual part-time staff at increased award rates, necessary for the kind of work it does, will inevitably have their effect upon retail costs. All those things are at the moment before the Government, which is considering whether there is any sort of further action that can cure anomalies; but I stress that, while it is the duty of the Government always to receive submissions made by anybody affected by laws in South Australia (and we shall always listen to anybody who comes to us)—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Even the Leader?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes, even the Leader—no statement whatever has been made by this Government that it intends to restrict trading hours except in the two trades that were mentioned.

Mr. COUMBE: Recently many conflicting statements have been made in the press about trading hours. The Minister of Labour and Industry has said that he is investigating this matter, whilst the Premier has said that the meat industry should have a 5½-day week and representatives of the meat industry have made statements. Further, traders in various districts have spoken about the Friday night trading issue and weekend trading. I refer particularly to the meat industry, in which the Premier has said that the trading week should be 5½ days. Will the Minister of Labour and Industry say what he contemplates regarding Friday night shopping, which he has mentioned in his statement, in the butchering industry, which operates in many supermarkets and shops of that type in the outer metropolitan area that at present are not covered by the Early Closing Act? Will butcher shops be required to shut or will they be allowed to remain open, and will these shops still be able to sell pre-packed meat products, and thus affect the livelihood

of many butchers? I consider that this is an important aspect of the matter and I should like the Minister to clarify the position for the benefit of the House.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be pleased to reply to the honourable member but, first, I point out that I disagree with his remark that conflicting statements have been made. I thought that the Premier pointed out that conflicting statements had been made not by any members of the Government but by parties outside the Government. I hope the honourable member appreciates that. The honourable member has referred to butcher shops that are built into the structures of some supermarkets situated outside the metropolitan area; these shops can be closed conveniently. The meat can be taken out of the refrigerated units and stored every evening. It can be cleared by 5.30 on Friday evening, and we expect that the butchering industry will be closed at that time on Fridays.

FRUIT FLY

Mr. McKEE: Some time ago, on behalf of the Port Pirie Branch of the Fruitgrowers and Market Gardeners Association, I took up with the Agriculture Department the method of destroying fruit confiscated on the Indian-Pacific train as a safeguard against an outbreak of fruit fly in the area. The department told me that it was negotiating with the Commonwealth Government to use the incinerator situated at the Port Pirie wharves. Will the Minister of Works obtain from the Minister of Agriculture a report on whether these negotiations have been satisfactory?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to obtain a report from my colleague and bring it down as soon as possible.

AGED COTTAGE HOMES

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Has the Attorney-General any report to make on the progress of what he has termed "negotiations" with Aged Cottage Homes Incorporated?

The Hon. L. J. KING: No, not at the present time.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. BURDON: All South Australians were and are horrified at the many road accidents that have taken place during the past few days, and also at the extremely high number for the year so far in South Australia. I regret to say that my own electoral district has not been spared these tragedies as, only recently, some fatal accidents have occurred that have aroused

public opinion and a desire that certain protective measures be taken in an endeavour to avoid such accidents in the future. During the weekend I inspected certain road crossings both in the city of Mount Gambier and in areas under the control of the District Council of Mount Gambier. I have also had a discussion with officers of both councils about these accidents. Following these talks, I now ask the Minister of Roads and Transport whether he will make available as soon as is humanly possible an officer of the Road Traffic Board to visit Mount Gambier to confer with the officers of the corporation and the district council on this vital matter of road safety.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Yes.

Mr. WARDLE: I do not wish to appear a spoil sport, but I believe that my question concerning on-the-spot breathalyser checks has a certain urgency about it. It is subsequent to the question asked by the member for Mount Gambier regarding road accidents, and my district, in common with his district, seems to have more than its share of these accidents. Having been an ambulance officer for many years before I came to Parliament, I believe that all ambulance officers would say that probably no more than half of all accidents caused as a result of alcohol ever appear in statistics or on records. Especially from the inside, one is aware of the number of requests an ambulance officer has made to him with regard to being silent about the things he sees in connection with many road accidents. I think it is possibly natural that many medical officers are somewhat loath to certify under such conditions when a patient has been involved in an accident. Can the Minister of Roads and Transport state the Government's attitude on the matter of on-the-spot breathalyser checks?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: On July 15, a similar question was asked by the member for Victoria, which was replied to by the Premier. I think that if I quote the Premier's reply, that would be sufficient. The Premier said:

No decision has been taken on this matter, although some recommendations concerning it were made before the Royal Commission on the Licensing Act some years ago.

There is a little more to the Premier's reply, but I think that that is the crux of the reply to the honourable member.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my recent question about the automatic permanent appointment of mayors and chairmen of councils as justices of the peace?

The Hon. L. J. KING: In general, a mayor of a municipality or a chairman of a district council who, upon his retirement, applies for a permanent appointment to the commission of the peace will be so appointed. There may, however, be cases where such an applicant is regarded as unsuitable by reason of the business he carries on or for some other reason. In such cases, there appears to be no reason why the ordinary considerations should not apply. I consider, therefore, that it is undesirable that retired mayors and chairmen of district councils should receive automatic appointment as justices of the peace. I repeat that in all ordinary cases such permanent appointment would be made upon application.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Mrs. BYRNE: Has the Attorney-General received from the Chief Secretary a reply to my question about the progress of work on the Modbury Hospital?

The Hon. L. J. KING: My colleague states that work on the construction of phase 1 of the hospital is currently on schedule.

PRICE CONTROL

Mr. RODDA: A constituent who lives at Naracoorte has written to me a letter dated August 1 about an increase in the price of bottles of lemon and barley water that he purchases for his wife for medicinal purposes. He states that this commodity, which is supplied by F. H. Faulding and Company Limited, has been priced at 50c for a bottle containing 26 fluid ounces but that the price has been increased "this week" to 65c a bottle. As my constituent is concerned about this rather steep increase in price, will the Premier have the matter examined?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will ask the Prices Commissioner for a report.

DAVENPORT RESERVE

Mr. KENEALLY: Has the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs a reply to my question about fire protection measures at the Davenport Reserve?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Investigations made since the matter was previously raised in the House by the former member for Stuart have revealed that the basic problem is not a lack of water pressure but one of flow. The reserve is serviced by an extension from the Port Augusta town supply through 1½ miles of 4in. piping to a 3in. meter at the reserve boundary. Water is then reticulated through-out the reserve by 3in. piping. The type of meter fitted is capable of registering water

usage during periods of low consumption and this restricts the flow of water available for fire-fighting purposes. The fitting of a by-pass to the meter for emergency use would improve the flow, but officers of the Engineering and Water Supply Department have stated that this would be contrary to normal policy. However, they have also pointed out that special approval has been granted to meet particular situations. It should be noted that it is normal practice in towns for fire hydrants to draw directly from water mains, not from a water supply that has been metered. I have taken up with the Minister of Works the question of a by-pass of the meter to enable a more adequate water flow to be available for emergency use. A proposal has been submitted by the Engineering and Water Supply Department for an integrated reticulation grid within the reserve at an estimated cost of more than \$7,000, but there are doubts at this stage about whether this proposal would increase the flow of water available, and negotiations will continue with that department further to improve the water flow on the reserve during times of emergency. These negotiations will be in addition to the request that a by-pass be fitted at the meter at the boundary of the reserve. In the meantime, adequate fire extinguishers have been provided for emergency use.

Regarding electrical wiring in reserve dwellings, I am informed that the reserve dwellings are of an emergency type previously located at Radium Hill. The wiring would have conformed to the required standards when installed, but the basic design of the ceiling structure prevents inspections being readily carried out. A local electrical contractor and an inspector from the Electricity Trust of South Australia are currently carrying out an assessment of the electrical wiring in reserve dwellings. Any installation that does not meet the trust's requirements will be rectified.

STOCK HANDLING

Mr. FERGUSON: Has the Minister of Works received from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked on July 22 as to whether consideration was being given to placing a crutcher on the chain at the abattoirs to crutch lambs and sheep before they are skinned and dressed?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board is proceeding with plans to alter the killing and sticking chain at the Gepps Cross killing works, and provision is being made for the introduction of crutching machinery at a later date should this

be considered necessary. If adopted, this method would be similar to one being used successfully at a killing works in Western Australia. The Minister of Agriculture has informed me that it is expected to be about six or seven months before this new plan can be brought into operation.

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Minister of Works a reply from the Minister of Agriculture to the question I asked on July 22 regarding the rejection of sheep at the abattoirs and the increase in the condemnation of lambs because of bruising?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: My colleague reports that there have been two sales at Gepps Cross since the new regulations were introduced. On July 15, 10.5 per cent of sheep and 8.7 per cent of lambs were rejected through owners either failing to crutch or not allowing stock to empty out sufficiently before loading them on to transports. A further 13.4 per cent of sheep and 17.4 per cent of lambs were considered unsatisfactory, but were passed because it was considered that the owners had made a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulations. These owners had since been given a warning. On July 22, rejections were slightly higher, being 12 per cent for sheep and 11.1 per cent for lambs, the inspector being a little more strict. The new restrictions appear to be operating fairly smoothly, and most vendors seem to be making an effort to comply, but there are always the few exceptions. The biggest cause for concern seems to be the failure to empty out stock adequately before loading, resulting in fouling of the receiving yards. However, no sheep or lambs have been rejected through contamination after arrival unless the owner has not complied with the regulation requiring sheep to empty out for 12 hours before being loaded. Reports indicate that, so far, there has been no significant increase in rejections for bruising since the crutching regulations were introduced.

COOBER PEDY WATER SUPPLY

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently regarding the Coober Pedy water supply?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Havens International, a firm with headquarters in California, United States of America, supplied and installed a reverse osmosis plant at Coober Pedy in May, 1969. The plant consisted of 234 modules, each module being a bundle of 18 fibre glass tubes each 9ft. in length. Raw bore water with a salinity of 17,000 parts per million is pumped at 600 lb. per square inch

into these modules, and a better quality water is obtained as a product. As is inevitable with new developmental processes, difficulties have been experienced. The fibre glass tubes in some cases have been unable to stand up to the continued high pressure and have developed pin-hole ruptures. These cause membranes to break, allowing the saline raw water to leak through into the product water. The net result is a lower quality and more saline product. When these ruptures occur the damaged module is removed from the plant and a new or repaired one inserted in its place.

This difficulty with the modules has been experienced by Havens International in its plants in other parts of the world, and new and improved modules have been developed. The South Australian Manager for Havens International confirmed yesterday that his firm would replace all of the modules supplied for this plant with new modules of the improved design at no cost to the department. Unfortunately, because of internal reorganizations that are taking place within the company, these cannot now be made in South Australia (as it was recently hoped would be the case) but must be manufactured and supplied from the parent company in California. This may take several months. In the meantime modules that have become damaged are being repaired at the Salisbury factory of Havens International. At present there are about 70 modules undergoing repair at Salisbury, and a further 53 are to be sent back from Coober Pedy. It is expected that some modules will be repaired and ready for consigning back to Coober Pedy by August 17.

Water at Coober Pedy has always had to be rationed. The ration, even after solar stills were commissioned, was limited to 24 gallons per capita each week. After the reverse osmosis plant was commissioned, this ration was doubled to 48 gallons per capita each week. With a population of about 2,000 people, this has meant a weekly consumption of water of about 45,000 gallons. Considerable difficulty has been experienced by the department in meeting this demand, but at present this is still being met. The local departmental foreman who is in charge of the tank, the solar stills, and the reverse osmosis plant, is continuing to supply water to people at Coober Pedy at the rate of 48 gallons per capita each week if they desire this amount, but is requesting them to exercise care and use less if they can.

As there are now only 91 of the original 234 reverse osmosis modules in service (the others, being damaged, have been removed for repair) the quality of the product water has deteriorated. The total dissolved solids amount to about 2,000 p.p.m. This water, having been obtained from a raw water with 17,000 p.p.m., is mixed with tank water and solar still water to give the best possible quality water that the department can produce in the desired quantities. A close watch is being kept on the situation, and it can be expected that an improvement in the quality of the water supplied will occur after about August 17 when a batch of repaired modules is received from Salisbury, and that this will improve further when the new and improved modules are received in a few months' time from the United States of America.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr. CUMBE: I noticed with interest the announcement by the Minister of Education that the Government intends to provide assistance for independent schools, and I seek clarification of that announcement. Hitherto, capitation grants have been made to help parents whose children attend independent schools. In the terms announced in the press yesterday, does the Government intend to examine various other aspects, so that the effect may be that in respect of certain schools the parents of some children may receive less assistance than will parents in different circumstances whose children attend other schools?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: If the honourable member's interpretation is that the assistance given to independent schools in the past has been purely to assist parents, that is his interpretation. I should have thought that the basic purpose of the assistance was to assist schools to raise standards of education. I have always assumed that this was the basic purpose of any State aid provided directly for these schools. After all, if the Government wishes to help parents it may do so directly without involving the school. The honourable member will know that the question of whether aid should be given directly to the parents or go to the schools has caused controversy in the past at a political level.

Mr. Coumbe: The parents have received the benefit.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That is up to the individual school. Certain individual schools, which do not need the funds that

have been provided in order to improve educational standards, may have passed the benefit on to parents, but I am not aware of any school that has reduced fees to parents as a consequence of aid given to the school either by the State Government or by the Commonwealth Government. If the honourable member has an instance of where fees have been reduced I shall be interested to hear of it. The purpose of the additional grants that have been made this time is, as I stated clearly in the press announcement, to help improve standards of education in independent schools on a needs basis.

Mrs. STEELE: At the time when the State aid granted by the previous Government was implemented, the Government actually intended that this grant should benefit parents and, to this effect, the officers of the Education Department worked out a clause which the Government approved, which the Chairmen of the councils of independent schools agreed should be placed on all account forms rendered to parents and which showed that this amount of State aid granted by the Government was to be considered as a deduction from the actual fees charged. Therefore, will the Minister of Education say whether he is aware (as he obviously is not) that the position was as I have outlined it, and will he seek confirmation on this point from the departmental officers?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Before becoming Minister of Education, I was not aware that this was in fact the case, as I knew of no public announcement by the previous Government about it. Although that Government may have given approval to bring this particular notice on to the accounts sent out by independent schools, I am not aware of any public statement having been issued in relation to the matter.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: It wasn't on the account I received.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: As far as I know, the approach always made in relation to this matter by the previous Government and by other people concerned with it has been that, if it is desired to assist parents, a direct grant is made to them without involving the schools; if it is desired that sums shall be provided to independent schools so that improvements may be made in educational standards, money is provided directly to the schools concerned. I have heard previously from members on both sides of the House about the way in which accounts can be

adjusted to make it look as though a benefit is being given to parents whereas, in fact, the grant being made is mainly assisting the schools. All I can say in reply to the member for Davenport is that it is yet to be demonstrated to me that any reduction in fees actually occurred or that, as a result of the grant made by the previous Government, the fees charged to parents were reduced. It may well have been that the fees were put up as a result of per capita assistance and that, on the account rendered, that amount was deducted again.

Mr. Coumbe: I think it is unworthy of the Minister to say that.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That may well have been the case. Surely the member for Torrens would agree that the way to assist parents is to make a grant directly to parents; if it is desired to assist standards of education in schools, a direct grant should be made to the schools. I know that many independent schools have been desperate for increased funds in order to raise educational standards. They have told me directly that grants made by the State and Commonwealth Governments have assisted them in raising the educational standards to some extent. This suggests that the grants that have been made have not been passed on in the way of lower fees to parents, although notionally some adjustment may be made to accounts to make it appear that that is the position.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Mr. RYAN: There has recently been discussion among local councils regarding the percentage of their contribution to meeting the costs of installing traffic lights at intersections and junctions within council areas, and this applies particularly where lights are to be installed at the boundary of two council areas. One glaring example of this, to which I referred in the Address in Reply debate and on which I now base my question, is the situation concerning the lights to be installed at the corner of Addison Road and Grand Junction Road, which forms the boundary between the Port Adelaide and Woodville council areas. Although I believe that this work is high on the Highways Department's priority list, I point out that a dispute has arisen between the two councils concerned regarding their proportion of the cost involved, one council not agreeing to what has been determined as its contribution, and work on installing the lights cannot be proceeded with

because of the objection raised by that council. Will the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the Government has considered charging against the State the cost of installing and maintaining traffic lights? If it has not, will he say whether, as a result of my question today, the Government will consider doing so? If local councils will not make their individual contributions, lights cannot be installed and, therefore, members of the public will be the ones who miss out.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I should not be able to give the undertaking that the honourable member is seeking. As the suggestion made by the honourable member would, if given effect to, involve considerable expenditure by the Government, the Treasurer would have to tell me, first, how my lines could be increased in order to provide the necessary sum, and I do not think, somehow or other, from discussions we have had on the matter, that he would be prepared to increase those lines.

WHYALLA ROAD

Mr. CARNIE: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on July 16 about the Whyalla to Port Augusta road?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In addition to the deviation affecting the northern section of this road, to which I referred when introducing the Bill to ratify the Port Augusta to Whyalla Railway Agreement, it is proposed to reconstruct the remaining portion of this road, to Whyalla, essentially on the present alignment. Considering availability of funds, it is not expected that major reconstruction work will be carried out until late 1973. Meanwhile, maintenance work will be carried out, particularly where the pavement is in poor condition.

GRESHAM STREET

Mr. HOPGOOD: Has the Minister of Local Government a reply to the question I asked earlier in the session, in the absence of my colleague the member for Adelaide, about the aerodynamic properties of Gresham Street?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I appreciate the reasons which prompted the request for steps to be taken to prevent wind tunnel effects occurring when large buildings are erected fronting comparatively narrow streets. Although I agree that wind can be a hazard to elderly people and small children, I cannot see how effective regulations could be framed

which would ensure that building design and location did not produce strong wind conditions at certain times.

BLACKWOOD PROPERTY

Mr. EVANS: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I recently asked about a property at 33 Winns Road, Blackwood?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Owing to the impracticability of further widening of Coromandel Valley Road, Blackwood, the Highways Department has developed proposals for the widening of Winns Road as an alternative route. The widening of Winns Road is not expected to be implemented for at least 10 years. When the work is carried out, vehicular access to a number of properties on the eastern side will be restricted and, on account of this, the department has recently constructed a new road at the rear of these properties. This work has been carried out now in order that the occupants will have adequate time to adjust to the new arrangement. A strip of land from 24ft. to 27ft. in width along the Winns Road frontage of the property of Mrs. Porter will be required for the road widening. The Highways Department is prepared to enter into negotiations forthwith for the purchase of this land, and the compensation to be paid will take into account any depreciation in market value of the whole property resulting from the road proposals. Mrs. Porter has previously called at the department's offices to discuss this matter, but arrangements have now been made for an officer to again contact Mrs. Porter to explain that the reduction in market value of the property on account of the proposals will be allowed for in the compensation to be paid.

PORTRUSH ROAD INTERSECTIONS

Mr. SLATER: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the acquisition by the Highways Department of property near the intersection of Portrush and Payneham Roads has been completed and whether it is intended to install traffic lights soon at the intersection? Also, will the Minister find out whether it is intended to install traffic lights at the intersection of Main North East and Portrush Roads at Vale Park to coincide with the opening to traffic of the new highway?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be pleased to get the information for the honourable member.

SCHOOL CHAIRS

Mr. SIMMONS: Since my election, I have visited many schools in my district. From these and other contacts, I have seen that one of the great unsolved problems of education in South Australia relates to the provision of a satisfactory chair for the children to sit on. The three types of chair in common use are a wire-mesh version, which corrugates as it chills, and also frays at the edges, with consequent damage to dress; a hard laminated wooden chair cunningly designed to ensure that the student must sit up straight, with the base of his spine pushed back as far as it will go as he tries to avoid falling off; and a product of this plastics age that in a very short time develops cracks with the result that when children sit down the cracks tend to widen and the relevant part of the body fills in the interstices, with consequent discomfort when they rise and pressure is released. No doubt honourable members, even those in safe seats, will have experienced this at times.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is tending to debate the matter.

Mr. SIMMONS: I am assured by young ladies that present fashions give them little protection in this respect. Can the Minister of Education report on the problem, giving some indication when this basic need is likely to be satisfied?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I think that all members would like me to thank the honourable member for the basic and fundamental research he has carried out on this subject.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Do you think you should investigate this yourself?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No, I do not intend to do that, as we have some competent officers in the Education Department that I am sure can do a thoroughly worthwhile job on this subject. The position is much as the honourable member has described it. For one reason or another, the older chairs that exist are unsatisfactory, and the newer plastic-type chairs, introduced largely in the last year or so, have caused much difficulty as a result of the cracking of the plastic tops of the chairs. No satisfactory solution to this problem has yet been found. We are currently reviewing the position with respect to the use of this type of chair. My view of the matter is that, if we cannot get a better quality chair of this type, a further change will have to be made in relation to the type of chair used. However, in view of his deep interest in the subject, I will obtain the latest information on the matter for the honourable member and let him have it.

SOMERTON BUS SERVICE

Mr. MATHWIN: Will the Minister of Roads and Transport consider having extended the present bus service to Somerton so that the route will take in all of the Somerton area and the area farther south to North Brighton? There is a definite need in the area, and it would encourage the public to make better use of this service.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I understand this service has been under review by the Municipal Tramways Trust. However, I will ask the trust for an up-to-date report on the progress of the review.

SPENCER GULF BRIDGE

Mr. KENEALLY: Upon completion of the building of the new bridge across Spencer Gulf at Port Augusta the question of the disposal or otherwise of the existing bridge will arise. Many and varied suggestions regarding what fate shall befall the existing bridge have been made, most of which have been not only impracticable but also impossible. In the light of this apparent confusion, can the Minister of Roads and Transport state his department's intentions regarding the disposal of the existing bridge?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As far as I am aware, when the bridge ceases to be used, it remains, such as they are, will be entirely removed.

ROAD SIGN

Mr. BECKER: A sign near the old toll gate at Glen Osmond pointing west reads "Coast". Will the Premier, as Minister in charge of tourism, confer with the Minister of Roads and Transport regarding the possibility of replacing this sign with one that reads "To Glenelg" as an aid to tourists from other States?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Well, I appreciate the tourist value of Glenelg, but that is not the only place on the coast of South Australia. I think that if the honourable member were to go a little farther up the highway he would see a parking bay with all kinds of directions to people about where they may obtain satisfactory accommodation, including places at Glenelg. However, I will see whether I can give some stimulus to the honourable member's district.

MEAT EXPORTS

Mr. VENNING: This morning, as a result of approaches made to me last week by graziers who bring sheep to the Adelaide abattoirs and because of the irregularities said

to have applied last week in relation to the condemning of sheep for export slaughter because of insufficient crutching of the hind-quarters, I inspected the abattoirs. There seemed to be very few pens marked "Not suitable for export but for local slaughter" and it seemed sheepmen, generally speaking, were getting the message regarding the requirements for crutching for the export trade, but the thing that surprised me was the very low returns being received by graziers. True, a good lamb would bring \$6 or \$7, but many other second-grade lambs—

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is tending to debate the question.

Mr. VENNING: The greatest surprise to me was that, generally speaking, sheep were bringing very low prices. Will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Agriculture, do all within his power to see that the Adelaide abattoirs are made suitable for the handling of export meat to the United States of America and to the Canadian markets? Although I understand that the abattoirs officials are attending to this matter, will the Minister do his utmost to accentuate the requirements so that the Adelaide abattoirs measure up to the necessary standards? I understand that recently the restrictions have been lifted at the Shepparton abattoirs, and that one of the problems is the inspection of the abattoirs in this State.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member must not make comments.

Mr. VENNING: Will the Minister do all in his power to assist in raising our abattoirs to the necessary standards and see that an inspection of the abattoirs is made as soon as possible with a view to having these restrictions lifted?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to pass on the honourable member's comments to the Minister of Agriculture, but I point out that the member for Goyder has just received a reply to a question that he asked last week on this matter and that the member for Light is awaiting a reply to a similar question. If the member for Rocky River likes to confer with his two colleagues, he may get some information that will help him; but I will still pass on his remarks to the Minister.

PARENTAL CRUELTY

Mr. RYAN: One of my constituents approached me recently voicing his great concern at a statement made by Mr. Beerworth, S.M., in the courts recently when dealing with

a case where, apparently, parents were charged with ill-treating one of their children. The magistrate remarked that he felt he should order psychiatric treatment for the parents, but found that under the Act he had no power to do so. Will the Attorney-General have the remarks of Mr. Beerworth investigated to see whether power is vested in the court to order psychiatric treatment for parents (other than gaoling them, of course) and, if it has not the power, will he consider amending the Act to give the court the necessary authority?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Yes; I shall consider the whole matter to see what can be done.

NURSING INQUIRY

Dr. TONKIN: I understand the Attorney-General has an answer to one of the questions I asked recently about nurses.

The Hon. L. J. KING: My colleague informs me that the committee set up by the previous Government will not function. The Government is considering other proposals as an urgent measure to inquire into all aspects of nursing.

AMERICAN RIVER WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Has the Minister of Works an answer to a question I asked him recently about the possibility of an officer of the Engineering and Water Supply Department being asked to visit American River for the purpose of discussing with the residents there the costs and possible rating of any water supply system that would be installed there?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: It is considered at this point of time that no good purpose would be achieved by sending a departmental officer to American River. Present investigations are being pressed forward to discover the best possible conditions under which supply can be given. Once these are determined, further consideration will be given to the honourable member's request. Indeed, it should be obvious to him that an officer must go at that point of time.

WATER RATING

Mr. EVANS: Although I am not complaining that increased water rates are the fault of the Government (the increases were well under way before the present Government went into office), I consider it difficult to justify the increase that has been made in the rates that one of my constituents is being charged. I shall state the figures so that the Minister of Works will know the position,

and the Minister may have the relevant papers later. For the quarter from April to June, 1969, the charge was \$7.64, whereas for the quarter from July to September this year the charge for the same property is \$32.50, an increase of more than 300 per cent. Whilst we all know that costs have increased and that the department needs to obtain more revenue, will the Minister investigate this particular rating to find out whether an error has been made and the person concerned has been overcharged, because an increase of 300 per cent seems to be very large?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I agree with the honourable member that the increase seems very steep and, if he gives me the details, I shall be pleased to have the matter investigated and give him a report.

FAUNA PROTECTION

Mr. McKEE: A press report last week stated that Dr. G. C. Gregory, a keen amateur zoologist and conservationist who had recently returned from Leigh Creek, claimed that waterholes in the Flinders Ranges that were being poisoned to eradicate vermin were wiping out native birds and animals. The doctor stated that it was common in some areas, although not in all areas, to poison waterholes and that this was quite legal. He was reported to be most perturbed about the waterhole at McKinley Spring, in the Flinders Ranges, not far from Mount McKinley, and he claimed that cyanide had been put into this waterhole. Will the Minister of Works take this matter up with the Minister of Agriculture with a view to preventing wholesale destruction of birds and animals in this area by the placing of cyanide in waterholes?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to obtain a report from my colleague on the matter.

DRUGS

Dr. TONKIN: Has the Attorney-General a reply from the Minister of Health to my question about drugs?

The Hon. L. J. KING: My colleague states that the statistics relating to patients currently being treated at St. Anthony's Hospital for drug addiction by the Alcohol and Drug Addicts (Treatment) Board are as follows:

Inpatients:

- 2 patients—Barbiturates, Amphetamines and Bromides.
- 1 patient—Excessive Bromides—Relaxa-tablets, etc.

Outpatients, following inpatient treatment:

- 1 patient—Heroin, Morphine, Amphetamines, L.S.D. and Marihuana.
- 1 patient—Heroin, Morphine, Amphetamine, Tenuate and Marihuana.
- 1 patient—Morphine, Cocaine and Amphetamine.

Outpatients only:

- 1 patient—Relaxa-tablets, Seconal and Nembutal.
- 2 patients—Excessive proprietary Bromides.

During the year ended June 30, 1970, 15 patients were admitted to St. Anthony's Hospital for drug addiction, comprising eight females and seven males.

EXCESS WATER

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Has the Minister of Works a reply to a question I asked on behalf of the Barossa Branch of the Fruitgrowers and Market Gardeners Association about water rating in the Barossa Valley?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The current rate for excess water in the Barossa Valley and elsewhere in the State is 35c for 1,000 gallons. This price has been in force since July, 1969, before which it was 30c for 1,000 gallons. The actual cost of supplying this water in the area is \$1.29 for 1,000 gallons. It will be seen that the supplying of water at current prices represents a considerable concession. As the honourable member is aware, a committee of inquiry is at present investigating all aspects of water rating, and no doubt its findings will be awaited with interest.

KEITH SUBWAY

Mr. RODDA: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my question about the provision of a subway at the Keith railway station?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I informed the honourable member on July 29 that, from memory, I thought the cost of the Keith subway would be \$40,000. The Railways Commissioner has informed me that its actual cost will be \$38,000 and that, should sufficient finance be available, it is intended that work will commence this financial year.

WHEAT QUOTAS

Mr. VENNING: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question regarding the terms of reference of the Wheat Delivery Quotas Inquiry Committee that has been set up by the Government?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Wheat Delivery Quotas Inquiry Committee has not yet been called together, and detailed terms

of reference are still being worked out. When this has been done, I shall be pleased to furnish the honourable member with the information. I expect that the committee will commence its inquiries in about one month.

FERTILIZERS

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Minister of Works a reply from the Minister of Agriculture to the question I asked recently regarding superphosphate and dolomite experimental plots?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: My colleague informs me that it is departmental policy to include in trials only registered fertilizers that have a guaranteed analysis of active ingredients, and it is only since September, 1969, that a source of dolomite with a guaranteed analysis has become available. Trials have been initiated in the Lower South-East on four sites comparing the response of pasture to treatment with dolomite and alternative calcium, magnesium sources and mixtures of these. As the trial is in its early stages, no results are available.

LOBETHAL SCHOOL

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked recently regarding the state of the Lobethal Primary School oval?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: A firm of consulting engineers has been engaged by the Public Buildings Department to investigate and provide an estimate of cost of requirements to improve the Lobethal Primary School oval. A recommendation will be made when this is received, and the question whether the work will be undertaken at departmental expense or under subsidy will be studied when the extent of the work is known.

BEACH EROSION

Mr. BECKER: During the weekend high seas caused considerable erosion of the beach at Glenelg North. The portion of the beach north of the Patawalonga outlet to West Beach has generally deteriorated over the past month. Will the Minister of Local Government therefore consider providing for seaside councils a special grant for beach foreshore maintenance and protection?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I suggest that the honourable member direct that question to the Premier, as Minister in charge of tourism.

WANILLA WATER SUPPLY

Mr. CARNIE: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about a water scheme for the Wanilla-Edilillie area?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: A scheme to supply the Wanilla-Edilillie area has been prepared and is currently being examined. The Chief Government Valuer has been requested to provide the assessment of the townships of Edilillie and Wanilla so that a revenue statement can be prepared by the Chief Revenue Officer. When this revenue statement has been prepared, an officer of the department will visit the area, indicate the possible rates that will be charged to each landholder, and obtain information from each landholder on the effect of this proposed scheme on his holding.

In the light of the information gained and the attitude of the landholders to the rates proposed, further consideration will be given to the scheme. It is likely that the revenue statement will be available in time to allow an officer to visit this area within the next two or three months.

POTATOES

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Minister of Works a reply from the Minister of Agriculture to the question I asked recently regarding payment for potatoes?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: My colleague informs me that all potatoes delivered to the South Australian Potato Board in April would have been included in Pool No. 4 for 1970, the duration of which was from April 1 to April 30 inclusive. The realization figures of Pool No. 4 were presented to, and accepted by, the board at its meeting held on June 26, 1970, and all cheques covering final payment were posted to growers by the first week in July, 1970.

RIVERTON HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question regarding the rebuilding programme for the Riverton High School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Land has been purchased with the ultimate intention of resiting the Riverton High School, but this is not likely to occur for some years. A decision to rebuild will depend on the availability of additional funds. The secondary school population of Riverton is static and seems likely to remain so in the foreseeable

future. Although the existing accommodation is not the most desirable, it is adequate for the present school enrolment and is of a reasonable standard.

SUMMER CLOTHING

Mr. BECKER: As a former State President of the Bank Officials Association, I was instrumental in obtaining approval for bank officers to wear shorts during the summer when the maximum temperature was expected to exceed 85 degrees. Will you, Mr. Speaker, be prepared to approve the wearing of shorts in this House?

The SPEAKER: I will study the honourable member's question and give a considered reply.

BUSES

Mr. SIMMONS: When visiting Hong Kong four months ago, I was impressed by the many small buses that had been introduced into the colony to supplement the heavy old-style vehicles. The new buses were faster, easier to handle in traffic, more flexible in their schedules, and cheaper to operate. Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the Municipal Tramways Trust has considered using small buses to provide a more frequent off-peak service, when loads are lighter?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I believe that the trust has considered this question over many years. When I have questioned the trust on this matter I have been informed that the trust, as a matter of policy, has decided to use larger buses. I believe the buses used in Adelaide are the widest buses operating in Australia and perhaps outside this country. In addition, the capacity of Adelaide buses is the largest of buses normally used. So, the trust's policy for some years has been directed towards the larger type of bus rather than the smaller type. I do not desire to proceed very far with this matter at this stage because a complete re-examination is currently being undertaken that could well lead to changed thinking in relation to the types of vehicle used.

GILBERTON FLATS

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Premier, as Minister in charge of housing, a reply to my recent question about the building of flats at Gilberton?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The flats at Gilberton have been officially named Elliott Lodge. There are 84 flats in the group, and within the next week almost half will have been occupied. It is expected that the whole

group will be completed in October of this year. A few of the flats will be let to persons living alone, but no provision has been made for pensioners.

WESTERN TEACHERS COLLEGE

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my question of last week regarding the pedestrian crossing on South Road that I previously authorized for Western Teachers College?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am always pleased to ensure that matters authorized but not carried out when the honourable member was Minister of Education are expeditiously carried out now that the Labor Government is in office. I have pleasure in saying that the installation of the pedestrian crossing on South Road adjacent to Western Teachers College is being undertaken on behalf of the Thebarton Corporation. The work is due to be completed ready for testing at the end of this week, according to the terms of the tender.

DENTAL NURSES

Dr. TONKIN: On behalf of the member for Mitcham, who is absent, I ask the Attorney-General whether he has obtained from the Minister of Health a reply to the honourable member's question about dental nurses.

The Hon. L. J. KING: My colleague states that dental nurses employed at the Royal Adelaide Hospital are paid weekly rates of pay that are the same as those prescribed for dental assistants under the Dental Mechanics and Attendants Award of the South Australian Industrial Commission. They also receive service and over-award payments approved by the Government from time to time. There has been a dispute between the Public Service Association of South Australia Incorporated and the Australian Government Workers Association as to which union should represent these employees. The Public Service Board had informed both associations that it was not prepared to become involved in inter-union disputes or take action that would favour any individual union. However, the Australian Government Workers Association informed the board on July 16, 1970, that it was prepared to withdraw any action previously taken to cover these employees on the basis that they be placed on annual salaries. Negotiations will be held shortly with the Public Service Association regarding the position and salaries of these employees.

KATARAPKO ISLAND

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Minister of Works obtained from the Minister of Lands and the Minister of Agriculture a reply to my recent question about Katarapko Island?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The National Parks Commission is aware of the infestations of noogoora burr occurring in Katarapko National Park and is making a thorough investigation to determine what remedial action can be taken. The commission is anxious to encourage regrowth of native flora in the park and, as continued grazing would have a detrimental effect upon such regrowth, grazing rights will be terminated as at September 30, 1970. This will give the licensee the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for the grazing of his stock. Patches of noogoora burr occur in many places along the Murray River, not only in South Australia but in other States. Therefore, there is the danger that reinfestation of the national park could occur in times of high river. However, the commission intends to watch the position closely. The Director of Fisheries and Fauna Conservation states that on the game reserve on the island his department will continue its policy of active control of noxious weeds, as has been done on the Bool Lagoon and Tolderol game reserves. However, in view of the present level of infestation of noogoora burr, he considers that eradication is likely to be a slow process. With regard to flood protection, the Director points out that the game reserve on Katarapko Island will be developed largely for waterfowl. As these birds will be free flying, floods will be to their benefit and high water will not constitute a problem.

KIMBA WATER SUPPLY

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the Kimba water supply?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: With the storage of water in the Kimba tanks reduced to 1,375,000 gallons out of a total tank capacity of 6,100,000 gallons, water carting by road transport to supplement this storage was commenced on November 3, 1969. Water has been carted from Pilepudla, Barna and Yalanda reservoirs and from the Tod trunk main almost continuously since that date. The rate of cartage has been varied to match the demand in the summer months and reduced slightly in the winter months to allow for possible intakes without wastage. On July 20, 1970, the water storage in the Kimba tanks was 1,300,000 gallons, almost exactly the same as

that when carting commenced. It is proposed to continue water carting to meet the coming summer demand of Kimba township, or until rains and intake make this carting no longer necessary.

WATER QUALITY

Dr. TONKIN: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question of July 28 about the quality of water in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Samples are taken from all principal feed mains into the metropolitan area at least three times a week. All samples are subjected to biological examination, and regular analysis is made for chemical composition, and to detect traces of pesticides and related compounds, and for the presence of viruses. Weekly samples are taken at several points through the reticulation system and of country supplies, and where any irregularities occur a test is made once and sometimes twice daily.

Mr. McANANEY: A constituent has been told by the Engineering and Water Supply Department (legally or otherwise) that, as he lives in zone 1, he cannot extend his poultry farming activities. Will the Minister of Works obtain a report stating how a modern poultry shed pollutes an area if the droppings are adequately disposed of?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: It may be a matter of whether the droppings are being disposed of adequately, but I shall be pleased to obtain a report.

BOAT RAMPS

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Marine a reply to my question of July 15 about the cost of constructing boat ramps for fishermen and tourists?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: A small sum is provided each year on the Estimates of Expenditure of the Minister of Agriculture to assist local authorities and fishermen's organizations to repair and rehabilitate boat ramps and associated fishing facilities at small ports. Grants from this fund are made from time to time on application by *bona fide* organizations, but the limited funds available would be insufficient to meet the full cost of these works, and grants are restricted to facilities that are for the exclusive use of the fishing industry. It has been the practice for many years for the Government to grant tourist subsidies on a \$1 for \$1 basis to councils for the construction of boat ramps for use by pleasure craft. In most cases the subsidy required has

been a few hundred dollars only. Often, voluntary labour has been available to construct the boat ramp, and the Government has helped with the cost of materials. The system seems to have worked satisfactorily on this sharing basis without the need for the Government to meet the full cost of constructing boat ramps.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following interim reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works:

Berri Divisional Headquarters and Police Station,

Chaffey Irrigation Area (Rehabilitation of Irrigation Headworks),

Glenelg Treatment Works (Reticulation of Reclaimed Water),

Panorama Technical College Additions.

Ordered that reports be printed.

PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr. COUNBE (Torrens) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Public Works Standing Committee Act, 1927-1955, as amended. Read a first time.

Mr. COUNBE: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I thank the House for its courtesy in enabling me to suspend Standing Orders in order to proceed with this Bill. Its main aim is to increase from \$200,000 to \$400,000 the present limit of the estimated cost of a public work that does not require reference to the Public Works Committee. The present limit of \$200,000 was fixed in 1955, and the comparable cost last year of a building that had an estimated cost of \$200,000 in 1955 was \$285,000. This means that many projects that previously would not have required reference to the committee must now be referred to it.

The small schoolbuilding projects, particularly the solid-construction and Samcon-type primary and infants schools, which presently vary in cost from \$212,000 to \$313,000 according to site conditions, now require reference to the committee. It is this class of project which is usually urgently required and which, unlike many larger projects, is often difficult to plan ahead in terms of time but which the present limit of cost seriously affects. The process of reference to the committee involves additional planning time and administrative cost to pre-

pare and submit evidence. The increase in building costs which has occurred since 1955 and which has resulted in an additional number of projects being referred to the committee has reached a stage where the building works programmes are being excessively restricted.

Since 1955 building costs have increased by about 3 per cent a year and last year the rate of increase was at least 3½ per cent. Further cost increases are expected following substantial building labour cost rises this year. During the past four and a half years 30 public building projects costing between \$200,000 and \$300,000 have been submitted to the committee, and it is expected that this rate of reference will increase. Twenty of these projects were primary or infants schools, six were other types of school projects and four were other than school buildings.

If the proposed amendment to increase the present limit of costs from \$200,000 to \$400,000 were approved by Parliament, it would make for increased efficiency in providing the smaller and usually more urgent works. The figure of \$400,000 is comparable with the \$200,000 of 1955, and it would reduce the burden of legislative and administrative controls that is now militating against the most expeditious achievement of works programmes.

I will now deal with the Bill in detail. Clauses 2 and 3 convert certain references to the old currency into decimal currency. Clause 4, which amends section 25 of the principal Act, is the main provision of the Bill. It increases from \$200,000 to \$400,000 the present limit of the estimated cost of a public work that does not require reference to the committee. New subsection (5) proposed by paragraph (d) preserves the application of the existing provisions of the Act so far as they relate to public works that are referred to the committee before this Bill becomes law. Clause 5 is another conversion to decimal currency, and clause 6 is a drafting amendment.

A similar Bill, introduced during the period of the Walsh Government, was supported by members on both sides but was not passed in another place. However, I am confident that this Bill will receive the support it merits. Last year, when Minister of Works, I intended to introduce this Bill, but was unable to proceed with it because of my unfortunate absence at that time. Having served on the Public Works Committee for 10 years, I pay a tribute to that committee for the work it does. I believe that this Bill will assist it in its work.

I contend that the original intention of the legislation first introduced in 1927 was to consider major public works, and it was not until 1955 that the limitation was increased to \$200,000.

I believe that one of the most important functions of the committee is to consider larger and more important works. The matters now being considered by the committee in increasing numbers were not originally intended to be considered by the committee. This is no reflection on the committee, for whose work I have the greatest admiration. Indeed, as a former Minister of Works, I commend the committee for the work it has done and for the way that it applies itself to each particular task. I regret that, because of a mishap this morning at the Government Printing Office, I have only three copies of the Bill available. Having given one copy to the Deputy Premier, I hope that extra copies will be available shortly for other members to consider. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

OMBUDSMAN

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I move:

That in the opinion of this House legislation should be introduced during this Parliament to establish the office of ombudsman.

Having spent some time last year expressing my views on this matter when a similar motion was before the House, I believe that new members on this side of the Chamber, as well as those on the Government side, have not yet had time to study the points made in the debate last year. For that reason, I do not wish to go into the matter in great depth today; nor do I intend in the future to repeat all that I said last year about this matter. At this stage, I merely wish to quote what Arthur Richards wrote about the function of an ombudsman, and I refer here to an article that I used during the debate last year, as follows:

So many bureaucrats are ruling us that we need an ombudsman urgently . . . He is everybody's benevolent big brother, everybody's Mr. Fixit. His main job is to stand as protector between the little individual citizen and the big and powerful Government. Did you suffer injustice when your home was resumed for Government works? See the ombudsman. Have you unfairly been denied a trading licence or a pension? See the ombudsman. This vague picture is accurate enough in essentials. That is how the ombudsman works in other countries, including our sister democracy of New Zealand.

I ask each member, before he makes up his mind on this subject, not to accept necessarily the views of a colleague who sits alongside him or a Party view but to examine, as an honest human being, whether he believes that as a Parliamentarian he can fulfil the role of an ombudsman, as various Parliamentarians and other people in public life have occasionally suggested that he can. I believe that all of us can become power-hungry individuals. Although we may consider that we can cure most of the complaints referred to us by constituents, I ask honourable members to examine the previous debates on this matter, including the debate that took place, I believe in 1966, when the member for Mitcham moved a motion in this House that a Select Committee be appointed to consider establishing the office of an ombudsman, and including also the debate on the matter last year.

I ask them to do this so that an honest decision and fair comment can be made regarding the merits or demerits of creating in this State the office of ombudsman or, if one wishes to have perhaps a better and easier term, a Parliamentary commissioner. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Alexandra): I move:

That in the opinion of this House the Government should consider increasing forthwith the payment to all independent schools, on behalf of each primary school child, from \$10 to at least \$20 per annum.

Most people agree on the value of independent schools, and few people in the community would have these schools eliminated from our society. Although opinion regarding these schools varies considerably, I do not think that many people would dispute the right of independent schools to exist under fair conditions. The adherents of independent schools are loyal to those schools and send their children to them at considerable personal sacrifice. As far as I can ascertain, it is with good motives that people send their children to independent schools. There are several reasons why they do this, and I think the most obvious and possibly the strongest reason is that parents desire their children to be educated in a school that has a particular religious background. I think this applies to all the major denominations, although the intensity varies between the various denominations.

The second reason why parents send their children to independent schools concerns the very word used to describe these schools: they are independent of the State system. Many people believe that there should be variety in the type of instruction given and that this variety can be achieved by independent schools. That may be a matter of opinion, but it is certainly one of the impelling reasons for sending children to independent schools. The third reason concerns the associations that children will be making at these schools, and to label this as mere snobbery is, to my mind, not respecting the motives of the parents concerned.

Undoubtedly, snobbery exists in all sections of our community but, unfortunately, it is frequently said to be the only reason for promoting the independent schools system. I believe that every parent has a perfectly valid right to choose a school for a child not only because of that school's religious background and not only because of its curriculum but also because of the other children who attend that school. I think that the motives of the parents concerned are by no means to be written down by contempt. I have checked this view with the principals of several schools, and they agree with me entirely on this point.

The fourth reason for parents' using independent schools for their children is one that perhaps involves a more material content: these schools are used by many country people whose children would experience unsatisfactory conditions in their own country schools. That is not necessarily a criticism of the State school system, but it is a fact that some children who wish to do certain university courses cannot find a State secondary school at which they can study the subjects that they must study in order to matriculate, and so they are drawn to an independent school. For similar reasons, children at primary school level are also drawn to independent schools.

When we were in Government, I received a letter from a man who farms in a modest way at Kangaroo Island; he is having plenty of difficulties at present. He is fortunate in that his child obtained a scholarship to go to an independent school, but the department's policy precluded the child's receiving a boarding allowance. I do not criticize this policy of the department; policies must be made, and there is a limit to every kind of assistance that can be given. However, policies must be reviewed from time to time. This man's child is undertaking Asian studies that entail his learning the Malaysian language. The last paragraph of his letter states:

The granting of a boarding allowance in this type of circumstance could be one practical way in which the South Australian State Government could help country people who, as you know, are at present feeling the economic situation so acutely.

As the letter was written to me when I was a member of the previous Government, I am not using it to show that the present Government is failing in this respect, for both Governments have had the same policy on this matter. I hope that in due course the present Government will review the policy in relation to boarding allowances, as I hope my Government would have reviewed it when able to do so had it remained in office. This parent points out the acute situation facing his section of primary industry. In relation to this person, the department wrote:

It is a fact that it is firm departmental policy that, where a child's home is within five miles of a departmental secondary school or a school bus service to such a school, a boarding allowance is not available to enable such a student to attend some other school more distant. In relation to Kangaroo Island, the same policy applies and courses up to the fourth secondary year are available at both Kingscote and Parndana. The residence of the person named is two miles from a departmental school bus route to Kingscote Area School.

In this letter the fact that the child is undertaking Asian studies and learning the Malaysian language has been noted, as follows:

Neither the fact that the boy was successful in gaining a scholarship to his college nor the fact that the specific subjects are not available at the nearest school can be determining factors in the provision of a boarding allowance under present conditions.

I have also received a letter from a man with two children who go to wellknown independent schools in Adelaide. Both children are studying languages with the idea of their taking university degree courses and, in both cases, local secondary schools do not teach the type of subject necessary for these children to study to matriculate. Those letters illustrate the fourth reason I have given for parents wishing to send their children to independent schools.

I give another reason as a result of discussions I have had with various former headmasters and others connected with education. One headmaster has told me that some parents do not want their children swamped, as he put it, in the less personal atmosphere of a high school. He did not imply that the high schools were failing: what he said was that he was putting a parent's view that was not necessarily a criticism of high schools.

The fact is that the parent was able to enrol his child in a school in a class of fewer children than was the case at a high school, so that his child was able to receive personal attention. This is probably one reason why fees at these schools are high. In any case, that is a fifth good reason why parents send their children to independent schools.

Another reason why parents send their children to independent schools is that they prefer permanence amongst the teaching staff. We know that there are too frequent staff movements in schools generally, a matter that worries all school authorities. In some cases teachers leave at short notice, and in other cases it may be necessary to transfer them. I believe that it is a fact that at most independent schools there is more permanence among the teaching staff than is the case in Government schools. In fact, many schoolteachers who now teach at independent schools taught at the same school the parents of the present students. I do not think that the fact that there is greater permanence in teaching staff at independent schools need be disputed.

Another reason why parents favour independent schools is that most independent schools offer more sporting facilities and recreational clubs than do State Government schools. That is not to say that such clubs are not formed at State schools or that those schools are not extremely well catered for in this respect, but in most independent schools these matters are well looked after. Therefore, for many worthy (and I emphasize that word) reasons people support independent schools. As a result of that support, they incur great cost and, in many cases, make heavy sacrifices. I understand that it costs the State an average of \$327 a year to educate a secondary school child and \$190 to educate a primary school child. Although this figure may vary somewhat from year to year, there is nevertheless an enormous saving to the Government as a result of the sacrifices made by these parents in sending their children to independent schools.

If it were not for independent schools, another 35,000 to 40,000 children at primary and secondary level would have to be educated by the State. I think there are just over 21,000 students in independent primary schools. So it is undeniable that the parents of independent school children are saving the State a large sum of money—larger by far than they will receive as a result of any system of benefits they will get from the Government (and I emphasize the words “any system”). In some

of these schools I understand the parents pay up to \$585 a year for secondary schooling and up to \$500 a year for primary schooling, plus additional costs. I have not mentioned a number of other costs such as the costs of books and extra-curricular activities, but many of these parents are paying at least \$500. However, in many cases the fees are only a fraction of the total amount because, if a boy is a boarder at one of these schools, the cost at a primary school can be as high as \$1,300 a year, which the family must find for the boy's education.

As far as I can ascertain, for some reason girls who board are more economical: they cost about \$1,050 a year each. Incidentally, the figures I have given are about the average for the more expensive schools. What is happening in this situation? Something very drastic is happening. In the seven years from 1961 to 1968, the independent school population dropped from 21 per cent of the State's school population to 16 per cent, and this was done by the independent school population remaining almost static. This figure has increased by, I think, about 3 per cent, while the number of children at independent primary schools has slightly declined, and the State school population has increased by 28 per cent from 173,198 to 222,019.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Has there been a decline in any section of the independent school numbers?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I said that the primary school population had declined very slightly.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: What about parish schools?

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I said that the secondary school population had increased by about 3 per cent. That is all the information I have available now. Is this a satisfactory situation? Of course not! No-one, except the person who is completely hostile to the system, thinks that this is a satisfactory situation. Indeed, all those who recognize that the parents of independent schoolchildren are saving the State money think that this is an unsatisfactory situation. There are some people in the community who not only think that this is unsatisfactory but are becoming frantic about it, namely, the leaders of the various church groups. The Roman Catholic authorities have made continual and powerful requests for more State aid. When the Hall Government originally paid the subsidies, after urgent representations had been made by Roman Catholic

Church officials, it was pointed out that Queensland, the most generous State in this regard, gave \$25 for each primary school student and \$77 to \$81 for each secondary school student, together with a number of other aids. When the Hall Government left office it was paying \$10 for each primary school student and \$20 for each secondary school student, with a promise that the \$10 would be increased to \$20. It is in furtherance of this policy that I am moving this motion today. South Australia is undoubtedly behind the other States in respect of State aid. New South Wales gives \$30 for each primary school student, Victoria \$20, Queensland \$25, Tasmania \$20, and Western Australia \$20. Each of the States gives other benefits that are too complicated for our argument here today. (I have them but they would become slightly irrelevant other than in pointing out that we are behind the other States.) It is worth mentioning one benefit that is given in Western Australia, in view of the approaching teacher problems in independent schools. (I say "approaching" although the problem is here today, but it will get infinitely worse.) The Western Australian State Education Department allows 10 free places in teachers colleges to students nominated by independent schools, and those graduate teachers are allowed to serve their bonds in certain independent schools.

Am I asking too much in this motion? I do not think it is an unreasonable request; I know it is possible to pay these allowances. After all, we budgeted last year for a \$2,250,000 deficit but we actually finished the year with about a \$3,000,000 surplus—a vast difference. The Premier has returned from the Premiers' Conference with a 12.9 per cent increase in reimbursements from the Commonwealth Government for the year 1969-1970. We have a per capita reimbursement about 32 per cent higher than that in New South Wales or Victoria, so I do not think it is an unreasonable request. A payment of \$10 a head would cost less than \$250,000. From these statistics it appears to me to be about \$210,000, but it may be a little more. It is a sum that I claim the State could find. In my motion I have said "at least \$10". I look forward to the payment of a higher proportion of the parents' costs than is represented by the \$20 payment that I am suggesting it should be.

On the other hand, I want to be moderate and not press at this stage for more than my Party actually promised at the last election; but

more it should be, I think, in common justice to the people who are saving the State between \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000 a year. I have heard stories of the poverty of and great sacrifices by parents who are sending their children to these schools. These stories apply to all the different major (numerically) religions; they are not confined to one religion or another. The question arose of Government policy, of which we knew a week or so ago. I got this from the statement the Premier made suggesting that certain schools, but not others, would be given assistance by his Party. I take it that is another way of saying that a means test would be applied.

This policy has now been announced in greater detail by the Minister of Education in this morning's newspaper. It provides that the State Government will make available an extra \$250,000 to help independent primary schools. The committee that has been set up will be asked to consider the ability of the schools to gain revenue by charging fees, staff-student ratios, average salary cost, revenue sources other than fees, capital expenditure commitments, and the likely demand for places in the schools due to expanding population. That is undoubtedly a means test, and certain schools will qualify much more easily than others will. Some schools may not qualify at all under these tests if the \$250,000 is to be carved up.

Before this announcement was made, I was asked, "How will the money be made available—by what system?" I think the system is announced here, that it will be made available by a committee, and the fundamental basis of it must be determined, I presume, by the committee in consultation with the Minister; but a more important question about this is not how this money will be used by why it will be used in this way. "Why?" is not to say that this will not be useful, because I think this is valuable assistance that will help some schools to solve critical problems.

I know many schools that will obviously qualify under what I call (fairly, I think) the means test, because they certainly need the money and will benefit from it; but there are parents who, as I have said, for various reasons may be sending their children to independent schools and who will probably get no relief at all under this announcement. Some of these parents are making big sacrifices. I heard of a man who is doing a heavy labouring job (and when I say that, one could not find a much heavier job than this): he is handling

sacks weighing 1½cwt. and is doing much of this work manually because, although machinery moves them to a large degree, there is still much handling to be done in this kind of work. He is pointed out as being a parent who has worked like this for many years and saved enough money to send his boy to an independent school, primary and secondary. It is a school which, judging by its name, I think may not qualify for extra assistance under this Government proposal. This man also sent his daughter to an independent school, which again, judging by its name, I think would not qualify for very much, if any, of this extra assistance. Both these children are now in their tertiary education, one studying for a degree and the other studying at the teachers training college.

I have been told of mothers who go to work when the family goes to school. They do that in order to help with the family income to enable them to send their children to these independent schools. These stories do not come from people we happen to meet in the streets; they come from responsible people to whom I have spoken, either headmasters or leaders of school organizations. They come from representatives of completely different school organizations: I am not speaking of just one school or group of schools. These people all agree that parents experience much hardship in their homes. A chaplain who visited the home of a student at one of the more expensive schools to which I have referred was shaken by the extreme poverty exemplified by the furnishings and appurtenances in the house. There was no such thing as a television set or any modern aid, and the chaplain left the house feeling astonished at the way in which these parents had brought hardship on themselves so that the child could get the education the parents had chosen for him. Families like this are admirable and deserve any assistance that can be given. Everyone knows that assistance given is only a fraction of the total cost of putting the child through the school. I think it fair to say that all the persons controlling independent schools are unhappy about the present position and will be more pleased by the Government's announcement.

I doubt that any of these people consider that the Government's action will solve the major problem, and I doubt that they will consider this grant to be a better way to help independent schools than the making of per capita grants to students. Of course, some may disagree with that, but I have spoken to

sufficient of these leaders to realize that they regard the per capita grants as being a good way to help the families. They also realize that assistance given is so much less than the actual cost to the parents that any increase must be welcomed.

We all know that the Roman Catholic Church fervently believes that secular education should not be separated from religious teaching, but it is losing ground in pursuing its aims. Authorities of that church estimate that, in 1961, 40 per cent of Catholic children were enrolled outside Catholic schools, whereas at present the estimate is 55 per cent. Although the reactions of the denominations vary in form and intensity, it is clear that the parents of children at independent schools are not being helped sufficiently, and this Parliament is asked to be sympathetic and to give tangible support to these unselfish and worthy people.

Mr. COURCE (Torrens): I have pleasure in seconding the motion and I wish to dilate upon some of the remarks made by the member for Alexandria. In this day and age, everyone accepts the fundamental right of any parent to choose the school to which to send his child, and the motion has been moved in furtherance of that acceptance and so that further assistance may be given to confer this right. I was interested to hear the Attorney-General, in his maiden speech, refer to this matter. I completely agree with his remarks about this fundamental belief and with his statement that assistance should be given to parents of children attending independent schools.

Many members on both sides have either attended independent schools or have, or have had, children attending them, and we all recognize that these schools are an integral part of the education system in this State. There is close liaison between the Education Department and the independent schools system through the department's inspectorial arrangement. When I refer to independent schools I refer both to the religious schools and to the schools that are completely independent, having no religious affiliations. We know that there are one or two schools in this State in the latter category. I use the term in its broadest context.

I expect the committee that has been announced by the Minister of Education, as reported in the *News* last evening and in the *Advertiser* this morning, to submit worthwhile information and a useful report. I was also interested in the terms of reference and the membership of the committee. However, I was rather

amazed when the Minister of Education could not reply to a question I asked at Question Time today: he did not seem to know how the capitation grants system was administered by his department. The Hall Government was the first Government in South Australia to make such grants in order to help parents meet the fees for each student for each term. This is an extremely valuable way of assisting many parents, and it has been much appreciated by school administrations and parents alike. It is greatly appreciated by country parents, who have peculiar problems because of the distances their children have to travel to school and because some courses are not available in country areas, but it is more particularly appreciated by many migrant groups.

I could cite many examples to show that migrant families appreciate the capitation grants now operating. The previous Government simplified the scheme as much as possible and, in doing this, decided to pay the grant direct to the school concerned, which would pass on a remission of fees to the parents when rendering the term account. The decision to do this rather than pay the amount direct to the parents was made after careful consideration and, after consultation, with the unanimous approval of the leaders of the principal independent schools in this State. The arrangement works on a basis similar to that on which book allowances are paid to students in all secondary schools. That allowance is paid to the schools and then remitted in the school account sent to the parents. The capitation grant works in the same way, and we are asking today for this principle to be continued. When replying to the member for Davenport, the Minister said that some of this would brush off on to the schools. If that happens, it will keep school fees down. As the parent of a child at present attending an independent school, I receive a remission in fees.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Can you give me an example of an actual reduction from what you paid prior to the introduction of this scheme to what you paid afterwards?

Mr. COUMBE: Would you like me to bring in the account?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must address the Chair.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: The honourable member knows very well what I mean.

Mr. COUMBE: I know what the Minister was alluding to. However, he carefully avoided answering my question. I was not criticizing the setting-up of the committee

when I asked the question, to which I received no reply. I asked whether this would mean that the parents of schoolchildren attending certain schools would receive less assistance than those of children attending other schools. I recall that last May the Premier, when Leader of the Opposition, annoyed some people when he specifically named Rostrevor and St. Peters College.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: He did not name Rostrevor College. It was named by Pridham and by the press. The Premier did not—

Mr. COUMBE: I am sorry to inform the Minister, who is so often wrong—

Mr. Langley: And you're always right!

Mr. COUMBE: I am not always right, but the Minister is wrong sometimes. Some people expressed considerable annoyance when these schools were singled out. The Minister says that Rostrevor College was not mentioned, but St. Peters College was certainly mentioned—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That's right.

Mr. COUMBE: — and this considerably annoyed some people because the object of the capitation grant, no matter how well a school may be endowed, is to help the parents.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: It is not.

Mr. COUMBE: The Minister has been in office for only a couple of months. The capitation grant was introduced by the Hall Government and was in operation for two and quarter years before that Government left office. The member for Davenport, who was the Minister responsible for introducing the scheme, revealed today in an explanation to the Minister the form that was used.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: The honourable member knows full well that in every case in which the capitation grant is made the fees charged by the school rose by at least the amount of the grant.

Mr. COUMBE: I know that I sent four children to independent schools and that I could not afford to do it today, unless I received assistance by way of a capitation grant.

Mr. Curren: Do you really mean that?

Mr. COUMBE: Yes, I do mean it. I believe emphasis must always be placed on assisting parents.

Mr. Hall: Any relief that assists parents is good.

Mr. COUMBE: Quite so. In its 1968 policy speech the Liberal and Country League announced that it would give \$10 to the

parents of all children attending independent schools. It also said that when the State's finances improved, grants to secondary students would be increased to \$20. The State's finances improved under the Treasuryship of Sir Glen Pearson to such an extent that we were able to honour that promise, and did so. In our last election policy speech we said that we would increase the primary students' grant from the existing \$10 to \$20 and, if we had been elected, we would have kept to that promise. Since my Party was not elected to Government it is requesting the present Government to do what is fair and equitable for the parents, the schools, the students and the community. We all know that if the independent school system in South Australia collapsed or if it withdrew to any marked extent the Education Department would be in a chaotic position.

The Hon. L. J. King: The parish schools would be the first to collapse, but under the Labor Government's system they will be saved.

Mr. COUNBE: I am very much aware of the problems of parish schools.

The Hon. L. J. King: They are the ones that would throw the weight on the State system if they collapsed.

Mr. COUNBE: If they collapsed the State education system would be in a chaotic position from both the physical and the professional viewpoints. I emphasized earlier that this serious situation has resulted largely from immigration, as the Attorney-General would be the first to agree. Many migrants in our community have greatly appreciated the capitation grants that have been made in the past.

The Hon. L. J. King: They will be greater if they are paid on the basis of need.

Mr. COUNBE: The value of the capitation grants at present being paid by the Government is far less than what it costs the State to educate a child at either primary or secondary level. Those costs are \$190 for a primary student and \$327 for a secondary student. In South Australia at present the total capitation grant is \$30 (\$10 for a primary student and \$20 for a secondary student), whereas in New South Wales \$30 is paid for primary students and, in the secondary division, \$34 for students in forms 1 and 2 and \$42 for students in forms 3 to 6. In Victoria \$20 is paid for primary students and \$40 for secondary students. In Queensland \$25 is paid for primary students and, in the secondary division, \$77 is paid for students in forms 1 to 3 and \$81 for students in forms 4 and 5. In little Tasmania \$20 is paid for

primary students and, in the secondary division, \$30 is paid for students in forms 1 to 4 and \$50 for students in forms 5 and 6. In Western Australia \$20 is paid for primary students and, in the secondary division, \$30 is paid for students in the first, second and third years, and \$36 is paid for students in the fourth and fifth years. These payments are quite separate from the Commonwealth grant.

What does it cost in South Australia today for capitation grants? Last year the cost for 14,000 secondary students at \$20 a head was \$280,000, whilst the cost for 21,000 primary students at \$10 a head was \$210,000—a total of \$490,000. If the motion is carried and if the policies that my Party announced during the last election campaign are carried out, providing an extra \$10 a head for 21,000 students will cost another \$210,000. So, we arrive at a total of about \$700,000. From a purely economic viewpoint it is good business for the State to continue this system, but that is not the main point: we must consider the question of equity and justice. Many schools undoubtedly need assisting, and I am the first to hope that the inquiry set up by the Minister will bring worthwhile results: I do not cavil at that in any way. A rate of \$10 a head results in a total of \$210,000, which is very close to the figure of \$250,000.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: We are doing more than that.

Mr. COUNBE: All right, but the Minister should give us credit that our motion was on the Notice Paper before the announcement was made. We did not know what the Minister was doing.

Mr. Hall: The motion hurried things up substantially.

Mr. COUNBE: One can place one's own interpretation upon that. Small parish schools, particularly Catholic schools, are facing grave problems. I know of some Church of England parish schools that have closed because of cost problems and because they have been in areas where the population has grown older and there have been insufficient children to attend the schools. I can cite two such schools in my own district, and I have seen this happen to schools of other denominations and to one or two schools that have no religious affiliation. The fundamental principle is that every parent in our community today should have the basic right of sending his child to the school of his choice, whether it be a State school or an independent school. A child should not be forced, because of circumstances, to go

to a school other than the school of his choice. I commend the member for Alexandra for his speech, and I have much pleasure in seconding his motion.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Education): Because several matters have been somewhat confused and muddled as a result of the remarks of the members for Alexandra and Torrens, I think we badly need some clear thinking on this question of aid to independent schools. First, on behalf of the Government, let me say that we do not dispute the right of independent schools to exist or the right of parents to exercise complete freedom of choice as to which school they choose for their children. Members appreciate that financial problems can vary enormously from parent to parent. If we considered an independent school in a relatively well-off part of Adelaide, we would find that some parents of children at the school were at one extreme (earning low incomes) and other parents were at the other extreme (earning very high incomes). The same applies at kindergarten level. The average income of parents whose children attend an independent school in a relatively well-off suburb of Adelaide would be considerably higher than the average income of parents in, say, a working class suburb. Certain assistance is granted to parents by the tax system. The Commonwealth Government allows parents to claim up to \$300 a child as a tax deduction, and the benefit that individual parents get from this deduction can be, in certain cases, substantial, but it depends on the parent's income. If his income is low, even assuming that the parent can afford to spend \$300 on the education of his child in one year, the benefit in the form of a tax reduction is low. If the income is high the benefit of the tax reduction is so much greater.

The benefit can be as high as \$210 tax reduction. That would apply to a parent earning a taxable income of more than \$32,000 a year. For such a parent the marginal tax rate on additional income is 66.7c in the dollar and, in addition, there is a further 2½ per cent levy, so the extra tax on marginal dollars of earnings is about 70c in the dollar. If that parent is allowed a tax deduction of \$300 for the education of the child his taxable income is reduced by \$300 and the tax payable by \$210. At the other extreme, for a parent who had several children and whose taxable income after all deductions was, say \$1,500 (and this would be fairly common), the marginal rate of tax on extra earnings is \$16.20 in \$100.

Therefore, a tax deduction of \$300 for the education of his child will reduce the tax payable by \$48.60.

This is the kind of inequality in our present tax system, and I suggest that if we want to assist parents financially the appropriate way is through the income tax system, because, as I have illustrated, the amount of assistance that can be given to parents is much greater than can be done by a per capita grant system that is aimed not at improving educational standards in independent schools but at reducing fees paid by parents. The present system of tax deductions is completely inequitable because, rather than giving more assistance to the parent who is struggling to send his child to an independent school, it provides the greatest assistance to the parent who is better off. The amount of assistance given indirectly in South Australia by the tax system is several times greater than the amount of direct aid given by the State or the Commonwealth Government to independent schools.

Furthermore, the higher the average income of parents of children at a particular school the greater the ability of that school to increase fees and to meet the increased costs of education and the increased costs involved year after year in maintaining a reasonable standard of education. For example, if the average taxable income of parents sending children to a particular school is, say \$8,000, the marginal tax rate is 48.7c in the dollar, so that if any school in our community can boast of a group of parents whose average income is \$8,000 the tax deductions claimed by those parents will mean a reduction in tax averaging \$145 a child. However, if the average taxable income of parents sending children to a particular school is only \$2,500, the marginal tax rate is 25.2c in the dollar and, even presuming that the parents can afford to pay \$300 a child and thereby claim that amount in tax deduction, the tax rebate would be worth only \$75 instead of \$145.

The former school, with the higher average income parents, will, because of the tax system, be able to charge higher fees and pass on increases in costs to the parents more readily than the school at which the average income of parents is lower. This is a situation that has helped the independent schools that are relatively well off to keep going while the poorer schools have had great difficulty in continuing. Extraordinary differences occur in the fees that can be charged by independent schools. At the primary level straight tuition

fees are as high as \$150 a term, whereas certain parish schools are having difficulty in getting \$10 to \$12 a term.

Mr. McKee: Even that is too high sometimes.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes. That is a notional fee that the school attempts to collect but, in many cases, it is not collected in full. In other words, there are independent schools in our community educating primary schoolchildren on the basis of a yearly tuition fee of \$450, while at the other end of the scale some schools are attempting to educate primary schoolchildren for a yearly tuition fee of \$30 to \$36.

The only way in which schools in the latter category have survived is by allowing class sizes to become excessively large and to tolerate an unsatisfactory standard of education, a standard which the schools themselves recognize as being unsatisfactory. Basically, I suggest that if we want to assist parents more with the cost of education we should do it by an alteration to the present taxation system. We should put the position to the Commonwealth Government and ask it to remove the present inequities in the taxation system. However, if we want to improve standards of education, we should pay moneys direct to schools. Further, \$10 per capita paid to a school which charges a tuition fee of \$450 represents to that school an increase in revenue from tuition of 2½ per cent; or, if it is passed on to the parent, a reduction in the amount paid by the parent of 2½ per cent.

On the other hand, assistance in the form of \$10 per capita paid to a school where the fee is \$30 a year represents an increase in tuition revenue, if the school takes the money, of 33½ per cent; or, if it is passed on as a reduction in fees to the parent, a reduction in cost to the parent of 33½ per cent. I believe that it is a Christian act to ask schools that have a satisfactory standard of education to forgo some part of the additional funds that the State may be willing to make available to it, so that schools with an unsatisfactory standard of education can receive still greater assistance. After all, the \$10 extra assistance to the school with the high tuition fees would not make a noticeable difference, but if we could put an extra \$20 into the poor school we might increase its tuition revenue by as much as 60 per cent or more, and that would make a substantial difference to the standard of education that such a school could provide.

Let us make no mistake: while some of our independent schools provide a fine standard of education, others, endeavouring to operate in difficult circumstances, are not able to offer a satisfactory standard. These latter schools remain open, and no-one (least of all I) is prepared to say that they should not remain open. However, I believe that the State has a responsibility in those circumstances to help raise standards and to ensure that no child in our community is brought up as a second-class citizen. That is the real issue in this matter. The member for Alexandra referred to costs of education at certain independent schools being up to \$1,300 (I presume that he took boarding costs into account) for a male student and \$1,050, I think was the figure, for a female student. Substantial assistance concerning those costs can be made through the tax system, but no-one will try to kid us that an extra \$10 a year granted as a fee reduction to parents who have to meet bills of \$1,050 or \$1,300 will make any significant difference to their position, for clearly it will not.

The Hon. L. J. King: It won't force them to send the child to a State school, either.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No; it will not make an ounce of difference, one way or the other. Where we can make a difference with the scarce money available is by providing it on a needs basis. A small independent school in Port Lincoln has class sizes which, according to a report I had from one of my officers recently, go up to 70. What kind of justice is there in that? The assistance that we can give, if we provide this extra \$250,000 on a needs basis, can make a noticeable difference to the problem existing in this kind of school. I know that small parish schools in my district have problems of excessive class sizes. It is in that area, again, that we can make a substantial difference, and I believe that the correct approach in the circumstances is to provide assistance on a needs basis (some may say it is applying the means test), so that we can lift our heads and proudly say, "There is a reasonable standard of education in every school throughout the State."

I am not satisfied that we could even say that about our State schools at present. However, that is the thing that we must be aiming for and that is our basic responsibility when we are paying money out to schools. If we wish to assist the parents, then we have to do something more substantial than what is intended by the motion before the Chair; we would

need to do things which are beyond our financial resources but which clearly are not beyond the financial resources of the Commonwealth Government and which are already being done by the Commonwealth Government, through the tax deduction system, in the most inequitable way imaginable. This arrangement through the tax system has existed for years without any popular outcry and, as a matter of hard, cold fact, it is one of the biggest tax scandals that exists at present.

The assistance that is designed to help parents with the extraordinary costs of education should be applied in such a way that the wealthier a person is the more assistance he gets! I invite any honourable member opposite to say whether or not that is just. In my opinion, it is not, and such a situation cannot be justified. We could make a more substantial difference to the problems of the parents referred to by the member for Alexandra if we altered the tax deduction system that applies currently at the Commonwealth level. We have heard a certain amount of gobbledegook from the member for Torrens, but I did not think he would go in for it to the extent that he did. Everyone knows that the assistance that was to be given to independent schools by the previous Government was first announced by the present Premier at the end of 1967. However, quite apart from that, everyone knows that this assistance was given primarily to benefit independent schools which were having difficulties with standards of education and which did not have enough money to employ sufficient teachers in order to get their class sizes down.

The assistance was provided in that direction, and the previous Government tried to get it both ways: it knew that no independent school would actually reduce the fee paid by parents, but the idea was, "Let's organize it so that the bill that goes out shows the assistance that we give you as a deduction from the fee that you are charged." If a particular school, for example, was charging \$70 a term prior to the extra \$10 being granted, then the school concerned would raise the fee to \$80 and show as a deduction on the account the \$10 provided by the Government, and so the fee that had to be paid by the parent would be \$70, the same as it was before. I know of no case where parents actually paid less as a consequence. Presenting accounts in the way they were presented was purely a way of getting across to parents that money was being paid to that school by the State Government.

Mr. Coumbe: Are you saying that that was a general practice?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am saying that it was almost a general practice for schools, particularly those where problems of educational standards were so acute, to increase fees to the extent of the extra assistance. If the member for Torrens were running a school that was having great difficulty in finding funds to pay the salaries of extra teachers needed, what would he do? He would do exactly what I have described as having happened: that is, he would increase the fee by the amount of the assistance and, in effect, pre-empt the assistance given for the use of the school. I am sure that every honourable member is aware that this assistance was basically given to the school. If we want to assist parents, we should not pay extra cash to every parent whether or not it is needed: we should be using taxes or some other method (child endowment, for instance) to provide direct assistance to parents in that way. I was amazed at the statements made this afternoon by the member for Torrens. This takes me back to the days when my Party was in convulsions about whether aid should be given direct to the parents or to the school.

Mr. Coumbe: Did your Party ever stop having convulsions about that?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: We have reasonable discussions these days, and we have them in the open.

Mr. Coumbe: This is quite a confession.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The honourable member is aware that every political Party has great difficulties at times. I remember certain difficulties the Commonwealth Liberal Party had recently over Mr. St. John, for example. Every political Party has a history. The only point I make to members opposite is that any discussions that occur in the Labor Party occur in the open and not behind closed doors. We publish full reports of our conferences, and people know what our policy is. They know who are the members of our State and Commonwealth executives; this information can be found out. One of the troubles about Liberal Party executive members is that they are not just faceless but nameless as well, because Liberal Party rules forbid the Party Secretary from providing to any public inquiry information on membership of the State and Commonwealth executives of the Party.

Mr. Clark: They have to change their image.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: First, I think they had better get one.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: They've been trying to find out what is their image.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that I am out of order, as you would no doubt be aware, in referring to such matters at present, and I do so only under the most extreme provocation from members opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must not take notice of provocation and must address the Chair.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The basis of what the Government proposes in relation to the additional assistance it is providing is, first, that it will make available \$250,000, which amounts to an average of \$11.40 for the 21,930 independent primary schoolchildren as at February this year. Incidentally, that number is greater than the 21,000 mentioned by the member for Torrens, and no doubt there will be some variation now on the February figure of 21,930. I shall not tell the committee we have appointed its job other than to ask it to look at certain criteria in making recommendations on how much a head should be paid to schools in any particular category, but the sum made available will permit the committee to provide, for example, as much as \$20 or even \$24 a head to schools in the greatest need, at the cost, admittedly, of certain schools getting nothing. I ask honourable members what is the right thing to do in these circumstances, when we know that certain schools are having drastic problems over educational standards. Should we give everyone \$10 a head whether or not he needs it, or should we try to institute a system whereby the additional assistance will go where the need is greatest? I know what is the right and Christian thing to do, and so do members opposite. I suggest that on that basis, and in terms of giving assistance where it will make a difference to educational standards, the only type of approach that can be justified is the proposition that the Government has put forward: a needs basis.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Do you favour continuing the present per capita grant as it now exists?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: We have decided to continue the present per capita grants, and there will be no change in that respect, largely because we do not want to take away rights that have already been

granted. Perhaps the member for Alexandra listened this afternoon to the member for Pirie who, during Question Time, objected to all sorts of things because they trampled on existing rights of people, and the same sort of consideration applies here. We propose that the assistance already given shall continue but that the additional assistance now to be given and further assistance at later stages shall be based on this needs basis. I ask honourable members to pose to themselves the question what is the right thing to do in these circumstances. Should we make a grant on a strict per capita basis, when we know that these extreme variations in need exist as between independent schools and that there are extreme variations in the fees that are paid and that parents concerned can afford to pay, or should we make the grant on a needs basis?

Mr. Coumbe: You're saying, in effect, that in some cases parents will get no additional relief.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That is entirely up to the school. Let me say clearly that I would like the school concerned to inform parents of the amount of assistance that we will be providing. However, if that particular school concludes that the assistance given is needed by the school to raise its educational standards and is not to be passed on to the parents, I will support its decision, as I hope the member for Torrens will, too, because, as I have already argued, this is not the appropriate way in which to give assistance to parents. If assistance to parents is needed, it should be provided through the taxation system, and that is basically a Commonwealth responsibility.

We are concerned here with educational standards. We have said that the additional assistance to be provided should be used to help with educational standards, and the logical conclusion from that, whether or not the honourable member likes it, is that, if the school concerned wishes the extra money to be used purely for educational purposes and not to be passed on in lower fees to parents, we will support its decision. I suggest to the member for Torrens that schools in that position have, in fact, been doing this all along, and that the adjustment of accounts required at present is really a little bit of gobbledegook. What it would be more honest to do would be simply to ask each school to indicate to the parents, either annually or each term, the amount of assistance provided by the State Government to that school: put it

on a per capita basis if you will, but do not let us kid the parents by having this amount deducted from the bill. I do not believe the motion as it stands can be supported by the House, because it suggests that money be paid out on a per capita basis of \$10, irrespective of circumstances, and that is contrary to our policy that we announced during the election campaign and that we have now commenced to implement. I hope that a member of the House, on either the Opposition or the Government side—I do not mind which—will work out some kind of amendment to the motion that will put it on the kind of basis it should have: that the additional assistance to be given to the independent primary schools should be based on need.

Mrs. STEELE secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Housing Improvement Act, 1940-1966. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is designed to make good certain deficiencies in the provisions of the Housing Improvement Act. Under Part VII of this Act, the housing authority (which under the terms of the Act may be the South Australian Housing Trust or some other body to whom the Governor has committed the administration of the Act) may declare a house to be substandard. A maximum rental may then be fixed in respect of the house or any part of it. Attempts have been made by some unscrupulous landlords to frustrate the provisions of the Act by charging the maximum rental for the house and charging separately for any furniture or other accessories provided with it. The Bill seeks to prevent this device. It also makes some refinements of the powers of the landlord of a house declared to be substandard under the Act to eject a tenant from the house. In particular, it provides that a tenant shall not be ejected otherwise than in pursuance of the order of a court of competent jurisdiction. Where the tenant has committed some breach of the tenancy agreement, the Bill makes it a matter for the discretion of the court whether that breach justifies his ejection. Formerly any breach of the tenancy, however slight, would disentitle the tenant to his statutory protections.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows: Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 makes a formal amendment to the principal Act. Clause 3 repeals and re-enacts section 50 of the principal Act. This section defines what is meant for the purposes of the Act by the word "rental". It is defined as including amounts paid by the tenant to the landlord for the use of furniture and accessories in or appertaining to the house, for the repair or improvement of the house, or for the supply of electricity, gas, water, fuel or other domestic commodity or service in respect of the house. Thus, where a maximum rental is fixed under the Act the landlord is prevented from making additional charges in respect of those enumerated goods and services. Clause 4 amends section 57 of the principal Act. The purpose of this amendment is to make it clear that the housing authority may, in the same notice by which the maximum rental is fixed in respect of a house, fix the maximum rental for the letting or subletting of part of the house.

Clause 5 amends section 61 of the principal Act. This section deals with the ejection of a tenant from a substandard house. The absolute right of the landlord to bring ejection proceedings where the tenant has contravened a term of the tenancy is modified by investing the court with a discretion whether the contravention should or should not justify ejection. Under paragraphs (c), (d), (g) and (h) of section 61 (1), the landlord is entitled to obtain repossession of the house where he requires it for the accommodation of a relative or employee, or for the purposes of repair or reconstruction. New subsection (3) is inserted to prevent abuse of these provisions. It provides that, where an order for repossession has been granted under any of those provisions, the house may not, without the consent of the housing authority, be let otherwise than to the persons for whose occupation repossession was sought, or before the purposes for which repossession was granted are carried out. New subsection (3a) provides that no order for costs shall be made against a party to proceedings under section 61 unless his conduct has been unreasonable, vexatious or oppressive. New subsection (6) prevents the eviction or ejection of a tenant otherwise than in pursuance of the order of a court. Clauses 6 and 7 make formal amendments to the principal Act consequential upon the enactment of the Land Acquisition Act. Clause 8 repeals section 88 of the principal Act, which is now unnecessary.

Mr. CUMBE secured the adjournment of the debate.

MINES AND WORKS INSPECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Minister of Mines) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Mines and Works Inspection Act, 1920-1966. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is designed to protect the South Australian countryside from aesthetic detriment resulting from mining operations (and that includes quarrying operations). While the exploration for and production of mineral resources are essential for the economic prosperity of the State, a proper balance must be kept between economic and environmental considerations. For some time past it has been apparent that the provisions of the Mines and Works Inspection Act are not adequate to deal effectively with environmental problems arising from mining operations. In consequence of these inadequacies, there are some places where the countryside has suffered grave, and perhaps irreparable, damage in aesthetic value. The amendments contained in this Bill are, therefore, designed to ensure that mining operations are properly carried out with a minimum of environmental damage.

The provisions of this Bill will enable the Government to have a better means of dealing with the situation that has arisen, particularly in the Hills face zone in relation to quarrying, but also in other areas adjacent to Adelaide, and in other towns in South Australia, from the inadequacy of the old Mines and Works Inspection Act and inadequate provisions in the existing Planning and Development Act. The latter Act has been shown not to have sufficient power to ensure that the provisions of the Metropolitan Adelaide Development Plan are carried out. This has been shown clearly by a judgment delivered in court only last Friday. Consequently, action in this area is urgent, and this Bill is the first of a series of measures to be brought down by the Government to deal with the position.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows: Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends section 10 of the principal Act. This section sets out the powers of an inspector under the Act. The amendment, first, empowers the inspector to make any examination or inquiry into the effect of any mine or mining operation upon the amenity of any area or place. Secondly, the inspector is empowered to order the cessation of any mining operation or practice that has impaired, or is likely to impair, unduly the

amenity of any area or place. He is empowered to give such directions as he considers necessary or desirable to prevent or reduce undue impairment of the amenity of any area or place.

Clauses 3 and 4 expand the Governor's powers to make regulations under the Act. Under the amendment, regulations may be made for preserving the amenity of any area or place from impairment by mining operations and, in particular, the regulations may regulate, restrict or prohibit operations that interfere with the surface of the land; regulate the position in which excavations may be made or mining operations conducted; regulate the treatment and disposal of overburden and waste products; regulate, restrict, or prohibit the treatment or disposal of overburden or waste products in prescribed places, or places of a prescribed kind; require that any plant or mining operations be screened from view; require the restoration of the surface of land on which mining operations have been conducted; and, finally, regulate the positioning, installation and removal of mining equipment and buildings used in connection with mining operations.

Mr. RODDA secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION BILL

In Committee.

(Continued from August 4. Page 497.)

Clause 2—"Interpretation."

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

In the definition of "insurance" to strike out "counter insurance".

I do so because we have not been told what the reference means. However, I do not want to be difficult and, if the Premier gives a good reason for including the term, I will not press the amendment.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): The term, which was taken from English Statutes, is not widely in use here. As it may lead to confusion, I accept the amendment.

Amendment carried.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): The definition of "insurance" includes assurance, and in the insurance business assurance may have some meaning of which I am not aware. Although the Walsh Government's Bill enabled life insurance policies to be written by the Government insurance office, this Bill provides that the commission is to have power to carry

on the general business of insurance other than the business of life insurance. I would object to the inclusion of "assurance" in this definition if it was included to allow the commission to write life insurance policies. Will the Premier explain the position?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: As the word "assurance" is used at times somewhat indiscriminately as being synonymous with "insurance", it has been included. However, the writing of life insurance is covered by clause 12 (1) (b), which provides that the powers and functions of the commission are as follows:

to undertake and carry on in the State such general business of insurance or any class or form of insurance (not including the business of life insurance or any class or form thereof) . . .

Mr. EASTICK: Personal accident insurance, sickness insurance, and some forms of motor insurance have a component of life insurance. Will the Government insurance office be denied the right to enter into this field?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes.

Clause as amended passed.

Clauses 3 to 11 passed.

Clause 12—"Powers and functions of Commission."

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

In subclause (5), after "department" second occurring, to insert:

but no member of the Police Force shall act as an agent of or on behalf of the commission for the purpose of arranging contracts of insurance (excepting contracts of insurance complying with Part IV of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959, as amended, in relation to permits to which section 16 of that Act applies) or of making inquiries concerning insurance claims, unless such inquiries concern any accident or offence or suspected offence or any contravention of or non-compliance with any law.

In effect, the clause allows the commission to avail itself of the services of members of the Public Service. The purpose of my amendment is not to destroy the effect of the subclause but to prevent the appointment of policemen as agents of the commission. Such a practice is followed in one State, and I believe it constitutes unfair competition. For many reasons people have to go before policemen who, if they are agents for the commission, would be able to do much business for it, although I do not think that the practice would be allowed by the Minister in charge of any department in this State under either a Labor or a Liberal Government. I do not

intend to prevent a policeman from pursuing his normal activities, which are covered by the exceptions provided in the amendment.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I regret that I cannot accept the amendment. First, the amendment as it stands, would make nonsense of the clause, because to insert the words proposed to be inserted after "department" would cause considerable difficulty. Apart from that, the amendment is probably designed to preclude any policeman from acting as an agent of the commission. I do not know whether the honourable member intends to require policemen to act as the commission's agents for writing third party insurance contracts in relation to temporary permits. It seems from the exception he provides that this may well be the case, but this is not what happens. Section 16 of the Motor Vehicles Act provides that a certificate of insurance must be produced to the policeman before he issues a permit under that section; so, he would not be acting as an agent to obtain an insurance contract. Policemen would perform their duties in these matters not as agents of the commission but in their own right. In these circumstances I do not see that the amendment as it stands will achieve anything. It is certainly not intended that policemen should be used as agents in this matter. Consequently, I ask the honourable member not to proceed with his amendment. There is no provision in the Police Act by which policemen can be made agents in their own right in respect of business of this kind.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: The Premier did not give any reasons why the amendment should not be carried: all he did was to make it clear that he did not intend to allow policemen to act as agents of the commission. However, if my amendment is carried the provision will be stronger than the Government intends: it will prevent the commission's arranging, through the Minister, for a policeman to act as its agent. If there is no other objection to my amendment, I cannot see why it is not acceptable.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Under the amendment a policeman could become an agent of the commission in respect of permits issued under section 16 of the Motor Vehicles Act, although I do not think that that is the honourable member's intention. The amendment says that a policeman is not to act as an agent of the commission except in certain circumstances; in those circumstances, if a certificate of insurance complying with section

16 of the Motor Vehicles Act or a cover note is produced to the policeman, he may issue a permit, but the honourable member is saying that the policeman is not to act as an agent except in relation to that kind of insurance contract.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: I am not making it any more permissive than the Bill provides.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: On the contrary: under the Police Act it would not be competent for the commission to have a policeman accept an arrangement with the commission that he personally should act as an agent of the commission. The honourable member is writing in something that allows the policeman to act as an agent of the commission in certain circumstances. I think the honourable member is achieving something that is contrary to what he intends to achieve. What he intends to achieve is achieved anyway, so this amendment is really unnecessary.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I still cannot see the objection to my amendment. As it stands, the Bill will effectively prevent a policeman's being appointed an agent of the commission provided the Minister does not give his sanction. If, on the other hand, the commission asks that policemen be appointed agents and the Minister gives his authority, then, if the Bill is passed as it is, policemen can be appointed. My amendment makes this impossible, except in one instance—that of temporary permits. I am making the legislation not more permissive, but more restrictive, except in one instance concerning temporary permits where it will not be any more permissive than would be the case under the Bill as drafted.

The Committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes (19)—Messrs. Allen, Becker, Brookman (teller), Carnie, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Ferguson, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Hall, Mathwin, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (24)—Messrs. Broomhill, Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Clark, Corcoran, Crimes, Curren, Dunstan (teller), Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Payne, Ryan, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wells.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. COUMBE: The words "but not including the business of life insurance" in this clause are something to which I completely agree. The member for Adelaide suggested last night that the Bill was introduced in its present form because the inclusion of life insurance was one reason why a similar Bill introduced by the former Labor Government had failed to pass in another place. He gave us to understand that in a year or two an amendment would allow life insurance to be included in the business of the Government insurance office. As this question is extremely important in relation to the passage of this Bill and as life insurance is excluded from the present provisions, can the Premier assure the Committee that the Government insurance office is not likely to enter into the business of life insurance under his Government or in the future?

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

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The reason for our excluding life insurance basically was that we had an investigation made into the profitability of various forms of insurance in offices of medium size. A Government insurance office would be an office of medium size (not the smallest, but certainly not the largest), and it is not possible for an office of medium size to compete effectively in the life insurance field because, in this field particularly, the economies of scale are enormously important. If one has a large-scale office, one is able to offer competitively far better benefits than can be offered through a small office. Quite different considerations arise in relation to other forms of insurance.

In addition, we are not so concerned about the standard of service in the life insurance field: this is a competitive area, given the large companies operating here, and it is under the control of Commonwealth Government legislation. Different matters arise there from those relating to the rest of the business that we are interested in having a State insurance office deal with. The only reason why originally we had included life insurance was that it was considered that there was an advantage in some policy areas of having people, who were insuring with the Government insurance office, able to take up life insurance in the same office but, frankly, those advantages were minimal as against the difficulty that we would face in being able to compete adequately with the terms of life insurance offered by the larger offices. In

consequence, we decided that there were advantages in excluding life insurance, and we have no intention of altering that view.

Mr. HALL: The Premier's reasons seem strangely conflicting with the basic reasons for introducing the Bill at all. There is, of course, a tremendous amount of competition in the insurance field outside of life insurance. If the Premier looks again at the rates of insurance applying in other States, he will find that South Australia is the one State in all of Australia in which, even without the existence of a Government insurance office, we have basically the lowest premiums.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: What do you mean "basically"?

Mr. HALL: There may be an odd tip of the scale against us here and there, but basically the average figures in the main insurance fields are lower here than in other States, and the Minister knows it. The Premier's reason, therefore, is no justification for introducing this Bill at all but, as that has been canvassed in the second reading debate, I do not intend to go over it again. However, I refer to clause 12 (1) (e), which provides:

Subject to this Act and the directions of the Minister not inconsistent with this Act, the commission is hereby authorized and empowered, with the approval of the Treasurer, to borrow money and to give security for the repayment of any loan;

Little information has been given to the Committee about the structure of the insurance commission and its costs, liabilities and expected profitability. Can the Premier give at least some idea of what it will cost to set up this office?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: At this stage I cannot specify a figure. The cost of setting up similar offices in other States has not been great. We have had offers of advice from a large area of insurance consultants in this State and elsewhere in Australia, including people who have been involved in setting up other State Government insurance offices. At this stage I cannot state a figure of cost, for I cannot say exactly at what rate the commissioners will recommend that we commence and undertake business. From what I have been told, I do not expect that we will be faced with vast establishment costs.

Mr. HALL: Surely the Premier must have some idea. Will it cost \$50,000 or \$500,000? To set up an insurance office will cost money initially, and whether that office will be profitable will depend greatly on the Minister who administers this legislation, as the Premier

knows. I question whether it is good enough to be dealing with this legislation when we have no idea of the expense that will face the people of the State. I do not ask for a precise figure, but surely it is up to a supposedly responsible Government to tell us what it will cost the community to set up this office. Whether there will be any return will depend on Government policy. Surely the Premier can do better than to say that we are at the mercy of the commission. If the commission wants to rush things along, this could cost \$500,000 but, on the other hand, if the commission wishes to grow slowly, \$50,000 may be sufficient to set up the office and employ some people. Surely some estimate of the cost can be given.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: As the Leader knows, if we had to provide \$500,000 for the commission, we would have to introduce appropriation legislation entirely apart from this Bill, and he would have an opportunity to speak at that time. However, as the Leader knows perfectly well, it will not cost anything like that sum.

Mr. CUMBE: As I said last evening, the Government has presented a Bill to this Chamber without knowing how much it will cost to set up the Government insurance office provided for in that Bill. This is a blank cheque. The Government is asking Parliament to accept the Bill although it has no idea of what it will cost to engage staff for this insurance office, to lease or buy property, to install all the equipment, and to run the show; and the Government does not know what it will cost year after year to run this office. I thought that the Premier must have known something about this before introducing the Bill. If he did not have the knowledge, in all honesty he should have deferred introducing the Bill until he had more information. The Premier asks us to vote on the Bill, yet he does not know how much the proposed Government insurance office will cost the taxpayer.

Will the Premier put on the Loan Estimates this year a sum of money that, if this Bill is passed, will enable an insurance office to be set up? In all fairness, Parliament should be given some idea and, if the Premier cannot do so, I suggest he has made a grave error of judgment in presenting this Bill to us and asking us to vote upon it when we do not know how much the project will cost the taxpayer.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member knows perfectly well that at this stage of the proceedings I cannot say what it

will cost the taxpayer. What is happening now is that we are setting up a commission that will make its recommendations, and any necessary appropriations will then come before this Parliament.

Mr. Coumbe: Out of general revenue?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: All right. The honourable member will have the opportunity to debate that matter. I cannot sign a Governor's Warrant for the setting up of this commission without a line to refer to.

Mr. Coumbe: That's all very well.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Honourable members here will in due course have an estimate of the amount that they will be asked to vote upon.

Mr. Coumbe: You should have deferred introducing the Bill until you knew what it would cost.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member obviously has never heard of the chicken and the egg. This is just the sort of thing we heard when we introduced the lotteries commission. People then asked, "What will the lotteries commission cost us?" What it has cost the State is a revenue of \$3,000,000 a year! I have never heard such nonsense. How can I possibly give an estimate of the cost until a commission has been appointed and made recommendations to me? I cannot bind the commission on what it will do: that would be an impossibility. In due course the necessary appropriations will come before Parliament and they can be debated then.

Mr. HALL: But the commission cannot operate without money. I see that my friends opposite are braying at the moon. The Premier has said he has never heard such nonsense, yet he cannot tell us one thing about the cost. The member for Mount Gambier by his braying does nothing to support the Premier. I can only assume that this is a piece of Socialist policy, and that the cost does not matter to the Government. Does any honourable member think that a proposal like this, which is a departure from normal Government policy, a departure into active Government trading in the community, should take place without any idea of the costs that will be incurred? It is reasonable that the Premier should produce some of those costs. I suppose he will not, but I should like this measure to be deferred until he can produce a rough estimate of what the State is up for. This is not the way to run the financial side of Government. I can only voice my protest, which I do.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: We all know that the Leader protests frequently. He protested a little earlier this evening that we had lower insurance costs in this State than New South Wales and Victoria had, for instance. He said that those States had State insurance offices and we did not, and this was the difference. This is the sort of argument he puts forward.

Mr. Coumbe: It was not a protest; he was stating a fact.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If the honourable member is supporting his Leader in the fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, he should look at the facts. In New South Wales and Victoria there are jury assessments of damages and, because of that, the cost of insurance in those States is higher because the assessments of damages are markedly higher than they are in the Supreme Court of South Australia. Any member of the legal profession or anyone associated with the insurance business would tell him that.

Mr. RODDA: The Premier's statement that the Government insurance office will not be the smallest or biggest insurance office in the State indicates that he has considered what type of office it will be, but he cannot tell us what funds will need to be provided for it. Can the Premier tell us what he intends regarding the use of Public Service officers in the State insurance office?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: From time to time various Government instrumentalities, such as the State Bank and the Superannuation Fund of South Australia, are given the use of an officer of a particular department for a particular purpose. Because of that practice, the provision has been included here. However, the Auditor-General has always required (and this is standard practice) that the cost of making that officer available be charged to the instrumentality that requires his services. The Auditor-General will require that to be done in this case, and I have a report from the Under Treasurer setting that out.

Clause passed.

Clauses 13 and 14 passed.

Clause 15—"Guarantee by State."

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Can the Premier tell the Committee whether he foresees the type of financing that will be made available to the commission, and the terms regarding interest and repayment?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If we provided money to the commission, I would expect our normal lending rate to be met, and the

commission would be charged (as would anyone else) our normal rate of interest at the time for any advance made. At times, advances are made to instrumentalities, and the honourable member knows that we make advances to the State Bank for particular purposes. Indeed, he will hear of one such advance soon in an area that I am sure will be of particular interest to him. We will expect the commission to meet the same terms as are met by other instrumentalities.

Mr. EASTICK: I ask the Premier whether it is intended that any of the insurance that the State office subsequently writes will be laid off with other insurance companies, or whether it will be totally a charge against Consolidated Revenue. It is the normal practice to lay off charges between insurance companies where the risk could become a catastrophe, yet there is no mention of anything other than funds being made available from Consolidated Revenue.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: That will be a matter for the commissioners to decide. The term "counter insurance" was originally used in England for that kind of insurance but, because it is not a term normally used here, I consented to its being taken out. It is in the hands of the commissioners whether they recommend laying off insurance in that way, but I expect that they will do so.

Mr. EASTICK: Would this matter be dealt with under regulations, not under the Act?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is simply an administrative act by the commissioners: regulations will not be required.

Clause passed.

Clause 16 passed.

Clause 17—"Contributions in lieu of taxation, etc."

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

In subclause (1) after "commission" fourth occurring to strike out "in respect of its insurance business".

If my amendment is carried the subclause will then be reasonable. To leave in the words proposed to be struck out is not a fair approach to the competitive side of the insurance business. Clause 16 provides that the commission may, with the approval of the Treasurer, invest in real property. The commission may very well accumulate large sums that may, in turn, earn further large sums. I do not see why these funds should be omitted from any taxation obligations which, of course, would apply

to a private company. The phrase "in respect of its insurance business" restricts the obligation of the commission to pay taxation.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I cannot agree to the amendment, because I see no reason for striking out the words "in respect of its insurance business". This is the basic business of the commission. Regarding money that the commission may have on deposit with the Treasurer and money that the commission may have lent to Government institutions or to semi-governmental authorities, I really do not think I need to see that some moneys are paid into the State Treasury in respect of that return. I point out to the honourable member that the present wording is the same as was used in an amendment moved by the Opposition when this Bill was presented by the previous Labor Government. We accepted that wording, and I do not think it is unreasonable. The honourable member now wants to go further.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: If the Government insurance office earns income from a building it owns that income is not in respect of its insurance business but is in respect of its investment in real property. The obligation to pay tax on that income should not be excluded.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If funds were earned in this way they would go into the commission's general funds, which would be available to develop the State. Obviously, other State Government insurance offices have contributed heavily to funds that are used for developmental purposes. If these investment incomes are available they will be used to develop the State and provide us with capital moneys, and they should not be taxed for revenue purposes. We have made reasonable provisions for some contributions towards the revenue of the State, but we cannot go further.

Mr. HALL: The member for Alexandra is not saying that the money will be lost to the State. He is suggesting that the commission should be on an equal competitive basis with any other insurance office, and if it is successful it should pay charges on its investments in the same way as other insurance companies pay charges on their investments. That would present an entirely fair competitive situation, but if this is not the case the Government insurance office will gain an increasing advantage, because it will have a significant amount of non-taxable income. Whatever is done with that money, I make it clear that the member for Alexandra is not suggesting that funds should

be diverted from the State, but is suggesting that there should be a proper accounting of the manner in which the commission's funds are built up, so that it will not have an unfair advantage because it is being shepherded by the State Government.

The Committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes (18)—Messrs. Allen, Becker, Brookman (teller), Carnie, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Ferguson, Gunn, Hall, Mathwin, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (25)—Messrs. Broomhill, Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Clark, Corcoran, Crimes, Curren, Dunstan (teller), Groth, Harrison, Hoggood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, McRae, Payne, Ryan, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wells.

Majority of 7 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause passed.

Clause 18—"Profits be paid into reserve and Consolidated Revenue."

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I move:
After "Chairman" to insert "and".

This amendment is consequential on my principal amendment, which is to strike out the reference in this clause to the Auditor-General. Included in the several duties given to the Auditor-General in clause 19 is the duty to present an annual report to Parliament. Yet, in clause 18, he will be involved in a matter of business judgment as to the amount of reserve to be put aside. That judgment could well be wrong for various reasons. If the Auditor-General were wrong in that judgment, he would be in the position of having to report to Parliament on his own business decision. I do not think this is a good thing. It would be better to leave the Auditor-General out of this decision altogether, so that he would then carry out his traditional and correct role in a matter such as this of reporting to Parliament as an auditor, and the judgment would be left to the people who should know about it, namely, the Chairman of the commission and the Under Treasurer.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: With great respect to the honourable member, I cannot see that there is any conflict of interest here in the Auditor-General's proposed duties. The Auditor-General has to report on the commission. At the end of any financial year he must investigate the workings of the commission, its

books of account, and property and, at the end of that financial year, he has to join the Chairman and Under Treasurer in recommending the proper amount of reserves. I cannot see any conflict of interest whatever in his recommending the appropriate amount of reserves and in his investigating the commission and reporting to Parliament. Something may come to his notice as part of the necessary process he will undertake, and I think it is a safeguard to the public that the Auditor-General, an officer independent of the Administration and responsible directly to Parliament, should have a voice in saying how much should be paid to reserves and in reporting to Parliament if the other members have disagreed with him.

Mr. McANANEY: I support the amendment, as I think that what is proposed in clause 18 is wrong in principle, the member for Alexandra having adequately stated the reasons why. The Auditor-General should not have to make a decision and then have to report to Parliament. I do not think this procedure would be carried out in any other form of business. The Auditor-General should be able to make an independent report whether he considers the reserves to be adequate. It is wrong for the Government to get away from the basic principle accepted in general business.

Mr. McKee: Why is it wrong?

Mr. McANANEY: I have already explained. In business affairs, an independent auditor is engaged.

Mr. Burdon: This happens in the five other States.

Mr. McANANEY: The Government should not move away from this recognized principle.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Clause 19—"Accounts and audit."

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I move:

To strike out subclause (3) and insert the following new subclause:

(3) The Auditor-General shall have and may exercise, in respect of the moneys and accounts of the commission and the persons dealing with the commission, the same powers as are vested by the Audit Act, 1921, as amended, in the Auditor-General in respect of public moneys and the public accounts.

This amendment has been drafted at the request of the Auditor-General, who pointed out that, although the clause is in the same terms as in the Bill when previously introduced, the provisions of section 41 of the Audit Act should not be invoked in relation to the powers of the Auditor-General as those provisions apply only to municipal corporations, district councils and other public corporations receiving

aid out of public moneys when the Auditor-General is required to audit their accounts by the Chief Secretary. The new subclause, however, invokes the general powers of the Auditor-General in relation to any audit of the commission's accounts. In consequence, this brings the matter into line with the Audit Act more properly than the original draft did.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (20 and 21) and title passed.

Bill reported with amendments. Committee's report adopted.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 4. Page 466.)

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): This Bill gives effect to a policy subscribed to by both Parties at the last election or subsequent thereto. In fact, this Government was then following hard on the heels of the previous Government in this matter. At that time the subject was discussed in terms of the State's Loan funds and what effect the amount diverted under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement would have on the total funds available, and it was considered that perhaps we could increase the maximum loan to \$9,500. However, as the State was not represented at the then forthcoming talks in Canberra, it was considered prudent to provide for a figure of \$9,000.

Subsequent events have proved that probably this figure could be higher. The Commonwealth Government has provided a significant amount of funds from revenue resources to supplement State finances, and this action has greatly reduced the burden of Loan funds on the general revenue. In addition, the State Government ended the financial year with a higher surplus than had been forecast. It seems that the amount could have been increased by another \$500 without reducing the amount of loans that would be available by a diversion of greater funds to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.

Be that as it may, the Bill makes a welcome move and the Opposition will advocate an increase in the amount as soon as State accounts show that we can bear it, because price increases that are occurring and must continue to occur consequent upon wage and salary increases are increasing the burden, on the

people who are having houses built. These people have not sufficient money to put down a deposit that will bridge the gap between a normal loan of this kind, with funds at concession interest rates, and a loan at higher rates that must prevail with bridging finance. As the proposal in the Bill originated in the policy of the previous Government, we support it and commend the present Government for implementing it. I know it will have a beneficial effect and I look forward to the time when we can consider increasing the amount further.

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

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 4. Page 467.)

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): It is very significant that we have the Government following Opposition policy twice in the one evening. I again commend the Government for adopting a futuristic attitude that will have the same results for the borrower. Under this Bill the amount that may be borrowed has been increased from \$8,000 to \$9,000. I may not often be able to repeat my commendation during this session unless the Government sees fit to follow the lead given. I repeat that I look forward to the day when the limit will be further raised to assist in financing housing for settlers.

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

ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 4. Page 467.)

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Alexandra): I do not object to this small Bill, but my only complaint is that the second reading explanation of the Attorney-General, who introduced the Bill, is not available in the *Hansard* pull. I have a copy of that speech, but I do not know whether it is the same as the explanation. It seems to me that the second reading explanation sets out what the Bill does but, in some instances, does not argue why it does it. I have not studied the explanation closely enough to work from the principal Act to ascertain all the reasons for this, but the explanation states that the Bill removes a restriction upon the power of a judge of the Supreme Court to order that administration

issue notwithstanding that the prospective administrator has not entered into an administration bond under section 31 of the principal Act. It does not say why that should happen but, from what I understand, that is satisfactory. The same applies to other provisions of the Bill, to which I do not object.

However, I am pleased to know that Latin is no longer a compulsory Matriculation subject for law students. When considering the Bill and the principal Act I discovered the following words were included: *sui juris, inter vivos,*

mutatis mutandis, ex parte, ad litem, bona fide, subpoena duces tecum, and subpoena ad testificandum. The sooner the law turns to English for accurate and clear expression the sooner will democracy be fully satisfied. I support the Bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 8.31 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, August 6, at 2 p.m.