

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, August 12, 1970

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

### MEMBERS' CONDUCT

The SPEAKER: Before calling for questions, I should like to direct attention to the misconduct of many members in this Chamber. First, I notice that members walk across the Chamber without acknowledging the Chair, and this must cease. Secondly, the practice of members standing in the aisles with their back to the Chair is not a proper practice and must also cease. Thirdly, walking between the Speaker and the mace before the mace is placed on the table is another practice that must stop. Finally, immediately the Speaker stands, a member must resume his seat, and at all times honourable members must address the Chair and not address each other across the Chamber.

### QUESTIONS

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOTING

Mr. HALL: The Government (I am not sure whether this involves the Minister of Local Government or the Premier) has announced that substantial amendments will be made to the Local Government Act that will include alterations to the form of voting for council and municipal elections. In today's *News*, referring to this matter, the following appears:

Only some 150 people in Adelaide City Council's richest ward would be entitled to vote if State Parliament accepts the Government's adult suffrage proposals for municipal elections. These are residents, building caretakers and live-in janitors. Hindmarsh ward (wealthiest of the city's six wards) includes North Terrace, Rundle and Grenfell Streets, and parts of East Adelaide. Almost 3,000 existing Hindmarsh ward voters would be disfranchised under Government voting plans because they represent commercial property owners.

I draw the attention of the Minister of Local Government to the last part of that statement, because it is obvious to everyone that the major shopping and commercial centre of Adelaide would contain few residents, yet the owners of the businesses in this area would be intimately tied to the policies of local government concerning the future operations of their businesses. This impending change has raised and will continue to raise considerable criticism on the basis that people who are intimately involved with an almost exclusively commercial

district would be disfranchised and would not have a say in local government policies affecting their businesses. Because of the serious consequences that could affect this multi-million-dollar commercial undertaking, which has successfully existed in Adelaide for many years, will the Minister take this matter back to his Cabinet and have this whole issue reviewed?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Dealing first with the last of the Leader's series of questions, I can say that I do not need to take the matter back to Cabinet, because it has not yet been to Cabinet. However, it will certainly go to Cabinet before it is presented to the House. I think that the Leader has highlighted one of the important differences between his thinking and the thinking of the Government. He referred to 150 people in the richest ward of the city of Adelaide and to the multi-million-dollar investments contained within that area, and this highlights the basic difference between the attitude of his Party and that of ours: we believe in the rights of people as individuals; we do not think that a person's rights increase with his worldly wealth. We believe that the lowliest and poorest citizen in the State should have an equal right in the governing of this State with a millionaire or with others who possess great wealth. We think that each person should have an equal say. The Leader's suggestion that 3,000 people will be disfranchised is completely untrue. These people will not be disfranchised: they will be given the right to cast a vote for local government. When the details of the implementation of our policy (which received the overwhelming endorsement of the people of South Australia) are finally worked out, people may have the right to nominate the area in which they choose to cast their vote; they may be able to use either their residential address or their business address. This alternative may well be included in the proposal to be put before the House. As I said earlier, the matter has not been brought before Cabinet, as many details have to be worked out. In due course it will be taken to Cabinet, and I am sure that the Bill presented to the House will cater for the needs of the community and most certainly will be in line with the policy that an overwhelming majority of the people endorsed on May 30.

Mr. HALL: I am surprised that the Minister does not seem to differentiate between the electoral responsibilities of State Government and those of local government, and I am concerned at the loss of confidence that commercial and industrial interests may well have in this

State if they are disfranchised in the particular form of local government in which they are franchised at present. Because of the developmental overtones and undertones which are involved and which will flow from the Government's policy (because it is not recognized generally that the voting rights that commercial and industrial interests have are working against the proper electoral representation in State and Commonwealth Governments that the citizens of this State have), before the Government adopts a policy on the matter will the Minister refer it to the Industrial Development Advisory Council for its views on this question of the significant alterations to council voting rights that he has in mind?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The premise on which the Leader asks the question is completely without foundation. I repeat that no-one will be disfranchised if the Government's policy is adopted in relation to local government. In fact, the position will be to the contrary, because thousands of people who are now denied the right of selecting or electing people to represent them in local government will be given the right for the first time to have a say in the affairs of local government.

Mr. Hall: What about replying to the question?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: What about the Leader's keeping quiet, and I will do just that.

Mr. Hall: I am waiting.

The SPEAKER: Order! There shall be no interjections across the floor of the House.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I repeat that no-one will be disfranchised as a result of the adoption of Labor's policy. That policy was clearly spelt out in single-syllable words during the recent election campaign. The Leader had the opportunity then to express the views he is now trying to express and I have no doubt that he did so. The net result was that he and his Party obtained only just over 40 per cent of the votes, whereas Labor obtained 54 per cent. I am therefore fortified in my views that the people of South Australia have endorsed this policy, and I need no endorsement other than that of the people of South Australia, whom I regard as being of supreme importance.

Mr. HALL: Will the Minister now answer my question whether he will refer to the Industrial Development Advisory Council the proposed changes in local government voting procedures?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Having given an answer to that question previously this after-

noon, I do not think there is any need to repeat it.

Mr. RODDA: I understood the Minister to say that under the new local government franchise a person would have only one vote and that he would be able to elect whether to vote in respect of his place of residence or in respect of his business address. Will candidates be able to offer themselves for any position in local government throughout the State, irrespective of their business address or place of residence?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I think I have the import of the question correctly although, unfortunately, the honourable member put so much preamble into it that was untrue and was not what I had previously said. I did not say that a person would be able to elect the area where he desired to be enrolled: I said that this was a matter that could well be considered when the details of the Bill were finally worked out, and I think I made it plain that the details had not been worked out. This is only one of many factors that can and probably will be considered. On the qualifications of a candidate, there is at present a restriction that ties the ratepayer to the ward in which he owns property, but members must appreciate that the policy of this Government is a new concept. In other words, as I told the Leader, we are not concerning ourselves with the wealth of the people: we are concerning ourselves with the people as citizens of this State, and the tie which currently exists of having to have ratable property within a ward will no longer apply within the concept of giving the right to people as citizens to elect a government rather than restricting that right to people who have wealth in this community.

Mr. WARDLE: As I do not want to misunderstand the Minister, I wish to know whether eligibility to vote in a poll concerning capital expenditure within a local government area is to be based on the assessed value of the property and whether, therefore, the number of votes is calculated according to the assessment. Will the Government's policy be that votes based on assessed values of property will no longer continue and that there will be, as it were, a basis of one vote one value? If that is to be the policy, will the Minister of Local Government say whether this was recommended by the Local Government Act Revision Committee?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am afraid the honourable member, like his colleagues, is a little confused on the whole issue.

*Members interjecting:*

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am sorry that his confusion is causing some amusement; I should have thought that members opposite would sympathize a little with the honourable member rather than laugh at him. The position is as I put it earlier: the Government is currently considering the details associated with implementing the policy, which has been endorsed by the people of South Australia. Numerous details have to be worked out, including the question whether people will be able to have a choice of enrolment, the question of any calculation necessary for election, and the matter relating to polls of rate-payers. All of these matters are details that have to be worked out in the concept of the overall policy of the right of the individual person as a citizen of this State rather than to be worked out on the basis of his getting three votes because he has \$3,000 or five votes because he has \$5,000. The policy of this Party is not to recognize the wealth of a person or to give that person the added right of cancelling out the effect of the poorer citizen's vote. This is not democracy, and the Bill will contain no undemocratic principles; I assure the honourable member of that. However, all of these details will be made known to the House at the appropriate time, when the Bill is introduced.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Can the Minister say whether or not the Local Government Act Revision Committee recommended compulsory voting at local government elections?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It did not recommend it.

**COURT DELAYS**

Mr. McKEE: Over the past few weeks, I have received several inquiries from doctors, and officers of St. John Ambulance Brigade branches, about accounts amounting to many thousands of dollars that have been outstanding for 18 months, and up to two years in some cases, owing to delays occurring in the courts hearing these cases. Also, I understand that accounts for many hundreds of thousands of dollars owing to many hospitals throughout the State are outstanding. Can the Attorney-General say whether any proposal to speed up the work of the courts is being considered?

The Hon. L. J. KING: The honourable member has referred to a real problem that arises because most victims of road accidents who suffer serious personal injury are unable to earn money during the period of their

incapacity and are therefore unable to meet medical and hospital expenses until their cases have been disposed of in court. The previous Labor Government sought to deal with this problem and other related problems by means of an amendment to the Supreme Court Act that provided for interim assessments of damages, a system by which liability would be determined before the injured person was fully recovered and, on the determination of the liability, the judge could direct that expenses incurred, out-of-pocket expenses and loss of earnings could be paid to the plaintiff pending the final determination of the case. To some extent the system has been rendered ineffective by the long delays that now occur in the Supreme Court and the Local Court before cases are heard. It seems to me that the answer to the problem raised by the honourable member is to take effective action to reduce these delays, thereby rendering the interim damages procedure as effective as it was intended to be. The Government intends to appoint more judges to the Local and District Criminal Courts so that on and from September 1 six more judges will be engaged in hearing cases, including the two who have already been appointed. It is hoped that from that date a vigorous onslaught can be made on court lists, and that the transfer of jurisdiction from the Supreme Court will enable that court to reduce significantly the size of its list. I hope that, as soon as the lists are brought reasonably under control, I shall be able to initiate discussions with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Senior Judge of the Local Court in order to define ways and means of making the interim damages procedure more effective. I hope that by the end of this year we will have reached the position where, at a relatively early stage after an accident, an order can be obtained so that hospital accounts can be paid as they are incurred.

Mr. PAYNE: A constituent of mine has approached me about what seems to be a long delay in her divorce action. Over 12 months ago, her solicitor informed her that all the necessary preliminaries had been completed and that her case was on the court list, but it has still not come up for hearing. Can the Attorney-General offer any hope of such long delays being reduced soon?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Of course, I cannot comment on the case referred to by the honourable member, as I have not had the opportunity of investigating the relevant facts. I think I can only repeat what I said in answer to the previous question: the Government will appoint four additional judges

to the new court in the next fortnight. That will make a total of six judges who will commence hearings on September 1. The result of this will be a considerable reduction in the work load of the Supreme Court, the work being transferred to the new judiciary. I hope that this will have the effect that the Supreme Court list, including the matrimonial list, will be substantially reduced in the next few months.

#### NORTHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. WELLS: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question regarding the acquisition of land adjoining the Northfield High School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Recently when 20 acres of land under the control of the Minister of Agriculture was made available as a site for a technical college at Northfield, it was agreed that no further calls would be made on the Minister of Agriculture and the Agriculture Department for such land for educational purposes. However, I am pleased to be able to inform the honourable member that my colleague has been most co-operative in allowing a further area of about 7½ acres to be released because of the problems being experienced by the Northfield High School.

#### TRADING HOURS

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My question concerns the difficult problem of trading hours in South Australia, with which the Minister of Labour and Industry is apparently dealing, as I was at the time of the change of Government. I notice in this morning's paper that the Minister is reported as having said that a statement of policy could be made on the matter during the coming week.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Which week would that be?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: During the present week, which I understand would be from now on. Can the Minister announce that policy now? If he cannot, will he assure the House that he will make a statement in this Chamber, as I am sure he will agree that this is the appropriate forum in which to make it?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: True, I am examining this matter, which is, I regret, one of the problems which I inherited when I first entered Cabinet and which the previous Government was unable to solve. I assure the honourable member that any announcement to be made on this matter will most certainly be made in this Chamber.

#### WINE TAX

Mr. CURREN: I noticed in this morning's press an article headed "Wine tax report angers growers" in which Mr. Preece, the President of the Federal Grapegrowers' Council of Australia, commented on the reported plan by the Commonwealth Government to impose a 15c a bottle tax on wine. He said that, if such a tax were imposed, it would do far more than anger growers: it would eventually put them on the breadline by inhibiting sales to such an extent that large surpluses of wine and, more important, wine grapes would occur. The present stability and prosperity of the industry dates from the time when wine-grape prices were first fixed by order under the Prices Act. As wine-grape growing is the only primary industry not now suffering serious economic difficulty and pressing for financial assistance from the various Governments, any move to alter the present situation should be resisted by all who would be adversely affected. As members fully realize, South Australia makes 68 per cent of the wine and 75 per cent of the brandy produced in Australia. I was informed today by Mr. Preece of actions taken on behalf of growers and winemakers by himself, the Wine and Brandy Producers Association and the Wine Board of Australia to bring to the notice of the Prime Minister, the Commonwealth Treasurer and the Minister for Primary Industry the disastrous consequences that would result from any tax imposition on wine. Will the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Premier, take urgent measures to bring our concern to the notice of the Prime Minister and his Government?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: First, this matter has only been reported as likely to be included in the Budget to be brought down by the Commonwealth Government next Tuesday, but I do think the reports seem to have some basis. From that point of view I think that everyone in this House, both Government and Opposition members, should be concerned about this important question because, as the honourable member says, over two-thirds of the wine produced in Australia is produced in this State and, although most of the wine produced in South Australia is produced in the honourable member's district, anything affecting this industry affects not only the honourable member's district but the whole State. I think that the steps that have been taken by the wine grape growers have been properly taken and they certainly must register, and I hope they will register, with the Commonwealth

Government because at the moment such grape-growers do not receive any subsidy (and this is one of the few primary industries that is not receiving a subsidy), nor are they seeking tariff protection. However, I am sure that, if this impost is placed on them, it will not be long before they do seek the assistance that other primary producers find necessary to seek from the Government. I think it would be right and proper for the Government to contact the Prime Minister, express its concern about the report, and indicate that the Government is concerned to see that this does not happen because of the effect it would have on this most important industry in South Australia.

#### BREAD

Mr. COUMBE: On July 16, when I asked the Minister of Labour and Industry a question about bread baking, he said he would reply during the following week. This, I believe, indicated that he was still discussing the matter. I originally asked the Minister whether Government policy meant that no-one could have fresh bread at weekends. I also asked what would be the position of bakers just outside the present metropolitan area who were forced to bake at weekends because of the inroads into their business made during the week by the big city interests. In reply, the Minister indicated that he was conducting negotiations with sections of the baking industry and that he would inform me further. Has the Minister had further discussions on this question and can he give me further information?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I am pleased to be able to inform the honourable member that discussions with all interested sections of the baking industry have been completed and that I believe we have reached the stage where a five-day baking week can be introduced in this State without real hardship being suffered by country bakers as a result of the inroads into their districts that the member has spoken about. As a result of this, I am at present preparing legislation which I hope will be before the House soon. When the Bill is introduced, the honourable member will be aware in detail of the actions we intend to take.

#### INVASION OF PRIVACY

Mr. HOPGOOD: This morning's press reports that the New South Wales Minister of Justice is asking for a national inquiry into the invasion of privacy by computers, and I assume that he is thinking particularly of the

credit field. Will the Attorney-General refer to Cabinet the necessity of co-operating with the New South Wales Government and other State Governments in this matter?

The Hon. L. J. KING: The Government, being interested in the matter of intrusions into privacy and in the protection of the privacy of the citizen, is currently considering legislation along these lines. I will further consider the matter of co-operating in a national inquiry, as apparently this has been suggested by the New South Wales Minister of Justice.

#### KARMEL COMMITTEE

Mrs. STEELE: The previous Government, in implementing one of the many promises it made and kept when it assumed office in 1968, appointed an expert committee to inquire into all aspects of education in South Australia from pre-school to tertiary level, the Chairman of this committee being the Vice-Chancellor of the Flinders University (Professor Karmel), who has more or less given his name to the committee. When we went out of office, it was expected that the report would be in the hands of the Minister of Education in the latter part of this year, in about September. Will the Minister of Education say when he expects the work of the committee to be completed? Realizing that some parts of the committee's report were ready for print some months ago, I ask also whether, when the final report has been submitted to the Minister, it will be printed and made available to members, many of whom on this side are particularly interested in it.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: When I first became Minister of Education I was informed by Professor Karmel that the full report would be ready to go to the printer at the end of December, or some time in December, this year. I presume that would have been the position that applied in the last month or two of the previous Government. Certain parts of the report, including statistical information, are ready to go to the printer now. In addition, Professor Karmel has promised me that certain sections of the report in which I expressed a special interest, because of the need to get ahead with urgent planning in certain areas, will be in my hands at the end of September, although those parts of the report will not be available generally for publication at that time.

We are making arrangements for the printing of the report, and these arrangements involve the circulation of copies to all members of Parliament and to other people as well.

In addition, copies will be sold to members of the public. I believe that this is a valuable committee, and I hope that its report on education in South Australia will be a standard point of reference for future changes in education for many years to come.

#### PORT ADELAIDE TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Mr. RYAN: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I recently asked about future road plans involving land intended to be used as a playing arena for the Port Adelaide Girls Technical High School?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The playing field proposed for the Port Adelaide Girls Technical High School is not directly affected by the road proposals in the area; however, the road connecting with the Bower Road causeway which will ultimately link with Grand Junction Road passes along the southern boundary. It is expected that in future the major roads in this area will carry a larger volume of traffic and, to minimize the need for children to cross these roads, it would be desirable for access to the area to be via a proposed extension of Station Place.

#### ABATTOIRS

Mr. GUNN: During the last week I have received complaints about the operation of the Port Lincoln abattoirs. It seems that, because of inefficiency, the abattoirs cannot kill many sheep, and this has in some way contributed to the low prices that farmers are receiving for their stock. As the Minister of Works may be aware that at Cleve and Wirrulla particularly low prices have been received, will he consult with the Minister of Agriculture to see whether action can be taken to remedy this situation?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes.

Mr. WARDLE: Has the Minister of Works obtained from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to my recent question about the inspection fee that applies to meat from country abattoirs?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: My colleague states that service fees received on meat entering the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board's area from country abattoirs during the year ended June 30, 1970 (53 weeks), amounted to \$60,850. The board's modified costing records do not segregate inspection costs on meat from country works. Service fees are payable, under permits granted by the Minister pursuant to powers contained in the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act, to country meatworks registered for export

operations to compensate the board for the supervision of premises where meats are prepared for sale for human consumption.

#### CARTAGE RATES

Mr. EVANS: In the absence of the Premier, has the Minister of Works, as Deputy Premier, a reply to my recent question about the prices paid by quarry proprietors in this State for the cartage of crushed rock?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Prices Commissioner has reported that assurances have been received from the quarry operators, including the company apparently referred to by the honourable member, that the principles laid down in the prices order setting out delivery charges will be observed. Inquiries made and records examined tend to confirm these assurances. However, further checks will be made. At the present time, discussions are taking place within the industry with a view to rationalising delivery charges and simplifying the methods of calculating payments to carters.

#### PORT LINCOLN DEEP SEA PORT

Mr. CARNIE: Can the Minister of Marine say what is the Government's policy on the establishment of a deep sea port on Eyre Peninsula?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Of course, the honourable member is aware that it has been decided that the deep sea port on Eyre Peninsula will be at Port Lincoln, and I take it that that is what he is referring to. By way of reply to a question the other day, I reported to the House that the matter had yet to be referred to the Public Works Committee (the honourable member will understand that this is necessary, owing to the expenditure involved). I had hoped that money for this work to commence could have been placed on the Loan Estimates this financial year, but this was not possible, as the honourable member is already aware. However, the undertaking has been given that work will commence during next financial year, when funds will be made available. The work will be spread over a period of, I think, three years, the cost being about \$6,000,000. Therefore, if the honourable member wants to know what is the policy of the Government on this matter, all I can say is that he knows the decision that has been made. The Government has no thought of altering the decision in any way: we are committed to it and we intend to proceed with this port. An argument could be developed that we are not proceeding

quickly enough but, as we will explain a little later, there are reasons for this.

### TRAVEL CONCESSIONS

Mr. GROTH: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on July 30 about travel concessions for pensioners?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I have here a schedule setting out the adult and child and pensioner fare scales of public transport undertakings in each Australian capital city, and the percentage rebate under adult cash fares allowed to pensioners for each sectional fare. I will make this schedule available to the honourable member. An examination of the schedule will show that, with the exception of Hobart, pensioners are charged child fare rates in each capital city and these child fare rates are usually fixed at 50 per cent of adult fares, or the nearest ticket value below 50 per cent. This means that as a general rule the rebate varies from 50 per cent to 70 per cent. In Hobart and Launceston, pensioners are charged a flat fare of 4c. This is less than child fare rates and results in a rebate to pensioners of from 50 per cent to 84 per cent of adult cash fares. With regard to concessions on railways, pensioners are charged child fare rates, which are 50 per cent of adult fares, on all State railway systems and on the Commonwealth Railways.

### POLITICAL LEVY

Mr. MATHWIN: Regarding a question I asked recently, the Minister of Labour and Industry said that, if I made the question clearer, he would be pleased to reply. I was not alluding to any payment to the Labor Party by unions but was referring specifically to the individual deductions made from workers' pay packets under the written name of a political levy. Will the Minister use his influence to allow workers to contract in rather than to contract out?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I think I understand what the honourable member is getting at today. As I think I told him previously, the matter he speaks about is a matter between members of the union concerned and the union itself. The honourable member will probably know that the Commonwealth Industrial Court requires unions to register their rules and, if it thought that it was improper for a union to have rules that imposed levies on members, it would not register those rules. I repeat that this is a matter between the union and the employees.

### HOUGHTON WATER SUPPLY

Mrs. BYRNE: I understand that the problem that a constituent of mine (Mr. D. F. Dodd of Houghton) had to get a water supply for his new house, which is within a zoned watershed, received considerable publicity last evening on a television public affairs programme. The Minister of Works will recall that, on June 23, I wrote to him making representations about this matter on behalf of my constituent. Although I received an interim reply on June 29, as yet I have not received a final reply. Will the Minister comment on the outcome of Mr. Dodd's application for a water supply?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: First, I wish to comment on what evidently took place last evening on a programme which I think is called *Newsbeat*. I understand that Mr. Dodd was questioned on that programme by an interviewer about his dissatisfaction with the Engineering and Water Supply Department's failing to supply an indirect water service to his house. True, I received a letter from the honourable member about this and another letter from the Premier, to whom Mr. Dodd wrote as well. Rather ironically, only yesterday I approved the provision of an indirect service to Mr. Dodd's house. I am rather surprised that Mr. Dodd was not prepared to wait for a reply from his own member, whom he had approached about the matter, or from the Premier, before proceeding to blast the department generally last evening on this programme. Although I did not see the programme, this morning I was told by my officers what took place. They, too, were amazed that Mr. Dodd had not given the department the opportunity to investigate this matter and to reply to his request. The matter had taken some time to investigate because the circumstances were rather unusual. Verbal promises had evidently been made, but it was hard to check on them. A doubt whether they had been made was one of the major reasons why an indirect service was given, although this action could be construed as a breach of policy. I understand that every consideration was given to Mr. Dodd in what was a fairly difficult problem, which has now been solved to his satisfaction. I suppose that, if I had been a small-minded person, because Mr. Dodd did what he did last evening, and as no-one was aware of my decision, I could have reversed it, but I am not that sort of person, and I intend that Mr. Dodd shall receive his indirect service as was intended before he appeared on the television programme. I resent the criticism of the department by Mr. Dodd and by channel 9.

### MANNAHILL POLICE

Mr. ALLEN: A letter from a constituent at Mannahill states that it is rumoured in the district that, when the present police officer is transferred, the station will be closed and no replacement appointed. As people in the district are concerned about this situation, will the Attorney-General ask the Chief Secretary whether there is any truth in this rumour?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will ask the Chief Secretary for a reply to this question and let the honourable member have it.

### FLUORIDATION

Mr. LANGLEY: During the last session much debate took place for and against fluoridating our water supply, but the legislation was finally passed. Since then several dates have been suggested from which the scheme will operate. Last week I saw a young person whose family had perfect teeth, and his first teeth were excellent also, but his second teeth suffered from cavities, because he had formerly lived in a country that had fluoridated its water supply. I am concerned that this could happen to children in this State, as his teeth are in poor condition. Can the Minister of Works say whether a date has been fixed on which fluoride will be added to our water supply, or has the Government reconsidered whether its introduction is necessary?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I take it from the way the honourable member has framed his question that he opposes introducing fluoride into our water supply. I do not intend to canvass this question, because I know of a variety of opinions about this controversial problem. The Government is proceeding with its plans to fluoridate Adelaide's water supply and, from memory, I think it will be operating from the first week in September this year.

Mr. Millhouse: So long as we don't have to buy any more pills. We keep on running out of them waiting for fluoridation.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Well, that is up to the honourable member to decide. There has been some delay because of the late arrival of equipment, but this should be received shortly. The metropolitan water supply will have fluoride added to it in September, but before that date the public will be given ample warning so that they can stop taking the pill.

### ST. LEONARDS SCHOOL

Mr. BECKER: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my question of July 30 about the new building at St. Leonards Primary School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: St. Leonards is included in the list of schools which I announced yesterday are to receive open-unit buildings. In addition, funds have been approved for the conversion of an existing building, to form a modern resource centre. This work is expected to proceed shortly. As the solid-construction building seems to be structurally sound, architects and engineers will examine the building soon with a view to upgrading it so that it will provide modern teaching spaces.

### DROUGHT RELIEF

Mr. McANANEY: I understand that during the last drought in South Australia we did not receive as much in grants from the Commonwealth Government as did other States that suffered similar droughts. As a drought situation seems to be developing in certain areas of this State, will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Agriculture how much money was advanced for relief by the Commonwealth Government to South Australia during the last drought period; how much money was advanced to primary producers as grants or loans; what money is owed at present by primary producers to the Government; and how much money, if any, is available for drought assistance in respect of applications made now?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to obtain this information from the Minister of Lands, who administers this fund, as the honourable member would know, and not the Minister of Agriculture. The honourable member said that this State received a smaller grant from the Commonwealth Government than other States did during the 1967 drought. I point out to the honourable member (and I think he may be aware of this) that this money came in two forms: first, as an advance or loan on which no interest was to be paid by the State; and secondly, in the form of a grant for capital works undertaken in areas in order to provide employment for people affected by the drought. This State did not receive as much money from the Commonwealth Government at that time simply because it was probably doing the right thing by the Commonwealth in ensuring that the money that went to councils was properly and effectively spent, far more so than occurred in other States where this grant was exploited. Had we played the same game we probably would have received more money, but the Government would have felt more uneasy about the situation than it feels now. If the



situation develops and this State is again subject to further drought (and God forbid that it is), we shall at least be able to go to the Commonwealth Government with a clear conscience and ask for further assistance. I am not certain whether my colleague is considering declaring any areas in the State as drought areas, but such a declaration would have to be made before relief could be given. I think that funds would be available to the Government now to advance carry-on finance and other assistance that might be required by people who were in difficulties as a result of drought conditions. However, I will obtain a report for the honourable member.

### SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Education a question regarding his announcement, which was reported in the press, that the Education Department intended to spend \$3,000,000 on school replacements, on the basis of a promise he had obtained from the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Minister for Education and Science is reported in this morning's *Advertiser* as having denied that a promise had been made. Part of the report states:

The denial was contained in a prepared statement by the Minister for Education and Science (Mr. Bowen).

The article later continues:

Mr. Bowen said last night he had not seen the full text of Mr. Hudson's statement, but as reported it was inaccurate and misleading. "At no stage during the discussion was any undertaking given that the Commonwealth would provide assistance for school buildings, as suggested in the report of Mr. Hudson's remarks", Mr. Bowen said.

How does the Minister explain that?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The honourable member might realize that misleading reports of statements by people often appear in certain newspapers. In this case it was the *Australian*, which reported me as having said that the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Science had promised \$3,000,000 to South Australia. However, that is just not the case: I did not say that. What is more, Mr. Bowen knows I did not say it, because he was told yesterday exactly what I did say. Members will notice that the Commonwealth Minister was careful about what he said in the press this morning, when implying that the report itself might not have been correct.

I said, first, that I believed the Commonwealth Government had a moral commitment as a consequence of the survey in which it had participated and which had shown such a huge

gap between the requirements of education in the various States and the sum that could be made available to the States for the purpose of erecting school buildings. Secondly, I pointed out on Monday the passage in the Prime Minister's policy speech, where he said:

When the survey is completed, the States and ourselves will discuss the assistance we should each provide to promote the further development of education in all schools.

Thirdly, I point out to the honourable member and others that the Commonwealth Government, through the Prime Minister and again through Mr. Bowen, has said that it does not intend to provide special assistance for the individual States for recurrent education expenditure, because it believes that aspect has been adequately taken care of by the provision of additional income tax reimbursement. Without going into the merits of that belief, I point out that the Commonwealth Government has not as yet said what it intends to do about meeting the capital needs of the individual States. I believe Mr. Bowen was fully aware yesterday that the statement attributed to me in the *Australian* was incorrect and that I merely said I believed the Commonwealth Government was morally committed to making funds available to the individual States for the purpose of additional school buildings and replacement of unsatisfactory accommodation.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Is the report in the *Advertiser* essentially correct?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The main things are.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Did you use the word "promise"?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Not the word "promise".

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Why didn't you deny it yesterday?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yesterday I had not read the statement in the *Advertiser* carefully, and I had not seen the statement in the *Australian*. Members opposite can have it whichever way they like. The plain fact of the matter is that, if the Commonwealth Government has not yet promised to make available money for this purpose, we believe it should be promising to do so, and the sooner it does so the better.

Mr. COUMBE: I assure the Minister that, although my question is supplementary to that asked by the member for Kavel, it is intended to help the Minister in his "unpromising" reply to the question. The Minister knows as well as I that the survey referred to recently was carried out in respect

of both capital and recurrent works for the quinquennial period beginning next year, and that the urgent request made this year on behalf of all States was for capital expenditure alone. The Minister, in replying to the member for Kavel, gave the impression that the Prime Minister, or the Minister for Education and Science, had refused to, or would not, undertake any recurrent expenditure whatsoever. Will the Minister please say where and when this statement was made?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The statement on recurrent expenditure was made by Mr. Gorton at the Premiers' Conference, and a similar statement was made on the *Four Corners* programme on which Mr. Bowen appeared the weekend before last; namely, that concerning recurrent expenditure the Commonwealth Government regarded the problems of the States as adequately covered by the changes that had taken place in the tax reimbursement formula.

Mr. Coumbe: Was he referring to the quinquennial period or not?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That is not clear. I would have to look up the detailed report of the Premiers' Conference to answer that question. But, certainly, concerning this area the attitude that Mr. Gorton expressed was quite clear: the States' recurrent educational problems were adequately covered as a result of the magnanimous gesture of the Commonwealth Government in relation to the tax reimbursement formula, and that was that! This certainly is a position that we do not accept, but that is what I have understood the position to be. Since that time, I have understood that the only chance of obtaining aid this year from the Commonwealth Government for primary and secondary education relates to providing capital payments, and the member for Torrens will appreciate that we have had no reply yet to the special requests made by all States for immediate and urgent financial assistance under this particular heading. He will also appreciate that, if we are to be able to spend additional money, it is necessary to have appropriate plans ready. Again, I point out, as I pointed out to the House yesterday, that it would not be possible to use immediately this year sums received from the Commonwealth Government on some major school-building project at one particular school (say, the replacement of an entire school), because the planning time involved would inevitably mean that we would run out of time and would not be able to spend the money.

That is why we developed these plans for the erection of four-teacher and six-teacher open-space units at 30 primary schools, with a further reserve list relating to another 40 primary schools; and we can easily extend that reserve list to include a further 60 schools. Therefore, the whole idea is that we will be able to go ahead and get the money spent should it be made available. When the Commonwealth Budget is introduced next week, we shall already have used up a month and a half of the financial year.

#### MANOORA RAILWAY DAMS

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on July 29 regarding the railway dams at Manoora?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The railway dams at Manoora provide a water supply to the station facilities and departmental cottages. Their retention for this purpose is necessary. The nominal capacities of the reservoirs are 1,200,000gall. and 7,300,000gall. respectively. At present they hold an aggregate of about 3,500,000gall.

#### PENSIONER FLATS

Mr. WARDLE: Has the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Premier, a reply to the question I asked recently regarding accommodation for elderly people?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The General Manager of the Housing Trust reports:

Over the past three months the trust has carried out a survey concerning aged persons' housing requirements in certain country areas, including Murray Bridge, where certain locally based organizations eligible under the Commonwealth Aged Persons Act have built accommodation for aged pensioners and are at present working towards the provision of even more accommodation for this purpose. I point out that the trust has always encouraged these organizations, both in the metropolitan area and the country, to avail themselves of the Commonwealth subsidy. The trust is aware that a number of aged persons are living alone in their own houses at Murray Bridge, but local authorities have indicated that most of them are reluctant to give up their present houses and move into smaller accommodation specifically built for their needs.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation. The Minister is entitled to be heard.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Thank you, Sir. The report continues:

Mr. Wardle mentions the Commonwealth Government funds that have been made available to assist in the provision of housing for the aged. The money obtained under the

States Grant (Dwellings for Aged Pensioners) Act, 1969, must be applied to the construction of self-contained dwellings designed for the occupation of not more than one person at a time. An eligible pensioner within the meaning of the Act is one who is in receipt of the supplementary rent allowance. In addition to cottage flats being built under the Commonwealth scheme, the trust will continue to provide housing for aged persons with its own funds and in this way flats for aged couples and single persons living alone and not eligible for the rent allowance can be assisted. Trust officers are now collecting and collating additional information concerning housing requirements in 10 country towns and further investigation will be carried out at Murray Bridge. When the results of these surveys are finalized, I will make the information available to the Minister of Development.

#### AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr. VENNING: I have been approached by representatives of country ambulance services in connection with their repayments from the Hospitals Department. Such services are experiencing difficulties in relation to pensioners who are being referred by their local doctor from country hospitals to a specialist in the metropolitan area. I understand that, if a specialist refers them to a Government hospital, the Hospitals Department is happy to pay for the ambulance service but that, if the specialist refers them to a private hospital, the department does not pay for the ambulance service. This means that the ambulance services have a backlog in payments. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Health to examine this iniquitous situation to see whether these ambulance services can receive payments due to them irrespective of where the patients are taken?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will ask the Minister of Health to look into the matter and let the honourable member have a reply.

#### MURRAY STORAGES

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition and I asked questions about the so-called renegotiation of the Dartmouth dam agreement. In his reply the Premier said that letters had been sent to Victoria and New South Wales setting out the bases on which the new South Australian Government desires to renegotiate the agreement. In today's *Advertiser* it is reported that outside the House the Premier refused to publish the letters on the grounds that this could in some way (I do not know how) prejudice the negotiations into which he hopes to enter with the other States. I accept his refusal, however, but ask the Minister of Works, in the absence of the

Premier, whether, after the negotiations, successful or unsuccessful, have been completed, the Government will table all the correspondence in this House for perusal by members and for the information of the general public.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will discuss the honourable member's question with the Premier when he returns to work, and no doubt he will want to discuss it with the Government before a decision is made or a reply is given to the Deputy Leader. The honourable member knows that Governments are always in a terrible hurry to hand over their dockets for everyone to see them because it does not matter very much! However, I will treat his request seriously and have a look at it.

#### AGRICULTURAL ADVISER

Mr. NANKIVELL: I previously asked the former Minister of Agriculture when it was intended that an agricultural adviser would be appointed for the district including the Southern Murray Mallee and the Pinnaroo line. I have been told in previous replies that, although general approval had been given to the principle of appointing this officer, it had not been possible to make an appointment. Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Agriculture whether this matter has been further reviewed and whether it is now possible to appoint an advisory officer for this area?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to take up the matter with my colleague and obtain a report for the honourable member.

#### AGED COTTAGE HOMES

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Can the Attorney-General say whether any progress has been made in what he has termed the negotiations taking place between him and Aged Cottage Homes Incorporated?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I cannot give any further information to the House at present.

#### WILD LIFE CONSERVATION

Mr. EASTICK: Has the Minister of Works obtained from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked previously about wild life conservation?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Fisheries and Fauna Conservation Department is preparing a written submission for the Commonwealth House of Representatives Select Committee on Wild Life Conservation. Some of the terms of reference of the Select Committee are beyond the functions of that department; however, the Director has an interest

in all the matters listed, and would welcome an opportunity to appear before the committee to present the policy of the Government of South Australia and to explain the functions of his department and how it implements these policies as they relate to the Fauna Conservation Act and the Fisheries Act. In order to preclude the possibility of duplication of effort in the areas covered by the terms of reference of the committee, the Director has consulted certain other interested organizations with which this department is closely connected.

The Minister of Lands has informed me that, so far as his Ministerial position is concerned, the National Parks Commission is preparing a submission for presentation to the committee. With reference to the possibility of the Commonwealth Government's assuming control of wild life conservation, the Minister of Lands has stated that in his opinion the control of national parks should remain with the State.

#### PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Mr. McANANEY: Earlier in the session, I asked you, Mr. Speaker, whether you would take action against people who invaded the front steps of Parliament House at any time. At that stage, perhaps it was a hypothetical question. However, a representative of a group of people has now publicly stated that these people will use the front steps for a week, during which they will hand out literature, before an intended march. As there has now been a definite statement that some action will be taken that will prevent people from proceeding to and from Parliament House by the steps, will you, Sir, say something that will indicate to these people that, by using the front steps as they have outlined, they will be exceeding their normal rights?

The SPEAKER: I think that the honourable member is still asking a hypothetical question. I do not know how he can say positively that by blocking the steps people are preventing members from entering Parliament House. I repeat to the honourable member that, if he encounters any such obstruction and informs me, I will certainly take up the matter with those concerned.

#### OAKLANDS CROSSING

Mr. MATHWIN: As I know that the Minister of Roads and Transport is familiar with the problems regarding the Oaklands railway crossing, will he obtain a report on progress being made with regard to improvements at that crossing?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As a result of the constant representations made by the former member for Glenelg, who is now the member for Brighton, and by me in relation to the Marion Road grade separation, I am familiar with the matter. As there has been constant agitation for something to be done at the crossing, the Highways Department is currently working on the proposal at my request, with a view to producing a plan that is more practicable from the point of view of the people of the area. At this stage I can say nothing about the matter other than that it is, being actively pursued.

#### WESTERN TEACHERS COLLEGE

Mrs. STEELE: Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked last week about the stage that negotiations had reached regarding the acquisition of land for the future Western Teachers College?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is not possible to say at this stage when the acquisition of land for Western Teachers College will be complete. A notice to treat has been issued, but no claim has been received from the owner in response to this notice. There is no way of forcing the owner to make a claim. The Crown Solicitor has given notice of the dates by which various parcels of land are required. The dates were worked out not only to guarantee that certain crops of celery and tomatoes could be raised in the year 1971 but also to ensure that the necessary soil tests and surveys could be carried out as well. It is unlikely that substantial access to the land, other than for surveys and tests, will be required before January, 1972. It would be possible for me, as Minister, to proclaim the land and, after a statutory period, to take proceedings to acquire it. But the owner has the legal right to appeal and to take the matter to litigation if he so wishes. I understand that the owner's solicitors have retained senior counsel on this matter. Therefore the honourable member can understand that I do not wish at this stage to make any public statement that would complicate the outcome of these negotiations.

#### GLENSIDE ROAD

Mr. EVANS: Last year I took a deputation of residents from the Stirling area to the then Minister of Roads and Transport to discuss the Highways Department's intention of closing Glenside Road at Stirling. Much discussion took place at that time, and several questions were asked in this House about closing the road, as such a closure would affect the

Emergency Fire Service in the area, buses taking schoolchildren to school, and residents of the area generally, who would be boxed in. In today's press, I noticed a report stating that the road would be closed tomorrow. Can the Minister say whether that report is correct and, if it is, can he give reasons why the road will be closed?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As I have not read the press report, I cannot comment on it. Both this Government and the previous Government have for some time considered closing Glenside Road. It has now been decided to close the road in the interests of road safety and of the safety of the public. However, this will not interfere with the fire service, as the honourable member indicated it might, because a condition for closing the road is that a gate will be installed at the present junction and that the fire brigade will be provided with a key to the gate so that, in case of emergency, it will have immediate access. After reviewing the whole file (and the honourable member will probably appreciate that it is voluminous), I believe that one valid point is that the closing of the road could (although I will not go as far as saying "would") detrimentally affect the attendance of the fire brigade at a fire, but that point is adequately covered by the provision of the gate. The honourable member said that the closing of the road would also affect schoolchildren. My only comment on that is that, if schoolchildren have been crossing the freeway, I am gratified that we are closing the road, for it would be hard to find a much more dangerous situation than having schoolchildren cross this freeway.

Mr. Evans: Not the freeway.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: That is what the honourable member said in explaining his question. However, I have outlined the situation.

#### COOBER PEDY

Mr. GUNN: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say when it is intended that the streets of Coober Pedy will be sealed?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will obtain this information for the honourable member.

#### FORESHORE CONTROL

Mr. McKEE (Pirie): I move:

That by-law No. 21 of the District Council of Noarlunga in respect of bathing and control of foreshore, made on July 31, 1969, and laid

on the table of this House on April 28, 1970, be disallowed.

The present by-law No. 21 of the District Council of Noarlunga provides that dogs shall not be permitted to roam on any beach or foreshore unless they are held on a leash. The council has now amended the by-law to ban completely dogs from beaches and foreshores under the council's control. Its explanation for the amendment is that it is expected that a complete ban would be easier to police than a ban on dogs not held on a leash. The Subordinate Legislation Committee has considered the by-law and, as reported to the House last Wednesday, considers that the by-law unduly trespasses on the rights of previously established by-laws, that it is much too restrictive, and that it should be disallowed.

Mr. HOPGOOD (Mawson): I second the motion. The District Council of Noarlunga has had peculiar difficulties in this situation, and its representatives have spoken to me as member for the district. One problem is that of retaining a local dog catcher. I think the member for Alexandra would agree with me that council employees have been subjected to physical assault whilst performing their duties. The council has therefore had much difficulty in enforcing the present by-law. However, I consider the suggested by-law is unnecessarily restrictive. After having spoken to the District Clerk and members of the council, I consider that this by-law can be improved. I believe that a compromise can be reached whereby dogs will be completely banned from the beach during certain hours, but I oppose the complete banning of dogs from the beach. I therefore support the motion.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ROAD SAFETY

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham): I move:

That in the opinion of this House, and in view of the appalling road toll, a Minister of Road Safety should be appointed, such Minister having the primary responsibility of co-ordinating all efforts to increase road safety.

Members will realize that the motion has three parts. The first part concerns the appalling road toll; the second is concerned with the appointment of a Minister of Road Safety; and the third refers to the co-ordinating of all efforts to increase safety on the roads of this State. I intend to deal with the motion in those three parts, and now refer to the appalling toll on our roads. It is probably not necessary to remind members of the

dreadful occurrences that take place daily, even more than daily, on the roads of this State and of this country.

To drive the point home, I refer to *Current Affairs Bulletin* of March of this year which states that more than 3,000 people die in Australia each year as a result of nearly 60,000 casualty-producing road accidents. If those figures are divided by 10, I suppose we get roughly the figures for South Australia, and they are staggering. Indeed, in the bulletin, for the year 1968 the numbers set out show that in South Australia there were 6,421 accidents, 8,902 people were injured, and 275 people were killed. Today, I have brought those figures up to date by consulting with the Road Safety Council, and I find that in South Australia, up to today, already 217 people have been killed in 1970. That compares with the corresponding figure to this date for 1969 of 160.

Although we realize that the figures for fatalities (and accidents to some extent) vary from year to year with no predictable pattern, this is an alarming increase, even taking into account that there has been an increase of 37 per cent (over one-third) in the number of people killed on the roads in South Australia in 1970. Members will be able to assess that the figure of 217 killed to date during 1970 is at the rate of about one a day.

On this point I also refer to the bulletin of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, headed "Road Traffic Accidents", which has been published for South Australia for the first time in 1970. On page 14 is set out in table 11 the age and sex of driver's licence holders and drivers and riders involved in accidents in South Australia during 1969. I will not go through the figure, but I hope that I have quoted enough to show the appalling nature of the road toll. I refer to the table to make a point that shows one aspect of the problem. The table, which dissects drivers into age groups, shows that the group under 20 years of age holding licences in South Australia in 1969 numbered 47,687 out of a total of 516,314 licence holders. That is, about 8 per cent of the licensed drivers in South Australia are under 20 years of age, but they are involved in 16.3 per cent of the accidents, as follows: a total of 12.1 per cent of 16-year-olds who were licensed were involved in road accidents; this figure rose to 16.3 per cent of 17-year-old drivers, 17.6 per cent of 18-year-old drivers, and 17.5 per cent of 19-year-old drivers. After that, there is a decline. The

total figure for the under-20-year-olds is almost twice the proportion of those who are licensed. This is one aspect of the appalling situation on South Australian roads. I need say no more about that, except to point to the cost to the community, in terms of dollars and cents, of what is going on. I have the figures for the whole of Australia only but, as I suggested before when dealing with other figures, if they were divided by about 10, we would get roughly the South Australian figures. At page 128 of the *Current Affairs Bulletin* the following appears:

The Senate Select Committee on Road Safety was asked to study this cost for a report they submitted in 1960. Based on the figures they arrived at, the equivalent costs for Australia in 1968 would be roughly as follows:

Material damage . . . . .	\$150,000,000
Loss in manpower and earnings (less reduced consumption of goods and services due to deaths) . . . . .	\$74,000,000
Cost of treatment . . . . .	\$6,900,000

These figures are approximations, but indicate that in 1968 the cost of road accidents in Australia was in the region of \$230,900,000. For the 58,759 casualty accidents reported that year, the average cost was nearly \$4,000 each.

These are estimates of tangible losses only: they make no allowance for the intangible suffering, heartbreak and tragedy caused by road traffic accidents, not only in cases involving fatalities but also in those involving injuries. These factors cannot be measured in terms of human suffering and misery or the consequent material loss to the community that they cause. I hope I have said enough to make the first point in the motion: that the road toll in this State is an appalling one. I hasten to say that no-one anywhere in the world has an answer to the road toll, but just because one has not been found that does not mean that we should not make every attempt to search for it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Aren't we doing that?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am not satisfied that we are doing sufficient to find an answer. True, research is being carried out, but we are not doing enough of it in this State or in Australia.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Your Party set up a committee when it was in office.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I hope the Minister will not misunderstand me, at least on this occasion. As far as I am concerned, this is not a Party-political matter. I am not trying to say that when in office we did everything we could or should have done.

Mr. Hall: We made a promise prior to the election.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: That is correct, and I will deal with that in due course. Nor do I suggest that the present Government is deliberately turning its back on this matter. However, I suggest that it is not doing as much as it should or as much as I would like to see it doing. That is why I have moved the motion.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Have you asked what the Government is doing?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: The Minister of Roads and Transport is not the most willing of the Ministers to give information in this place, so he has only himself to blame if I do not know what is going on. Perhaps I could give some examples of matters on which we should be doing something but on which I am not satisfied we have done enough or have made the right decision. I mentioned research, but as well as that is the question of the compulsory wearing of seat belts. I am forever grateful to the Walsh Government for what it did in 1966 when it brought into effect the legislation which I had sponsored in this House and which I managed to have passed in the teeth of great opposition at that time from the then Government, both in this place and in another place, and which could only have passed and come into operation on proclamation. I am, and the people of South Australia should be, forever grateful to the Walsh Government for having issued the proclamation that brought the legislation into effect.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Are you in favour of the compulsory wearing of seat belts?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My point is that I do not know whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. There are arguments for and against on this matter. I understand that at one of the Australian Labor Party conferences a resolution was passed in favour of the compulsory wearing of seat belts. I always wear a seat belt, and I do not regret doing so. Indeed, I urge everyone to do so. However, whether people should be forced to wear a seat belt is another matter. I am not canvassing the question one way or the other: I am merely saying that this is one matter which should be examined and on which a decision should be taken.

Another controversial matter on which no decision was taken during the term of office of the last Government or of its predecessor is the matter of random roadside breathalyser

tests. This matter was canvassed by the Royal Commission on the Licensing Act during the term of office of the previous Labor Government. The Royal Commission suggested that the matter should be reviewed about 18 months after the breathalyser legislation had come into effect. The Liberal Government made no decision on it—and I do not know whether the present Government intends to do so. This is a matter on which attention should be focused.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Why didn't you take a decision on it?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am not here to argue about the matter: I am merely pointing to these matters at present. I do not know why the Minister of Labour and Industry should be so touchy about this matter.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: I am interested.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I see. I hope, then, that the Minister will make a contribution to the debate. That is the best way he could show his interest rather than by interjecting now. He probably will not speak, although he will have the opportunity to do so. I also refer to driver education and probationary licences. One matter that the present Government has taken up again is the points demerits scheme. The Liberal Government hoped to have such a scheme in operation in this State by now, but the legislation was blocked during the term of office of the former Liberal Government because the then Opposition opposed it and would not allow it to pass in that form. It insisted on the legislation being referred to a Select Committee. Perhaps that was the right decision. I do not know.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Didn't you oppose the Select Committee?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes. I was satisfied that the legislation was in a proper form and that it should have been passed. However, this is all water under the bridge now. This is the only thing that the present Government has done, at any rate on the surface, in the field of road safety that is known to the people of the State. Another thorny problem is the matter of compensation in case of injury. This is a matter on which I am certain the Attorney-General has views, as I have. Should we continue to award compensation only on fault when negligence has been proved, or should there be some system of universal insurance? I investigated this proposition when I was in office, and I inquired about it in New Zealand, where the matter has

been canvassed and where I believe it will eventually be introduced. I think that as time goes on the basis of awarding compensation on the proof of negligence is becoming more and more unreal. This is a very big matter, however, which we should be examining in this State, if not elsewhere.

This is not an exhaustive list, but these are some of the matters to which we should be directing our attention in a far more co-ordinated and systematic way than we are at present. There is now much literature available and there has been much research in this field.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Are you, too, being critical of the Road Safety Council?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am not being critical of anyone, Mr. Speaker. I am being very careful not to be critical in this motion despite the many invitations I am having from the front bench on the other side. Much research on this subject has been done in the last 20 or 30 years. Valuable research has been done in South Australia, and I refer only to the 1966 report on traffic accidents in Adelaide by Messrs. Robertson and McLean and Dr. Ryan. I refer briefly to the recommendations in that report on such matters as pedestrians, pedal cyclists, motor cyclists, trucks, cars, and highway engineering, and there is also a general section. Under each of these headings there are recommendations arising out of research into traffic accidents in South Australia in 1963 and 1964. Not all by any means of those recommendations have been acted on and I do not know how many have been considered in any detail by the authorities, but in my view they are all worth considering.

These are some of the matters which I canvass as justifying a far more co-ordinated and systematic approach to the problem of the road toll than we have now. I cannot help noticing the look on the face of the Minister; I hope it does not mean that he is unsympathetic to the problem of road fatalities in South Australia. I hope that he regards this problem with the gravity with which I regard it and with which it should be regarded.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: This Government is treating it far more gravely than your Government treated it.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: At this juncture I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

## OMBUDSMAN

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Evans:

(For wording of motion, see page 513.)

(Continued from August 5. Page 513.)

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I do not desire to repeat the comments I made last year when I moved a similar motion. There are two reasons for my desire: first, it is unnecessary because the members can read *Hansard*; and secondly, I would possibly lose my voice before I could repeat all the comments I made then. I know that the main function of an ombudsman is to investigate complaints made against actions or decisions emanating from Government departments. These actions or decisions could be investigated by the ombudsman (or Parliamentary commissioner, if we wished to call him that) after all formal avenues of redress had been examined.

Even then, the person concerned would have to make his complaint through the Parliamentarian representing him, and the Parliamentarian would, in turn, approach the ombudsman. The office of ombudsman works effectively in other countries, including New Zealand, the United Kingdom and some Scandinavian countries. In a society such as ours, with the ever-increasing activities of Government departments and appointments of officers to those departments, injustices occasionally occur through decisions made by officers. I believe that it would also be an advantage to public servants themselves to be able to lay a complaint through their Parliamentarian concerning certain actions that may have been taken against them within their departments. It is important that each citizen receives a fair go or at least seems to receive a fair go at all times.

If we believe that as members of Parliament we can cure all the complaints referred to us, I believe we are hoodwinking ourselves. It is necessary that John Citizen, if he wishes to make a complaint, can do so in the proper form, while not taking away any of the power or responsibility of Parliamentarians or of Parliament itself. By making it obligatory for a complainant to make the approach through his Parliamentarian, we protect our rights and we protect Parliament as an institution. The ombudsman would have no power over the Minister who may have made the decision in question: he may only write to the Minister for a formal explanation of the decision made. After an explanation is forwarded through the Parliamentarian to the complainant, who is still not satisfied about the matter,



the ombudsman is informed through the Parliamentary whether it is still considered that the decision is wrong and unjust. Before making a final decision, the ombudsman must discuss the matter with the Minister concerned.

I think we would all agree that Parliamentarians should not have the power to demand of a Minister the right to look at departmental files: we need here an independent authority, a person who is trusted by Parliamentarians and by the man in the street. Indeed, if we appoint an ombudsman, that appointment must be accepted by a majority of members on each side of the House (that is by a majority of members on the Opposition side and by a majority on the Government side), and not merely by a majority of the House. Often, if a person can cover up a mistake he has made he is reluctant to admit that mistake. As I have said, I believe that injustices have occurred in my own district in the short time I have been in politics.

I am not the one who should have the final say in these matters, for I can only form an opinion, as can also the constituent concerned. However, if we have someone who is separate from Party politics and from Government and responsible only to Parliament, and who can investigate these matters, I am sure that many of the decisions considered to be unjust would, if investigated by this person, be found eventually to be acceptable to the constituent concerned. It is important to note that an ombudsman would not have power to change a decision or action taken: he could only report to the Minister concerned that he believed the relevant action or decision should be varied. If the Minister and departmental officers concerned decide that they will not make a variation, the only other avenue of redress open to the ombudsman is, if he wishes, to make a special report to Parliament on the matter; or he can wait until the end of the year, when he is obliged to present an annual report to Parliament.

If the Minister and officers concerned have not taken the action suggested by the ombudsman, the matter can then be debated in Parliament. This is really a guarantee to John Citizen that he has a further avenue of appeal, but he cannot use this avenue until he has used every other form of redress available to him. It is important to note that the ombudsman would not act on a frivolous complaint or on a matter in which someone did not have a personal interest. In certain other countries, where a serious mistake has been made by a departmental officer, it is within the power of

the ombudsman to recommend legal action against that officer. If a serious case arose necessitating legal action, the Minister, if he were so informed, would initiate that action, but an ombudsman would not make a recommendation along these lines to the Minister unless it was absolutely necessary.

Although I believe that our function as Parliamentarians should not be interfered with, I consider that if we can attend more effectively to complaints made by John Citizen, we should do so. In attending to complaints, we generally carry out much necessary and important work. However, at times we find we are banging our heads against a brick wall. There is nothing harder to get through than an experienced Minister who is on the defensive. Since he has the power to keep his files secret, it is virtually impossible for a Parliamentarian to obtain the information necessary to prove to John Citizen that he has been either justly or unjustly treated.

I hope that all members will read as much as they can on this matter and look at themselves as human beings and individuals. I hope that they will consider whether they have ever come across a problem that they cannot overcome where they believe a citizen has been unjustly treated. I hope they will carefully consider whether we need an ombudsman or Parliamentary Commissioner and think seriously before they accept or reject this proposal. It should not be considered lightly. The worth of an ombudsman has been proved in practice. In other countries where an ombudsman has been appointed he or his successor has continued to hold that position. Once established, the office has not been done away with, and it is important that we should have it here. I trust that most members will support the motion.

The Hon. L. J. KING secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Adjourned debate on the motion of the Hon. D. N. Brookman:

(For wording of motion, see page 513.)

(Continued from August 5. Page 524.)

Mrs. STEELE (Davenport): I support the motion, which was moved by the member for Alexandra with the best of motives—to give further financial aid to the parents of children attending independent primary schools. The motion is in accord with the announcement in the policy speech of the present Leader of the Opposition (then the Premier) prior to

the last election. It was then announced that the Liberal and Country League would raise the per capita grant for primary schoolchildren from \$10 to \$20. As members know, the Hall Government pioneered in this State such grants to the parents of children attending independent schools. In the first instance these were grants of \$10 to primary and secondary students alike, with the promise that they would be increased for secondary students to \$20 as soon as the State's finances improved to the extent necessary. We could not immediately bring it into effect, because the State's finances had reached a very low ebb; this poor financial situation had been brought about between 1965 and 1968 by the previous Labor Government.

In the course of time we were able to put into effect our promise to increase the grant for secondary students to \$20. At the time of the last election we publicly stated that we intended to do the same for primary students attending independent schools if we were re-elected. Therefore, the motion is supported by every Opposition member. I think it is in order for me to clarify the sequence of events relating to the placing of this motion on the Notice Paper. It was on the Notice Paper for some days before the Government, through the Minister of Education, announced its intention further to assist independent schools and to set up a committee that would look into the question of making grants on the basis of need. I cannot help thinking that Government members must have felt some chagrin that they had lost the initiative in making this announcement public. I and many others believe that the Government was provoked into the action it took by this motion's being on the Notice Paper.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Nonsense! It was in our policy speech.

Mrs. STEELE: The Government was provoked because the member for Alexandra had placed his motion on the Notice Paper. I am not decrying any action that will bring much needed help to independent schools, because I believe that help of any kind is both timely and just. However, I think it is proper that we should get the record straight. Last week Opposition members, particularly the member for Torrens and I, were at some pains to explain to the Minister of Education the method that the previous Government had adopted in making these per capita grants. As we pointed out, they were made direct to the independent schools, with the proviso that on each of the accounts sent to parents there

should be a statement showing how the grants had been passed on to the parents.

I was Minister of Education at the time this arrangement was initiated and the wording on the statements was submitted to me by the Director-General of Education after discussions with his officers. Furthermore, it was agreed to by the independent schools. I had a personal discussion with the Director of Catholic Education on this matter. He in turn passed the information on to the parish councils which, of course, are responsible for the financial arrangements of parish schools in the Catholic diocese. Discussions were also held with the headmasters and headmistresses of some independent schools and with chairmen of councils of others. There was no suggestion at any time that the independent schools were averse to this kind of per capita grant, and they certainly did not reject it when it was implemented.

Mr. Coumbe: They favoured it.

Mrs. STEELE: Yes; they were most appreciative because it directly enabled them to raise the standard of education in their schools. As members know, while I was Minister of Education I made a feature of personally visiting many schools throughout South Australia so that I might see for myself the conditions under which teachers and children worked and so that I might meet members of school committees and others associated with the schools. Whenever I went to a town where there were parish schools I always informed them in advance that I would like to pay a courtesy visit to those schools. The schools included many Catholic parish schools and some Lutheran schools. I received great pleasure from visiting these schools, where I was always most warmly received. However, at no such school did the reverend mother or parish priest, who usually accompanied me at the Catholic schools, or the chairmen of Lutheran school councils fail to thank me for the great help that had come to the parish schools as a result of the then Government's per capita grants to parents of children at independent schools.

It would be less than fair of me if I did not say that I thought that the Minister of Education was explicit in the points he made in this debate last week. In making those points, he was expounding a theory that was in line with the beliefs of his Party. Last year, in moving for the disallowance of the regulation that permitted the then Government to increase the book allowances for children in lieu of the discontinued bursaries and scholarships, the

then member for Glenelg quite strongly made the same points which he has made in this debate and which are obviously held by him personally as well as being the beliefs of his Party. However, I believe that the points made by other members who have spoken in this debate are equally valid from the point of view of parents, and, by virtue of the kind of per capita grants that we, as a Government, made, we elected to help parents.

Like other members, I believe that parents have the right to send their children to the school of their choosing. As it is quite obviously known, many parents do this at great sacrifice. The Minister spoke about the inequities of taxation deductions. That kind of argument may apply regarding people on big salaries who, in consequence, are big taxpayers, but the average taxpayer recoups only a small sum in taxation deductions for education expenses, so he would most certainly benefit from the per capita allowance for his student child, and that was the policy of my Party.

Mr. Coumbe: And the most deserving.

Mrs. STEELE: Yes. The people who received the extremely high incomes referred to by the Minister would be few and far between in the community. These are the people who would get a taxation reduction of about \$200 for each of their student children, but such people would most definitely be in the minority. The matter should be put in its proper perspective, because most people involved earn average salaries or wages.

Quite obviously the Catholic parish schools will derive the greatest benefit from this new policy, because they lack funds. We all know that, although they charge small fees, often fees are waived altogether, so that admittedly they suffer from a lack of funds. As a result, their classes are too big, as they do not have enough funds to pay a sufficient number of teachers. Therefore, they have been up against it for a long time. For them to close their doors, as some were compelled to do before the previous Government provided per capita grants, would mean an increasing burden on the departmental schools, at which, for the very reasons that I have stated, the cost of educating a pupil is much more than is the cost at the parish schools. I believe that much will depend on the interpretation of the term "school in need" by the committee appointed by the Minister. We cannot escape the conclusion that some parents of children at schools in need will possibly benefit at the expense of others with children at

schools not classified as needy; they will get no relief.

The member for Alexandra mentioned various reasons why parents desired their children to attend independent schools, and honourable members will no doubt recollect those reasons. He said that some parents believed that there was a more stable staff situation in private schools in that there was not the turnover of school staff that unfortunately occurred from time to time in departmental schools. He also said that parents may wish to send their children to independent schools in order to have them receive a certain amount of religious instruction. Another instance he gave was that independent schools provided better sporting facilities.

Mr. Coumbe: He referred to country parents.

Mrs. STEELE: Yes, some country parents wish to send their children to independent secondary schools in the metropolitan area, believing that the children will thereby receive a better education. However, in pointing out these various reasons, he made it clear that parents often made great personal sacrifices to enable their children to receive this type of education. Why should such people, who often receive a small income, be denied benefits as a result of their school's not being assessed a school in need? One of the effects of the Government's policy could be to force such children into State secondary schools, with a consequent increase in the cost of the State system. It seems to me that this is almost like saying, "You would be better sending your children to departmental primary or secondary schools, because any aid you get through your independent school will be subject to a means test."

It could well be that eventually independent schools would be phased out. Then we would have only one system of education: the system run by the State. I think all members believe (I certainly do) that that would be disastrous, in that vastly increased costs would be involved in maintaining the State education system and there would not be the competition which now exists between the two present systems and which I believe is healthy and assists in the normal development of a good standard of education. I am sure that there will be some worthwhile recommendations in the findings of the Karmel Committee, whose terms of reference enabled it to take evidence from anyone and everyone who was interested or involved in education.

Knowing that independent schools participated, I believe they would have made a most valuable contribution to the findings of the committee.

In reply to a question, the Minister told me today that he expected to have that committee's report by the end of the year. He also said that he had asked the committee whether he could look at some portion of the report that related to some of the policies the Government wished to put into effect, and the committee agreed. If in these early releases there are bits of evidence or recommendations which could assist the Cook Committee that the Minister has appointed and which relate to the subject of this debate, I wonder whether the Minister will allow members to study those parts of the report, so that we can have the benefit of the information and recommendations. The wording of the motion implied that the increase would be only a beginning, as it would most certainly have been dependent on the funds available had the Party on this side remained in Government. There is no reason why our Party would not have brought its per capita grants to independent schools up to the level of those made by other States, and there is no reason why the present Government should not do the same. I shall not recapitulate the figures given by the member for Alexandra in moving the motion, but the amounts of the per capita grants made in the other States can be found on page 516 of *Hansard*. I hope honourable members will study these figures and see the level to which we can aspire in South Australia.

All other States have decided upon and implemented the system of per capita payments. They obviously believe that this is the right way in which to help independent schools and, indirectly, the parents of the children attending those schools. One can only deduce, because of the method that the present Government intends to implement here, that with a Labor Government in power this State is to be the guinea pig for Socialist experimentation, and the policy enunciated by the Minister of applying a means test to parents of children attending independent schools is our first taste of such experimentation. I support the motion.

Mr. HOPGOOD (Mawson): I do not think we can by any stretch of the imagination accuse the Opposition of failing to have due regard to the considerations involved in this motion. We have heard its big guns boom in this debate, as is evidenced by the

fact that two of the speakers have been from the front bench opposite and one, a former Minister of Education, has been from a seat further back. It seems to me that the member for Alexandra was present at the centre bounce. He had attending on him the member for Torrens on the wing and the member for Davenport skulking somewhere about the half-back flank and, because of the intervention of the Minister of Education at the centre bounce, these two members have spent some time trying to prevent the ball from going out of bounds. However, I believe it has done so and it is my free kick.

Various colleagues on this side have indicated that they wish to have a go at some of the things said by honourable members opposite, and I shall not usurp their position in this debate. However, I shall say one or two things in rebuttal of what has been said by the member for Davenport. That honourable member claims that the Government was provoked into the action recently announced by the Minister because of the putting on the Notice Paper of this motion by the member for Alexandra. I want to make two points in relation to this. First, we are fulfilling (and are perfectly consistent in this) a promise made in the policy speech of our Leader. I shall quote briefly from it, under the heading "State aid", as follows:

A Labor Government will continue current levels of aid and will institute an inquiry into the needs of independent schools. Where needs, judged in terms of standards currently applying in Government schools, can be proven, assistance will be provided for the solution of these special problems.

The other point raised was the timing of the motion. I remind members opposite that, when the Government insurance Bill was being debated, they suggested that the timing of the Bill and the bringing on of the legislation gave some hint of our priorities in these matters. I take them up on this point and suggest that, as we have brought on this matter and the pronouncement has been made as early as possible in the life of this Government, it shows the high priority that this Government gives to this matter.

The member for Davenport also reminisced about her adventures in the tea and cake circuit and mentioned, *inter alia*, that various people in parish schools had told her they were grateful that the Government had introduced the per capita grants. I have no doubt they were very grateful or that they would be grateful for whatever they could get, but the mere expression of gratitude is no indication

of preference as to how the aid should be allocated. To assume that some preference has been indicated simply because gratitude has been shown is to assume far too much.

It would appear that the gap between Government and Opposition on State aid is not wide, but it is significant. There is no difference on the question whether aid should be granted to the independent sector of the schools system. There is very little difference in emphasis about how much aid should be granted in the immediate future because, when we turn to the speech of the member for Alexandra, we see that he says:

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.

I do not want to claim any advantage over the honourable member in this by suggesting that the Government has topped that because it is going to give more or to take advantage of the fact that he could not accurately cost it, so I am prepared to accept that there is no discernible difference between the Government and the Opposition on how much aid will be given in the immediate future. The only difference (and this is the issue before us) is how the money should be distributed within the independent schools system. The Minister last week when speaking to this motion referred to the fact that we are dealing with church schools. This may not always be the case. It may be that in the future, with what we hope will be growing affluence and greater leisure time, there will be an expansion of the independent schools system with experimental schools that will enable a much broader approach to education and the trying out of new education theories to be made.

It may be that people with strong political opinions, either, on the one hand, of a militant colour or, on the other hand, of a reactionary nature, will be impelled by those political beliefs to want to set up independent schools in which the children can be trained in those particular beliefs. If it should be that I am in this place when such schools come about and a request is made to the Government of that day for aid, I shall be interested to hear the sorts of comment made about such requests, if and when such a thing comes to pass. However, I concede the point that what we are dealing with now are church schools. The Minister referred to the fact that Christian principles applied in the outlook of these schools and, although I do not want

to push this point very far, I think it should be made: that in the teachings and practices of the Christian church for 2,000 years the application of aid on the basis of need has loomed very large. If we turn to the ancient writings upon which the principles of these church schools are based, we find in the writings of Dr. Luke:

They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all as any had need.

If we consider the life of the church community during the subsequent 2,000 years we can see various incarnations of this principle. We can see it in the practices of the medieval monasteries and in the lives of such modern Christians as Dr. Kagawa, of Japan, and Martin Luther King. I suggest that there are two attitudes that we may adopt in support of church schools and the sending of one's child to a church school, but I do not suggest that they are the only attitudes that exist in the community. There are those in the community, like I, who, though not hostile to church schools, do not intend to send their children to an independent school.

On the other hand, there are others who are completely hostile to the church school system. However, we are not discussing these attitudes: we are taking it for granted that aid is being given and we are discussing how it should be given. I delineate what I see as the two main attitudes in favour of independent schools. Let us consider citizen A. His attitude towards an independent school education for his children is like his attitude towards a Cadillac: it would be nice to have and it would be comfortable to ride in. Translated into educational terms, there would be a better staff-student ratio than in State schools, or more cubic feet of room space than exists in State schools. The Cadillac has a much faster pick-up, or, translated into educational terms, there is more intensive teaching for examination purposes. Thirdly, there is a certain prestige associated with a Cadillac, but I do not think that any translation on that basis into the educational situation is needed.

As a person who has taught for some years in both systems, I think I should say that I would regard most of these advantages, which people see in the prestige independent schools, as being largely illusory. As a teacher in a private school I have been confronted with a class of more than 35 boys, and this is one ground that is frequently criticized in the State school system. On the other hand, as a teacher in the State school system I recall on one occasion being asked to relieve the situation

in a Leaving physiology class and, on arrival, found two students in the classroom. I sat down to await the rest of the students: it was 10 minutes before the penny dropped and I realized that no more would arrive. This I regard as being a Utopian staff-student ratio, although there may have been exceptional circumstances in that case. However, I doubt whether staff-student ratios and class sizes show much difference between the State schools and the prestige private schools, and whether this makes much difference to the type of teaching and education that the children receive. The key to the situation is the teacher: in the State school system there are good and bad teachers and in the private school system there are good and bad teachers.

In this debate reference has been made to what has been regarded as the relative stability of teaching within the private school system. This is something that is not in accord with my experience. During part of the time that I taught in a private school my wife taught in the preparatory section of that school. Since then there has been a complete turnover of the staff in the preparatory school which, in terms of stability or lack of it, would be as serious as anything that has happened in a State school. However, I wonder whether this really matters or whether sometimes stability means stagnation, and whether the private school wishes that certain faithful retainers could be shifted to another school and new blood introduced.

I suggest that some advantages that citizen A sees in the independent school system may be completely illusory in terms of educational benefit that his child receives. However, he does perceive them, and we must appreciate the point that whether they are there or not he believes that they are there and wishes to take advantage of them. The main factor in his approach to the education of his child will be the cash factor. Here I revert to the position of his attitude towards the Cadillac. It is something he would like to have but if he cannot afford it he will not go on with it, and that is that. I think that is right and proper and, as a supporter of this Government, I would not want to give financial aid to purchase a Cadillac, either literally or in the educational sense.

I turn now to citizen B, who is in an entirely different situation. For him the cash position is not the predominant one. He has an ethical imperative, and for this reason he sends his child to the non-State school.

This is a position that I do not share and one which I find difficult to understand. I do not concede his position, but what I do concede is that, as a supporter of this Government, I have a responsibility to ensure that his children are properly educated. As has been explained by the Minister, fees are not the important thing for this person, because there has grown up a private school system with a great range of fees available to this person, right down to what amounts to a nominal charge. He will see to it that his child gets an education at the school where he wants him to get an education, because of this ethical imperative.

Although the child is at the school and the fee position is something that can be overcome, what does the child find when he arrives at the school? He is in a class of 60 children, there is no library, there are either totally inadequate or non-existent gymnasium and sporting facilities, and the child finds that he is dealing with laboratory equipment that may have been purchased some time before the Second World War. The aid that citizen B requires is not for fees but for school facilities, and the only way I can see that we can meet this demand is by distributing what money we have on a needs basis. I am not so Utopian to believe that even in the foreseeable future we will live in a society (no matter how desirable it may be) that incarnates the principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," but I concede that in any operation of the Government in raising revenue and the distribution of aid these principles should be applied. For example, I support the type of revenue-raising measures such as income tax and succession duties, which the economist describes as being progressive, and I oppose those methods that are regarded as regressive. At present, the problem facing the Government is that we are being increasingly forced into the use of regressive taxation. However, we are still masters of the situation of how we should spend our money. We should disburse money not only for education but also for health, law, and transport, according to needs. In this respect I move:

To strike out all words after "That" and insert "this House supports the decision of the Government in allocating an additional \$250,000 to independent primary schools in 1971 on a needs basis".

The motion will then read:

That this House supports the decision of the Government in allocating an additional

\$250,000 to independent primary schools in 1971 on a needs basis.

I urge the House to support the amendment.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): Mr. Speaker, as I wish to speak to the original motion, I ask for a ruling?

The SPEAKER: The honourable member may speak to both the motion and the amendment if he so desires.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support the original motion moved by the member for Alexandra. We have again had some interesting effusions from the Government side of the House, not the least that of the Minister. I thought the speech was plausible enough, and one of the first things he did was to exhort us to clear thinking, although he immediately resorted to a diversionary tactic and discussed at some length the Commonwealth Government's taxation system. Here, I agree with the member for Mawson. The question we are discussing is that a certain sum of money is proposed to be spent by the State Government to aid independent schools and we are debating how it should be spent. I digress to deal with the matter of taxation, which was raised by the Minister. He made the astounding statement that a person on an income of \$32,000 a year would pay tax at the rate of about 70c in the dollar. He said this would amount to a taxation deduction of about \$210 on an expenditure of \$300 on education.

That does not seem to me to be a very profound economic statement by the Minister. He said that the taxation structure must be changed, but he did not indicate how he would propose to do this. Does he intend to remove all deductions for people in this income bracket or to have some sliding scale for deductions? If so, I should be very interested in the details. It was rightly pointed out by the member for Davenport that the number of parents in this salary range who send their children to independent schools would be very limited. I know this is so from my own experience, as I have had some experience as a parent with these schools. I consider again that this is a case of the Minister turning his attention in the only direction he can turn when in trouble, namely, to criticism of the Commonwealth Government. We are sick and tired of the continual attacks on the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Do you think they are unjustified?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I do. The Commonwealth Government's taxation provisions have little to do with the motion we are discussing. Any issue on which the Government is in trouble seems to have something to do with the Commonwealth Government, and the Government here is using the Commonwealth Government as a scapegoat, as a whipping boy, and it has just about been thrashed to death. Let me put the record straight on what the Commonwealth Government has done about education. In the 1969-70 Budget speech delivered by the Prime Minister he said:

The Commonwealth has progressively increased the scale and broadened the scope of its financial support for education. Through specific purpose payments and general financial grants assistance is being provided at all levels and for all types of schools. Over \$265,000,000 will be appropriated in the Budget for education this year, or 38 per cent more than last year's expenditure. Within the total, payments to the States specifically for education will increase by 53 per cent to \$165,000,000.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Are you satisfied with that?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: As I pointed out in answer to an interjection made by the Minister (I think last week) on the same topic, the Government acknowledged the fact that we finished the year with a surplus of about \$3,000,000 in the Revenue Account, but I point out to the Minister that, as a result of his particular activities, we now have a recurring expenditure of \$6,000,000 to find every year.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Is that unjustified?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I am saying that the State Government's criticism of the Commonwealth Government is unjustified in the circumstances. I am saying this as a word of advice to the Minister: it is always a good idea to know where the money is coming from before committing it.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: How long have you been here?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has not been here all that long, and only for the same time as Minister as I have been here as a member. I have been here as long as the Attorney-General. I repeat that it is always an advantage to know where the money is coming from before it is spent. As I said earlier, few people in the very high income bracket are involved in this matter, so I consider that this argument is irrelevant. Does the Minister think that there should be no deductions for people in this high income bracket? He is not prepared to answer me. He considers that the

provisions in the Commonwealth Government's income tax laws are inequitable, but he is not prepared to suggest how he would remedy them. The Minister said that he knew of no instance where this allocation of funds had resulted in a reduction in fees.

I am personally involved as a parent with two independent schools and know it is true that the chairman of one school council stated that these grants had prevented an increase in fees. Surely the Minister agrees that this would be a real benefit to parents in this instance. It is quibbling to say that the grants have not resulted in reductions in fees: they have resulted in no increase, and he cannot deny that this is a real benefit. I agree broadly with the statement that the money should be allocated on a needs basis, but who is to determine the needs of the parents? I believe that the needs of the parents should be paramount. I know that many parents who pay high fees to send their children to private schools have a real struggle in doing this. The committee's terms of reference are interesting. We do not have the full terms, but we have seen an outline of them in the press. One of the terms of reference refers to the ability of the schools to gain revenue by charging fees. I suggest that the only way in which this ability can be determined is, in fact, to determine the ability of the parents to pay these fees, and this would involve the committee in an investigation of the financial affairs of many hundreds of parents sending their youngsters to these schools.

I emphatically disagree with the point made by the member for Mawson that the choice of sending a child to an independent school is similar to the one of deciding whether or not to buy a Cadillac. Here, again, he is considering an extreme case, for few citizens would be buying Cadillacs. The reasons for sending youngsters to independent schools were documented fully by the mover of this motion with whom I agree entirely. As he said, snobbery plays a small part, if any, nowadays in the choice of school for a child. We know that many country people send their youngsters, and have done so in the past, to city boarding schools of all denominations. The parents may have gone to a particular school, and this naturally influences their choice of that school for their children. Their position is becoming extremely difficult. We know of the opinion of members opposite regarding the position of people living in the country;

we know just how much sympathy they are willing to accord these people.

Mr. Clark: I think you should be fair.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: There was an interesting discourse recently between the Deputy Premier and the member for Adelaide, as follows:

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: What about the concessions the cockies get on tax and everything else?

MR. LAWN: Yes—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think that reference to remarks of debates occurring in this session are out of order.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I am making the point—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member is referring to a debate in this session.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I bow to your ruling, Sir.

Mr. Jennings: Very good of you.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: That is very good of you, too, for that matter! There is plenty of evidence from what has been said over the past three weeks that members opposite have little sympathy for country people.

Mr. Clark: That is untrue and unjust.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: In fact, many country people are having great difficulty in keeping youngsters at boarding schools. The Minister said that the proposed grant would be insignificant. I do not consider that we can take this grant in isolation. The Commonwealth Government makes per capita grants to the schools; there is \$35 for a primary school student, and added to that is the \$10 already granted by the State Government and a further \$10 which we would give to all students in primary schools on a per capita basis. One cannot say that \$55 is insignificant, and our argument applies even more strongly in respect of secondary schools. The position regarding our schools has been referred to by many eminent speakers, and I had the opportunity of hearing Professor Walker, of the University of Armidale, deliver a lecture some time ago dealing with education in the 1970's. Among other things, he said:

Indeed, the position of the non-government schools generally has reached a critical stage. It seems very likely that in the near future the Catholic schools of Australia, bedevilled by rising costs and teacher shortages, will become in fact, if not in name, merely another form of Government school, lacking in all probability at least some of the distinctly religious flavour of the "public" Catholic schools of Alberta and Scotland. The independent non-Catholic schools, on the other hand, are likely to become rather more exclusivist than they are today, for the places they offer are



unlikely to increase in anything like the same proportion as the increase in the population generally.

The main reason for these schools becoming exclusivist is that, as the fees rise, more and more parents are having difficulty in keeping their youngsters at the schools, and any grants we make tend to stabilize fees; indeed, this has happened in several cases of which I am aware. I comment now on the statement made by the Minister in this debate, and I trust that this is not out of order. The Minister said:

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.

It seems particularly ironical to me that the matter of State aid for schools was discussed by the Labor Party behind closed doors, unless this is another case of misrepresentation by the press, about which we have heard a little today. The following statement appeared in the *News* on August 6, when the Australian Labor Party was having some trouble in bringing its Victorian branch into line:

The discussions held in private have reportedly produced a resolution which will end forever Labor opposition to Government assistance to independent schools. And, more importantly, the private talks have mustered the numbers to ensure the passage of the resolution through the 17-man executive despite bitter opposition from some quarters. The motion will hit directly at the Victorian branch which has been the strongest centre of opposition to State aid within the Labor Party.

Several independent primary schools are conducted in my district, specifically in the Barossa Valley, by the Lutheran Church, and many of the parents of the children attending these schools work in wineries and other industries. They are not wealthy. I am not citing this as a case concerning a school charging high fees; nor am I indicating that these schools may be excluded, although I believe that some schools will be excluded under the Labor Party's plan. However, I have had talks with some of the people who administer these schools, and they are of the opinion that the fairest, most just and most equitable way of distributing these funds is on the per capita basis that is already operating.

I believe that there is no really valid reason for us to deviate from the principle accepted in the other States. Although I am not casting the slightest aspersion on the ability of the committee that has been established, I believe that it would have the utmost difficulty in determining the needs of parents, and I believe that this is the basis on which the allocation

should be made. I think this is another example of the Government's flying off at a tangent when, in fact—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Could the Government establish the needs of parents?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: No, but this is what we believe is the matter at issue.

The Hon. L. J. King: How can a per capita grant deal with the needs of parents?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I pointed out earlier that many of the parents whose youngsters attend the schools that will be excluded from the scheme have a real struggle to send their children to these schools. These facts will not be known to the committee.

The Hon. L. J. King: Surely the per capita system ignores needs altogether.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: We are not disputing that a need exists. Our answer is that by aiding all parents we are doing what we can to alleviate the needs in the most equitable manner. Experience in other States and advice received from people running the schools show that the Government is again embarking on an unsound scheme. I support the motion.

Mr. KENEALLY (Stuart): I support the amendment. In doing so I congratulate the Government and the responsible Minister on allocating \$250,000 to be spent on independent schools in areas where the greatest need exists. I agree that parents should have the right to select the school that their children attend and to expect that school to provide an adequate education, whether that school is a Government or an independent school. The State Government also recognizes and accepts this responsibility; this is why it has made the grant under discussion. In addition to spending this \$250,000 on needy independent schools the Government is continuing its programme of expenditure on Government schools, also on the basis of need. Surely Opposition members cannot disagree with this policy, because it is unquestionably correct and, as the Minister of Education has said, the most Christian policy to adopt.

It is in parish schools that the additional financial assistance will have the greatest effect. Parish schools in low-income areas find the greatest difficulty in providing a decent education for the students. In saying this I do not reflect for one moment on the teachers in those schools, because they do a marvellous job under trying conditions. Fees at these schools are minimal. A school that I know very well charges \$10 a term for each student:

where there are more than three students from the one family, the total charge is \$18 a term. I know of a family of five children at this school; the family pays \$18 a term, which works out at \$3.60 a term for each child, or \$10.80 for the whole year.

Members can well imagine that schools charging such small fees (and in some cases they do not get even these fees) have great difficulty in financing their work. The school I am thinking of has been charging these fees only for the last three years. As these fees are now compulsory, some students have been forced to go to Government schools because the parents either are unable to pay the fees or refuse to pay them, low as they are. Of course, the natural result is that schools charging these minimal fees have large classes. We have already heard of a private school in Port Lincoln with classes of 70 students; because of its very small fees the school has to have large classes in order to balance its budget. Besides accepting from the moral viewpoint the responsibility of ensuring by financial grants that a good standard of education is provided to all independent schools, there are also sound economic reasons why the Government should make these grants. The member for Alexandra has already said that it costs the Government \$190 to educate a primary school child. Members do not need to be mathematical geniuses to realize that, if the parish school system educates about 16,000 children in primary grades, and if that particular system fails, it will place on Government resources a burden of about \$4,000,000 a year.

Therefore, I believe we have a financial responsibility here not only to the independent schools but also to the people of South Australia generally to support these schools. Although I personally believe that ultimately the Government should support parish schools completely, I do not think that at this time it is financially able to do so. Having discussed the matter of grants with representatives of parent bodies of parish schools, I can say that they are enthusiastic about the grant that has been made. I wish to quote the following remarks made in welcoming the grant by Doctor D. T. Dineen (President of the Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation):

We are certainly pleased that the Government is prepared to increase assistance to independent schools . . . It will certainly be a boon to Catholic primary schools in the newer areas where the rapidly growing population is made up largely of young married couples with heavy economic burdens.

This would seem to indicate that in the largest area of independent schools (that is the parish schools) this grant has been welcomed. As any assistance to independent schools is welcome, I do not think it is reasonable for members opposite to say that, because a per capita grant of \$10 has been enthusiastically welcomed by independent schools, this is the best way to assist those schools.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Do you know better than they do?

Mr. KENEALLY: I am saying that the parish schools, to which I am mainly referring, are probably the area of greatest need in education in South Australia, and I think the Government's responsibility always is to the children; the Government must make sure that the children of the State receive the education they deserve. If there is a lack of proper facilities in the parish schools, I believe it is our responsibility to do something to improve those schools.

I wish to comment on points raised by members opposite, particularly by the members for Alexandra and Torrens. The member for Torrens said that he could not afford today to send his child to an independent school without receiving a capitation grant. I am not referring for one moment to the financial status of the honourable member, but I suggest that, when he refers to an independent school, he is referring to an independent schools system that is different from the one I am talking about. I also suggest to the honourable member that, if he wishes to send one of his children to a parish school, he will probably find it within his financial capacity to have his child attend the school.

In his long speech, the member for Alexandra did not at any stage refer to parish schools. Of course, he did say that he was critical of the Government for applying a means test to the aid that should be made available to schools, but he obviously supports a school system that places a financial means test on parents who may want to have their children attend one of the more expensive schools. When members opposite (and I have in mind particularly the member for Torrens, the previous Minister of Education) refer to independent schools, they should remember that parish schools are independent schools. I will be fair to the previous Minister and agree that in his closing remarks he did pay some heed to the requirements of those schools.

The member for Alexandra has given seven worthy reasons why people want their children

to attend private schools. I will mention them and briefly comment on them, because I think they indicate the honourable member's viewpoint of what constitutes an independent school. The first reason he gives is religious training. I do not think anybody would disagree with this, because this would be the reason why most people send their children to independent schools. The second reason is independence of curriculum. I need not comment on that, because it is reasonable enough. The third reason is student association, which seems to indicate that the member believes that the student association in ordinary schools is not as good as that found among pupils in the expensive private schools. He went to some length to prove that this was not a form of snobbery. He gives as the fourth reason the unsatisfactory conditions in country schools. He thinks the answer is to provide assistance to the parents so that they can send their children to expensive schools in Adelaide, whereas I think the answer is to provide facilities for the country schools, which our Government is trying to do, so that there will be no need for people in the country to send their children to private schools in Adelaide.

The fifth reason given is smaller class size. An independent school system that I know very well is the parish school. For instance, the school at Port Lincoln has a class size of 70, so he is speaking about a different system. Another reason is the permanence of teaching staff. That does not apply to parish schools. A further reason is that most independent schools offer more sporting facilities and recreational clubs than do Government schools. The honourable member gives these reasons why parents send their children to private schools and he states a case why we, as a Government, should support a per capita grant to the people with children attending those schools. I think that these may well be good reasons for parents to send their children to certain schools, but they are not good reasons for the Government making a per capita grant to parents of children attending these schools when there are areas in this State badly in need of immediate aid.

Before I sit down, I shall comment on some of the remarks made by the member for Kavel, who was critical of the Minister's statement on taxation deductions available through the Commonwealth taxation system. He was being less than honest in his comments. It is obvious to anyone who closely examines the Commonwealth taxation system that there is a greater taxation reimbursement to people on

the higher incomes. He mentioned an income of \$32,000 a year. The Minister pointed to the figures of \$32,000 and \$1,500 as the two extremes of taxable income, but the taxable income applying to most members here is about \$8,000 a year. Even here, there is a tax reimbursement of about \$145 to the parent claiming \$300 in education expenses. (This is for the people who are on a taxable income of \$8,000.) If a person is on a taxable income of \$2,500, I think the reimbursement is \$75, so obviously an inequitable system of tax reimbursement operates here.

The Minister has rightly pointed to the Commonwealth Government as the best area for help for the parents of students that this motion is desired to assist. It would not be proper to expect the Minister of Education to suggest a formula that would be accepted by the Commonwealth Government. If he did that Opposition members would be critical and say that he was trying to tell the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Science how to do his job, and our Minister would be severely criticized. The greatest area for relief for parents who have children at school is through the Commonwealth taxation system and not by a per capita grant. The Minister made the point, which has been criticized by the Opposition, about a per capita grant being relayed to parents and not being absorbed by the school. Opposition members have tried to prove that a per capita grant is given as a relief to the parents, but my experience is that the school retains the \$10, and this is a prudent action by the school because in schools where the need is great, they cannot afford to pass on the \$10 to the parents; they have to be able to use it in the schools, and this is the correct thing to do.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That is why it is granted.

Mr. KENEALLY: Yes. If a grant of \$10 was made to a parent to whom the member for Alexandra referred and who paid fees of \$1,300 at a boarding school for a boy and \$1,050 for a girl at a boarding school, it would be less than 1 per cent of the overall school fees. However, this seems to be the kind of support that Opposition members are suggesting is worthy of our attention. To relate it more on a comparable basis, the \$10 would probably be the cost of a pair of shoes or something like that. The parents who can afford to spend \$1,300 or \$1,050 as fees to allow their children to attend the prestige and expensive schools in Adelaide are not concerned about \$10 relief. I suggest that schools that

cannot provide an adequate standard of education for the children at that school because of financial difficulties should receive assistance. This would apply not only to independent schools but also to Government schools that have the same problem, and these are receiving attention. If \$250,000 is available, it would be futile to give a large percentage of this to schools that do not need assistance.

I accept that the private, expensive, and prestige schools should exist and that, in future, the Government may be able to give relief to parents whose children attend these schools. However, I should like Opposition members to realize that our immediate problem is at schools where the needs are greatest, that is, the Catholic, Church of England, and Lutheran parish schools. This is where the money should be directed. I compliment the Government and the Minister on their action in directing the money to these schools, because this is where the greatest need is and where the greatest benefit will accrue from such grants.

Mr. EASTICK secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### RIVER TORRENS ACQUISITION BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

It is designed to remove obstacles that confront the Government and councils in attempting to improve and beautify the Torrens River. This river can and should be an important aesthetic feature in the countryside through which it passes. Unfortunately, stagnation and neglect at some points of its course detract from its attractiveness. One of the major difficulties in the way of obtaining any improvement lies in the fact that the legal tenure of much of the river bed is in private hands and, in many instances, it is difficult to ascertain exactly in whom the property rights are vested. This Bill is designed to provide for the acquisition of bed and banks of the river by the Minister of Works. Consequent on this acquisition, the Minister is charged with the duty of performing such works as are necessary to ensure the unimpeded flow of waters over land acquired by him, and with the duty of improving and beautifying the river. He may, however, transfer the acquired land to the care, control, and management of the local council, in which event those duties are to be undertaken by that council.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows: clause 1 sets out the short title, and clause 2 provides certain definitions that are necessary for the purposes of the Act. In particular, "the river" is defined as meaning so much of the Torrens River as does not lie within the city of Adelaide. It is not intended to deal with that portion of the river lying within the city of Adelaide which is, of course, efficiently maintained by the Corporation of the City of Adelaide. Clause 3 sets out the conditions precedent to the acquisition of the land constituting the river. First, a plan must be prepared delineating the land. The boundaries must be as close as practicable to the top of the river bank. When the plan has been prepared the Minister must send a copy to each council whose area comprises any portion of the land to be acquired and he must give public notice that the plan is available for inspection at the office of the Minister or of the council. A person may lodge with the Minister written representations as to whether the boundaries of the land to be acquired should be altered. The Minister is obliged to consider any such representations, and may amend the plan as he thinks fit.

Clause 4 provides for the acquisition of the land. After the expiration of a period specified in the public notice given under clause 3, the Minister may submit the plan, together with copies of the representations (if any) made in connection therewith. The Governor may, by proclamation, declare the plan to be an authorized plan. Upon that proclamation the Minister may, subject to the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, acquire the land delineated on the plan. Clause 5 obliges the Minister to execute and perform such works as are necessary to ensure the unimpeded flow of the waters of the river over lands acquired by him, and permits him to undertake work for the improvement and beautification of the river. Under subclause (2) the Minister may, by instrument in writing, transfer the land to the care, control, and management of a council.

Clause 6 exempts the Minister from liability to rates, taxes, and contributions under the Fences Act in respect of land acquired by him. Clause 7 permits the Minister to grant licences permitting the exercise of such rights over land acquired under the Act as the Minister thinks fit. Clause 8 exempts adjoining owners from any obligation under sections 8 and 9 of the River Torrens Protection Act, 1949, where the river bed has been acquired by the Minister under the new Act. Clause 9 deals with appropriation, and clause 10 permits the

Governor to make regulations for the purposes of the new Act.

Mr. COUMBE secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### POTATO MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

This short Bill is intended to give the Treasurer power to guarantee repayment of loans made to the South Australian Potato Board. Since its inception some 20 years ago the board has employed as an agent of the board the South Australian Potato Distribution Centre Proprietary Limited to undertake its marketing functions. While it is clear that in the early stages of its growth this arrangement was a feasible and practical one, the board, after a detailed examination of the situation, is now of the opinion that it is time that it assumed direct responsibility for these functions. Accordingly, the board has resolved to assume direct control in this area from October 1, 1970. To undertake its marketing functions the board will, to a considerable extent, be dependent on loan finance, and clause 2 provides for the Treasurer to execute appropriate guarantees to enable the board to seek funds for this purpose.

Mr. McANANEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

It is necessary to restore to solvency the fund constituted under the Wild Dogs Act. Following repeated submissions dating back to 1955 received from producer organizations requesting an increase in the wild dog bounty payments, the Minister of Lands directed the Pastoral Board to convene a conference to consider this particular aspect of dingo control and at the same time to inquire into dingo control measures operating in other States, which are confronted with this common problem.

Accordingly, invitations were extended to the appropriate authorities in the various States to meet in Adelaide to consider the question of increasing the bounty payments for wild dog scalps and for discussion of wild dog control measures in each State. The conference duly took place in May, 1969. It was

resolved at the conference that the bounty rate on a wild dog scalp should be increased to \$6. The Pastoral Board, after due consideration, recommended on June 17, 1969, that effect be given to the resolution passed at the conference that the then bounty payment of \$2 for the scalp of a wild dog be increased to \$6. The notice increasing the bounty payment from \$2 to \$6 as from September 1, 1969, was published in the *Gazette* on August 14, 1969.

In making this recommendation the board was influenced by the following factors:

(1) The bounty payment was last upgraded in 1948 to the figure of \$2. Since that time costs of killing wild dogs have risen steeply and the \$2 bounty payment provided insufficient incentive to interest people in wild dog destruction. No professional dogger was operating in South Australia. It may be pointed out that for the same period the payment made to owners of the dog fence to assist them in maintaining the fence in dog-proof condition had been increased from \$12 a mile to \$35 a mile.

(2) The Stockowners Association of South Australia and the Vermin Districts Association, the two producer organizations whose members are most directly concerned with the dingo problem, strongly advocated and supported an increase in the bounty payment to \$6. Both associations fully appreciated that such an increase would also involve their ratable members in the payment of additional wild dog rates. In fact their contributions were trebled with the rise in bounty payment from \$2 to \$6.

(3) Reports have been received by the board of unprecedented calf losses in the Far Northern cattle areas caused by dingo activity. These reports were confirmed by the pastoral inspectors and the board's investigations. It was evident that urgent measures had to be taken to curb the rising dingo activity if cattle-breeding programmes were to survive, particularly in the Far North of the State. Also, it was obvious that the build-up in the dingo population would place a dangerous pressure on the dog fence, which is now the only functional barrier between the sheep population of the State and the dingo-breeding areas outside the fence. It was considered that the most expeditious manner of attaining this object was to increase the bounty payment.

(4) The Wild Dogs Fund as at June 30, 1969, was in a healthy position, having a credit balance of \$46,000, which, with rates and

subsidy to be paid for the year 1969-70 totaling about \$28,000, would provide for the payment of about 12,000 scalps at \$6 each. Despite reports of increased dingo activity, it was not expected that this figure would be exceeded in the light of bounty payments made over the preceding 10 years. During that period scalps were submitted at an average rate of less than 4,000 a year. In fact, however, 19,490 scalps were submitted, requiring a total bounty pay-out of \$111,060 representing 1,470 scalps at \$2 each and 18,020 at \$6. After borrowing from the Treasury \$8,000 (the maximum advance permitted under the Wild Dogs Act) the Wild Dogs Fund at June 30, 1970, was \$39,200 in debt.

In order to alleviate these financial problems for the year 1970-71, the bounty payment has been reduced from \$6 to \$4 for the scalp of a fully grown wild dog, and from \$6 to \$1 for the scalp of a wild dog which is not fully grown. Also, the rate a square mile has been increased from 10c to 15c, the maximum rate permitted by the Act, which will provide an additional \$8,000 in revenue. These measures, however, will be inadequate to restore the fund to solvency if, as may reasonably be expected, 12,000 scalps are submitted during the 1970-71 financial year in the ratio of 10,000 fully grown dogs at \$4 and 2,000 pups at \$1.

On the above hypothesis there will be an estimated deficit of about \$58,000. In order to

overcome this deficit the Bill increases the maximum rate to 25c a square mile. The limitation upon the dollar for dollar subsidy payable by the Government to the fund is removed. The total amount of the loan that may be advanced to the fund is increased to \$50,000. It is hoped that these measures will restore the fund to solvency within two years.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows: clause 1 is formal, and clause 2 amends section 5 of the principal Act. This section imposes the rate upon land for the purposes of the Act. By subsection (2) of this section the maximum rate is 15c a square mile. The Bill raises this maximum rate to 25c a square mile. Clause 3 amends section 8 of the principal Act. This section provides for the Treasurer to pay to the credit of the fund a subsidy of \$1 for every \$1 collected as rates. Subsection (2) of this section provides that the subsidy shall not exceed \$8,000. This restriction upon the amount of the subsidy is removed by the Bill. Clause 4 amends section 9 of the principal Act. This section provides for the Governor to make loans to the fund of an amount not exceeding \$8,000. The Bill raises the maximum amount that may be advanced to the fund to \$50,000.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.43 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, August 13, at 2 p.m.