

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 28, 1973

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

LAND COMMISSION BILL

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

URBAN LAND (PRICE CONTROL) BILL

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

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such further amounts of money as might be required for the purposes of the proposed amendments to be moved to the Bill by the Minister of Works.

QUESTIONS**DARTMOUTH DAM**

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I have today sent to the Prime Minister a letter, a copy of which I will table. The Prime Minister has also been sent a telex message informing him of the contents of the letter, which is on its way. The letter states:

My dear Prime Minister, The South Australian Government has considered your letter of August 22, 1973, and rejects out of hand the suggestion of the Coombs task force that the construction of the Dartmouth dam be slowed down or deferred. To do so would place the future of South Australia in real danger. The State's water supply is already at risk with the probability of restriction of our River Murray entitlement one year in three. Without Dartmouth the risk becomes greater each year. Dartmouth will provide additional water to South Australia and any delay could result in severe restrictions. This would naturally bring about loss of production and endanger proposed developments such as the petro-chemical industry at Redcliffs—not to mention the hardship it would cause to individuals. There is no doubt that the early completion of Dartmouth is essential to the reasonable safety of water needs in South Australia. Its construction cannot be slowed down without harmful affects on this State and Australia as a whole.

South Australia has already suffered from enforced restrictions in 1967 and 1945, and there was lesser reduction of entitlement flows in three of the intervening years. The 1967 summer restrictions resulted in the water flowing into South Australia being cut by 260 000 acre feet. Water quality was seriously affected and there was severe salt damage to irrigated orchards. Water taken from the river for urban and farm use was undesirably saline and well outside acceptable standards for water supply. Any repetition of the dry conditions which affected the Murray watershed in the nine years culminating in the 1945 drought would mean six seasons of restricted supply in South Australia. In five of these seasons the water available to South Australia would be reduced, at least over some months, by more than 25 per cent. Even in years of relatively ample rainfall such as last year, the present system can be overtaxed. The River Murray Commission storages were full and water was available to the commission out of the Menindee Lakes; yet there were plans to curtail supply following a rapid draw down of storage. I am sure

you will agree that this indicates the narrow margin on which the River Murray resources are used.

South Australia's present entitlement under the River Murray agreement is 1 254 000 acre feet, although, as I have said, there is at present a probability of below-entitlement flow one year in three. Dartmouth will ensure a supply in excess of 1 254 000 acre feet each year. The entitlement must be regarded as comprising two factors—a base flow to cover evaporation and other losses, and water available for use. While these are respectively considered to be 564 000 and 690 000 acre feet, the base flow figure is below essential requirements and all of the 690 000 acre feet is not available for use. A better figure is 600 000 acre feet, but restrictions, when applied, are in relation to 690 000 acre feet. Our present usage of irrigation water is committed to about 400 000 acre feet a year. No expansion of irrigated land areas has been permitted since November, 1970, in spite of sustained demands from the industry to be allowed to extend as private unsubsidized ventures. The ban on expansion is based solely on lack of availability of water, and this situation will not be changed by the augmented entitlement provided under the River Murray Waters Agreement when the Dartmouth storage becomes effective. Apart from irrigation, South Australia increasingly relies on the River Murray for reticulated water for metropolitan and urban supply as well as for stock and domestic use in rural areas. The existing diversion capacity for this is 350 000 acre feet a year although the maximum draw-off so far has been 105 000 acre feet. However, it should be pointed out that a repetition of the dry conditions before the 1967 summer would greatly upset this figure. It is recognized that, if New South Wales were prepared to assure substantial contributions to the River Murray system for the Blowering-Burrinjuck storages, it would be possible to mitigate the potential danger of serious restrictions in South Australia. It seems apparent from existing information that such surplus water does not exist, in the dry years at least. In conclusion, the construction of Dartmouth on schedule is vital to this State and we cannot agree with the suggestion of your advisers that the project be slowed down or deferred.

Mr. COUMBE: Will the Premier give further information concerning the letter that he has just read and tabled about Dartmouth dam? This matter culminated from a question by the Leader last Thursday and the reading of a letter from the Prime Minister, followed by the Government's announcement that it would send a letter to the Prime Minister. I say immediately that the Government has the complete support of the Opposition in its move. Will the Premier inform members as soon as possible of the results of any talks that he or his Government may have with the Prime Minister and of the receipt of any letters about this matter? We consider that the Dartmouth dam project is so vital to South Australia that no stone should be left unturned to have this project finalized.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I appreciate the expression of view of the Deputy Leader, and certainly I will keep the House informed on this matter. The Prime Minister's office has been told not only by the letter that I have sent but also by telephone conversation of the views that were taken by the South Australian Government (and I have no doubt by the South Australian people) of the suggestion made by him. From the outset we have made it clear that we utterly reject, as all members do, this proposition, and we will maintain that position. If there is any further information from the Commonwealth I will let the House have it immediately.

MISSING CHILDREN

Dr. EASTICK: Can the Premier say whether Cabinet has considered offering a free pardon for any person or persons who are accessories after the fact to the abduction of the two young girls from the precincts of the Adelaide Oval last Saturday? I do not in any circumstances (nor does anyone in this House) condone the action that led to the abduction of these two children, but it is possible that

some person (or persons) has become an accessory to the fact subsequent to the event. Whilst I agree to and accept the responsibility shown by the Government and support its action in making funds available for a reward if called for, I ask the Premier whether this further measure has been considered, because it is a measure that may lead to a successful conclusion to the inquiry.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: We do consider such a proposal when the Police Force suggests that it may help in the inquiries. However, no submission to this effect was suggested yesterday at the time when the reward was offered, although we have taken this course in other cases at the same time as we have offered a reward. I will consult with the Commissioner of Police and, if it is considered that there would be any usefulness in such a suggestion, it will be taken up.

Mr. MATHWIN: Will the Premier reconsider his plans to introduce legislation abolishing the death penalty in all circumstances? This latest abduction has left thousands of parents wondering whether they can safely allow their children to play alone in unprotected areas in Adelaide. With school holidays in progress there are thousands of young children outside the protection of the schoolyard, and many parents have the nagging fear that this tragedy may be repeated. The Premier has foreshadowed legislation this session abolishing the death penalty. Will he now consider an amendment to it that will maintain capital punishment in certain circumstances, such as for the abduction of young children?

Mr. Gunn: And corporal punishment.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MATHWIN: Does the Premier agree that we must use every weapon at our disposal to ensure that a case similar to that which occurred over the weekend does not occur again?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Government will not reconsider its proposals to introduce legislation to abolish the death penalty.

Mr. Gunn: What about your support of the parole of Stuart?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Eyre. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The statistics clearly show that the death penalty is no uniquely effective deterrent. If the honourable member were to look at the United States of America, where several quite serious crimes have occurred recently in States that not only retain but also practise the death penalty, he would see that what I have said is the case. To people who are not normal and who are much less than normal (and that is the case with most murderers) the death penalty is not a deterrent at all, because they do not take account of the deterrent effect of the punishment.

Mr. Mathwin: That's your guess.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The statistics on this are incontrovertible. One instance of this kind (which the Government utterly deplors and about which we will do everything in our power) does not alter the facts in relation to the death penalty. It does little credit to the honourable member to use in the way he has the case that he has raised this afternoon.

Mr. Mathwin: It doesn't—

The SPEAKER: Order!

STRATHMONT LIGHTING

Mr. WELLS: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation a reply to my recent question about a street-lighting scheme for Grand Junction Road between Foster Road and Walkley Road?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Highways Department has prepared a design for a street-lighting scheme for Grand Junction Road between Foster Road and Walkley Road. However, as modifications to the existing facilities of the Electricity Trust of South Australia are involved, the approval of the trust is at present being sought. The scheme will proceed as soon as the trust approves it, and it is expected that the project will be completed by the end of this year. The improved lighting on this section of road should lessen the danger to persons using the entrance gates to Strathmont Centre.

MURRAY RIVER SALINITY

Dr. TONKIN: Can the Minister of Works say what progress has been made in the implementation of salinity control measures in the Murray River system? Is the Minister satisfied that work is progressing as speedily as possible? As a result of the present unfortunate actions of the Commonwealth Government, the future of the Dartmouth dam is not so clear as it was, and salinity and salinity control is of great importance in South Australia. What progress has been made in this matter, especially on the South Australian side of the border?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I am not satisfied with the progress made on salinity control in the Murray River, not only in South Australia but in New South Wales and Victoria. I have a report from the Engineer-in-Chief on events that have occurred recently concerning this problem. Indeed, this problem is even more worrying than the problem of the volume of water in the river. The Gutteridge report, of which the honourable member is aware, recommended that further and continued investigations be required to evaluate the proposed solutions. At the same time it was recognized in the Engineering and Water Supply Department that there was an urgent need to rehabilitate the older comprehensive drainage schemes and that some evaporation basins were over-taxed. It was felt therefore that a programme of systematic investigation was needed to consider the salinity problem as a whole and to develop a programme of works which would be implemented in stages to give the maximum benefits.

A committee was set up immediately on the receipt of the Gutteridge report. One of the most outstanding differences between its observations and those contained in the Gutteridge report concerned the sum required to be spent just in South Australia to do something about this problem. The Gutteridge report refers to about \$1,500,000, whereas the inter-departmental committee refers to about \$11,500,000. There was this tremendous difference in the estimate of the cost of work required to relieve the problem in South Australia. The departmental committee was formed in late 1971 within the Engineering and Water Supply Department, with representatives from the Mines and Agriculture Departments to direct the investigations. To co-ordinate interstate activities, the River Murray Commission established a salinity committee to recommend investigations and, subsequently, works to control salinity problems aggravated by commission works. An interstate liaison committee was established to co-ordinate State salinity study programmes. In March, 1973, the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the three States (New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia) established the Murray River working party which is responsible to a

steering committee of the relevant Ministers. The most important of their tasks is the salinity problem in the Murray River, and they have appointed a salinity committee to co-ordinate work in this area. The working party is to submit an initial report to the steering committee in September, 1973, which will "examine and recommend urgent interim measures which might be implemented in the short term to deal with the salinity problems of the Murray River waters and the means by which those measures might be financed and operated".

The programme of investigations into salinity problems is well under way at Renmark, Berri, Loxton, Barmera (including Lake Bonney), Waikerie and Cadell. Investigations have been completed in the Lake Victoria area and in the Chowilla and lock 6 area. The first project report (on the first stage of the Lake Victoria salinity control scheme) has been prepared in draft form and will be submitted to the River Murray Commission shortly. The works recommended will control 7 per cent of the total salt-load increase from lock 9 to Morgan. The Lake Victoria submission will be followed by further submissions on proposed schemes in other areas both to the commission (where problems are related to commission works) and to the Australian Government. Expenditure on the above investigations since September, 1971, amounts to \$120,000.

I have heard the member for Chaffey criticizing the Government for its inaction in this matter, but I think he will be the first to admit that the problem cannot be tackled piecemeal. This must be done properly, and I believe that the Government is pursuing the matter in the proper way and that we will soon see some tangible results. However, we believe that that is not possible until we know exactly where we are going, how the work is to be financed, and how it will fit into the total scheme of things.

POLLUTION

Mr. OLSON: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation a reply to the question I asked on August 8 about pollution in the Osborne area?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The honourable member has expressed concern over the Electricity Trust power station and the Imperial Chemistry Industries plant at Osborne cleaning boilers whilst adverse wind conditions prevail. I have been informed by the Director-General of Public Health that the Electricity Trust soot-blows about once every month and tries to do so when the wind is blowing away from local residents. I.C.I., because it operates coal-fired boilers, normally soot-blows at shift changes, that is, at 4 p.m., midnight and 8 a.m. Operators have been instructed to vary the soot-blowing time if adverse wind directions exist; however, it is not possible to avoid soot-blowing without closing down the plant, and some inconvenience could occur if the wind is constantly from one direction. In general the levels of emission from the Osborne power station have been reduced considerably through the limited use now made of the station. In the case of I.C.I., the Public Health Department has required that control measures be instituted to prevent particulate emission and to improve gaseous dispersion.

Mr. Coumbe, for Mr. EVANS (on notice):

1. What is the name of each industrial factory that discharges waste into St. Vincent Gulf or Spencer Gulf, either directly or by excessive waste overflow escape channels?

2. What are the products manufactured by each of these factories?

3. How many towns or cities discharge sewage, either treated or raw, into either St. Vincent Gulf or Spencer Gulf?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. See reports of the Engineering and Water Supply Department entitled Spencer Gulf Water Pollution Studies—Reconnaissance Survey, and Gulf St. Vincent Water Pollution Studies—Progress Report, May, 1973. I presume the honourable member is capable of reading them.

2. *Vide* No. 1.

3. *Vide* No. 1.

ROAD PROJECTS

Mr. EVANS: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, a reply to the questions I asked during the debate on the Public Purposes Loan Bill about certain Highways Department road projects?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The roads referred to by the honourable member in items one to six of his question are regarded by the Highways Department as being long-range projects. They are at present under consideration to provide a connection between the South-Eastern Freeway and the Adelaide Plains. No detailed design work has as yet been carried out, and construction would not commence before 1980. It is intended to reconstruct the Old Belair Road (question No. 7) during the 1975-76 financial year, subject to the availability of funds. With regard to item No. 8, it is intended to commence work on the reconstruction of the Adelaide-Goolwa Main Road No. 11 (Belair-Blackwood section) during the 1974-75 financial year. This is also subject to the availability of funds. It is not intended to construct an over-pass at the Glenalta railway level crossing. However, this crossing will be provided with automatic boom gates and warning lights and gongs, replacing the existing wig-wag signals. Initial work on this installation has already commenced.

WILMINGTON ROAD

Mr. KENEALLY: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to the question I recently asked about the Wilmington road?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Highways Department intends to reconstruct completely the Wilmington road from Stirling North to Horrocks Pass. The required survey and design work is at present in hand, and construction is planned to be undertaken between 1975 and 1977, subject to the availability of funds.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Mr. VENNING: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to the question I asked on August 16 about legislation dealing with commercial road transport?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: It is expected that legislation to implement recommendations of the committee which considered the operations of commercial road transport will be submitted to Parliament in the latter part of this session. It will certainly not be introduced before my colleague's return from overseas on September 10.

Later:

Mr. VENNING: Will the Minister representing the Minister of Transport have a further look at the question I asked on August 16 about road transport and bring down a suitable reply to that question? The Minister has given a reply, for which I am thankful, but when one reads the question one sees that the reply has no relevance. Therefore, I ask the Minister to be good enough to have another look at the question with a view to bringing down a report in connection with it, perhaps tomorrow.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I will examine the point the honourable member makes and see whether I

can ascertain what is the difference between the original question and the reply.

MADDOCK FAUNA PARK

Mr. RODDA: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation consider establishing an advisory committee under the auspices of the Naracoorte Chamber of Commerce to help in the running and maintenance of the Maddock Fauna Park at the Naracoorte caves? During the weekend I was approached by members of the Naracoorte Chamber of Commerce who are concerned about the effectiveness of the fauna park, in which there are 16 kangaroos and two emus. The park comprises 25 acres (10 ha) and it is surrounded by a 7ft. (about 2 m) wire netting fence. The kangaroos keep out of sight in the thick bushland of the park and are not seen by the hundreds of tourists visiting the caves. There is a spread of *dolicus*, a parasitic type of vine-like plant, in the reserve and it has been noticed that the number of rabbits within the park is increasing. The local chamber of commerce would like to help the department improve the park as a tourist attraction and I see the formation of a local committee as the ideal way of doing this.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be happy to examine the proposal and bring down a reply. While visiting the area next week, I will get some information on the spot.

PETROL STATIONS

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Has the Premier a reply to my question on August 2 concerning the rationalization of petrol re-sale outlets in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The terms of the voluntary retail outlet disinvestment scheme have been accepted by the parties and it is not feasible to amend them. The scheme provides that the number of retail outlets in South Australia will be reduced by about 10 per cent by June 30, 1974, and that these will include a reduction of 10 per cent in the company-owned outlets in the metropolitan area. There is no penalty imposed on owners transferring to other oil companies when their current agreement expires.

HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE

Mr. ARNOLD: Has the Premier a reply to my recent question about household insurance?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The General Manager of the State Government Insurance Commission has reported that, as the commission's houseowner's and householder's policy is a contract of indemnity, it is feasible that, in the event of a total loss being sustained, less than the insured value could be paid to a client. The main criterion in the adjustment of claims is the actual value at the time of the loss, and in the event of goods destroyed being worth less than the policy sum insured, the payment would be limited to the amount representing the actual value.

TRAVEL AGENTS

Mr. BECKER: Can the Premier say when the Government will introduce legislation to control travel agents in this State? I understand that a Bill has been passed by the New South Wales Legislative Assembly placing certain obligations on travel agents and that the legislation calls for the licensing of all travel agents in that State and for the establishment of a travel agents' fidelity fund. I understand also that the Bill provides that each licensee shall be required under the regulations to keep a trust account that shall be subject to audit by a public accountant. Provision is made for the inspection of the books of

account of a licensee. Fraudulent conversion or omission to account for moneys carries a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment. I also understand that advertising by licensed travel agents would be regulated and penalties are provided for breaches of those provisions and for false or misleading advertising. In view of the considerable amount of money lost by South Australians through the collapse of unscrupulous travel agents, my previous questions on this subject in the last Parliament, and the reply that the Government would not introduce legislation unless it was uniform, will the Premier now take action similar to that taken by the New South Wales Government as a matter of urgency in order to protect prospective travellers in this State?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, I cannot do that until there is satisfactory provision for the indemnity fund. Legislation of the kind to which the honourable member has referred was ready last year for presentation to the House. Indeed, we had our legislation drafted ahead of anyone else. The problem was that neither from payments into the indemnity fund at any reasonable figure that could be an impost on travel agents nor from an interest payment on trust accounts (nor from a combination of both) could a sufficient fidelity fund be established out of the number of travel agents in South Australia. It simply would not provide the necessary security. The only way to run an operation of this kind is to have it Commonwealth-wide. New South Wales can go it alone if it chooses to do so, because it has by far the bulk of the travel agents. Therefore, it is large enough to be able to raise a reasonably-sized indemnity fund from imposts on travel agents, whereas we do not have sufficient travel agents to do that. The matter has been held up because the Commonwealth Government has said that it will legislate, and we will introduce supplementary legislation that deals with intrastate transactions within that area of Commonwealth licensing. We are waiting on this at present. Travel agents themselves agree with the terms we have had prepared, but, until we can get effective common funding for an indemnity fund, I am afraid that the legislation will not be good for anything like the use for which we designed it. We are pursuing this matter at present.

FISHING LICENCES

Mr. CHAPMAN: My question is supplementary to a question I asked about this matter on August 21. Can the Minister of Fisheries say whether lobster authorities are transferable between fishermen in circumstances that involve adding lobster pot licences to those already worked? At the start of his reply to my previous question about the freedom to transfer, sell or make a gift of a fishing licence, the Minister said:

The rock lobster and prawn authorities are transferable . . .

I am interested to know whether such licences or authorities are transferable in the case of adding a pot licence to a licence already held as a result of purchase or an arrangement to transfer one licence from one vessel to another licence holder and owner of another vessel, bearing in mind that there will be strict adherence to the provisions of the Act relating to the number of pots that may be worked from the fishing vessel, and having regard to the criterion observed throughout the industry involving the number of pots to be worked in relation to the overall length of the vessel as prescribed in the Act.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The answer to the honourable member's question is, in general terms, "No". I am

sure that the honourable member will support a policy of encouraging the fishing industry as an owner-operator industry as far as that is practicable. To the extent that it is practicable, we will not approve existing holders of rock lobster authorities accumulating further authorities by purchasing them from other fishermen working in the industry. If we did so approve, it would not be too many years before we might well find that the rock lobster industry was controlled effectively by a few people, and the whole basis of the industry, as one in which the base unit of operation was the owner-operator, would disappear. The general policy we will follow in this area is to encourage owner-operation so far as it is practicable to encourage that. Special circumstances arise from the previous history of the industry where we may have to take into account a partnership, or something of that type. Where a fisherman was intending to sell to an existing holder of a rock lobster permit his own permit so that the new holder became the operator of two, three or more rock lobster boats, our view would be that that was not in the long-term interests of the rock lobster industry. In view of that, if it is necessary we will bring down appropriate regulations to ensure that we can retain this industry as an owner-operator industry. I am sure that the honourable member will be happy to support such a policy, and even support it publicly.

WEED SPRAYING

Mr. McANANEY: I understand that the Minister of Environment and Conservation, representing the Minister of Transport, has a reply to one of my 14 unanswered questions.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I am not sure which reply the honourable member wants, but I will give him the following reply to his question about weed spraying along the South-Eastern Freeway: the Highways Department intends to continue the sowing of mixed grasses in selected cutting faces and other areas on the South-Eastern Freeway between Verdun and Mount Barker and beyond. The planting of trees, shrubs and ground cover plants will also be continued. The department employs full-time qualified personnel in the horticultural field and also has ready access to expert advice from the Director of the Botanic Garden, and the Woods and Forests Department in selecting the most appropriate and economic planting schemes. The work done to date in the planting of mixed grasses has proved economic, aesthetically pleasing and technically successful for erosion and slip control.

CAMPBELLTOWN ROAD

Mr. SLATER: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation a reply to my recent question about work on Church Road, Campbelltown?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Highways Department intends eventually to widen Church Road, Campbelltown. However, this is a long-term proposal, and it is not expected that it will be implemented during the next 10 years.

STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

Mr. MATHWIN: In the absence of the Minister of Transport, will the Minister of Environment and Conservation ensure that the practice of running trips for special occasions by trains drawn by steam locomotives is maintained? I understand that four steam locomotives are operating in South Australia for special train tours around the State. These trips are usually booked out: as many as 900 people try to book on them. The trips, which are extremely popular, are making a profit. The locomotives

are maintained by the Australian Railway Historical Society and the service could be claimed to be one of the few profitably run rail passenger services in South Australia, if not the only such service. When I inquired yesterday, I was told that the service would cease in 1975.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I will check the information the honourable member has given to find out whether the South Australian Railways intends to take the action to which he has referred. If such a decision has been made, I will let the honourable member know the reason for it.

RESTRICTED FILMS

Mr. WRIGHT: Has the Attorney-General a reply to the question I asked on August 7 regarding restricted films?

The Hon. L. J. KING: As requested by the honourable member, I have obtained figures regarding the number of restricted films shown for the period of 14 weeks to August 17, 1973. Those figures are as follows:

Metropolitan Area:

Number of programmes with R content 69.

Number of programmes with no R content 126.

Total number of programmes screened 195.

Percentage of R programmes screened 35.3.

Country Towns:

Number of programmes with R content 45.

Number of programmes with no R content 184.

Total number of programmes screened 229.

Percentage of R programmes screened 19.6.

The two major drive-in circuit operators claim that they endeavour to avoid both circuits screening R programmes simultaneously, thereby ensuring that practically always one half of the drive-ins are not screening R films.

COUNCIL GRANT

Mr. WARDLE: In the absence of the Minister of Local Government, has the Minister of Environment and Conservation a reply to the question I asked on August 8 about the cancellation of a grant of \$3,000 to the Mount Barker council?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Certain funds were allocated by the Highways Department to the District Council of Mount Barker in the 1972-73 financial year for work on the Kanmantoo mine access road. However, this finance was allotted on the basis that any funds not spent as at June 30 would be automatically cancelled. This is in accordance with established procedures and the council is fully conversant with these procedures. In considering the council's application for assistance, the department has had to take into account the total funds available for rural roads, cost increases, and other factors. Consequently, the department has been unable to provide funds to the council this year for this road, because it is of a relatively low priority in comparison with other works within the State. The position beyond this year cannot be predicted, as there will be new legislation to provide for Commonwealth aid for roads from July 1, 1974. The expenditure to date on this road of \$48,500 has been wholly met by the Highways Department.

BRIDGING FINANCE

Dr. EASTICK: Will the Premier say what criteria the Government will use to determine the implementation of the bridging finance provisions under the new financial agreement with the Commonwealth Government regarding housing? When the Premier was explaining a document about the measure to ratify the five-year agreement, he was asked about the implementation of the bridging

finance provisions and it was stated clearly that this information would be given during debate on the Bill. The Premier has not given this information and I consider it essential that members know the ramifications of these provisions before being asked to support the Bill.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Criteria have not been laid down by the Commonwealth Government. There were no provisions in the previous agreement for bridging finance to be available for community facilities. The agreement provides that before bridging finance is made available permission must be sought from the Commonwealth Minister. It is considered that the initiative for the types of amenities for which bridging finance can be made available should come from local government or local communities. If such bodies have a community amenity which they believe could be provided if bridging finance were available, then they should communicate with either myself or the Housing Trust and we will communicate with the Commonwealth Minister to seek his consent to the advance of money.

FARM MACHINERY

Mr. GUNN: Will the Premier say what action the South Australian Government has taken to offset the effects of the Commonwealth Budget on South Australian farm machinery manufacturers affected by the removal of tax concessions in respect of primary producers, who have been purchasing large quantities of farm machinery? It seems that, since the backlog of orders has been made up, farmers will not be keen to order new machinery, owing to its high cost and the small sum they will be able to write off in their income tax returns. Obviously, this state of affairs will cause unemployment in the industry, which has been affected by the rural recession.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will investigate the honourable member's prophesies. They do not seem to accord with the reports given me about the buoyancy of the agricultural machinery market.

Mr. Gunn: There was a backlog.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member has spoken of the effects of the rural recession. I assure him that, on reports to me, demand from the rural area is now so buoyant that one cannot reasonably speak of the rural recession having an effect on sales of agricultural machinery.

Mr. Gunn: But they—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: On the reports to me, there is no likelihood of a lessening of demand for a considerable period. However, I will get a full report for the honourable member on what he has suggested.

MORGAN DOCKYARD

Mr. ALLEN: Will the Premier say whether the Government will consider delaying the removal to Murray Bridge of the Morgan dockyard until the proposed expansion of Penfolds Wines Proprietary Limited at Morgan has been achieved? Members are aware that the Government's policy is to transfer the operations of the Morgan dockyard to Murray Bridge, despite many protests by residents of the Morgan district. At present, of the 22 men employed at the dockyard, 15 own their houses in the town. If the removal of the dockyard were delayed until the grape plantings come into production, it would allow employees to remain in Morgan, or, if they wished to transfer to Murray Bridge, they would be able to dispose of their houses at a reasonable price.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Although I think it is unlikely that we can postpone the transfer, I will obtain a report for the honourable member.

FREIGHT CHARGES

Mr. COUMBE: What consideration, if any, has the Government given to the report by the Coombs Task Force concerning freight charges on coal transported from Leigh Creek to Port Augusta? Whilst I appreciate that this is only one of many recommendations (and only a recommendation), if this action were taken undoubtedly it would have a deleterious effect on the efficiency of the Port Augusta power station. I therefore ask the Premier whether he or his Government has considered approaching the Commonwealth Government, in the same way as he has approached it about the Dartmouth dam project, to point out to the Prime Minister the effects that such action may have on the power station at Port Augusta and the possibility of an increase of electricity tariffs in this State.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Our views on that matter will be communicated to the Commonwealth Government. We are examining the Coombs Task Force report and getting out material on all matters in it that may relate to South Australia in any way. As the honourable member has said, an alteration in the freight rate on coal from Leigh Creek would affect disastrously the economics of the power station at Port Augusta, and this suggested action seems to be completely at variance with inquiries from the Commonwealth Minister of Minerals and Energy about the future use of soft coal in South Australia for electricity generation. I assure the honourable member that this matter has not escaped the notice of the Government and that we are preparing material on this matter, and on any other matter referred to in the report, that may affect South Australia.

NORTH-EAST ROAD

Mrs. BYRNE: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation ascertain when the widening and reconstruction work now taking place on a section of North-East Road, Ridgehaven, leading to Hancock Road, is expected to be completed?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be pleased to obtain that information for the honourable member.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Mr. VENNING: I have a question for the Minister of Education, whom I do not see in the Chamber at present. He has told me that he has a reply to the question I asked some time ago about further education, particularly music instruction, and I shall be pleased if the Minister, who has now returned, would give me a reply to my question.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am always pleased to provide a service for the honourable member in his last term in Parliament. With its comparatively limited resources, the Music Branch of the Education Department is providing an excellent advisory service in classroom music as well as instruction in instrumental music within most of the metropolitan area and some country centres. At Whyalla, an adviser in classroom music serves the Western Region, and there is also some instruction in instrumental music, mainly in strings. In the Southern Region, centred at Mount Gambier, a similar service is provided, but the instrumental section is more comprehensive. In several Upper Murray towns, the Music Branch arranges instruction in strings, but there is no advisory teacher in classroom music. In the country area, which the honourable member represents, it is intended to provide

a better service next year by the appointment of an advisory teacher in classroom music attached to the Clare Regional Office.

It is hoped that this will eventually lead to a development of instrumental instruction in schools as has occurred at Whyalla and Mount Gambier. However, it cannot be guaranteed that this development would include "piano playing". With the resources available, the Music Branch cannot possibly provide instruction in all musical instruments to all students desiring such instruction. As most students are able to find private piano teachers, the branch has tended to channel its resources into other areas. Its main aim, of course, is to see that as many children as possible gain general experience in music making and musical appreciation and that some will be sufficiently motivated to continue music as a full subject at secondary level. I am sure that the honourable member will appreciate that the initial need of the Music Branch of the department is to concentrate any instrumental instruction on those instruments that are not readily available in the areas with which we are concerned.

SALARY INCREASES

Mr. HALL: Can the Premier say what the cost will be to the Government of the recent increases in salaries of heads of departments and clerical officers in the Public Service?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: There have been several increases, some made directly by the Public Service Board, some by Executive Council, and some are the subject of a Bill to be introduced this afternoon. I think what I can best do for the honourable member is to obtain a report on the full range that could conceivably be embraced by his question, and I will do that.

UNDER-AGE DRINKING

Mr. McANANEY: Has the Attorney-General a reply from the Chief Secretary to the question I asked on August 9 about details of under-age drinking?

The Hon. L. J. KING: My colleague states that 55 persons under the age of 18 years were convicted for drinking on licensed premises during the year ended June 30, 1973.

FREE MILK

Dr. TONKIN: Will the Minister of Education investigate the relative advantages of using bottles instead of cartons in which to provide milk for schoolchildren? Representations have been made to me by parents of children attending the Rose Park school that, last year when the school changed from using bottles to using cartons, several children who previously had drunk the milk complained that they did not like the flavour and were disinclined to drink it. It has also been pointed out that the disposal of cartons is difficult because the school incinerator is now full of nothing but cartons that continue to discharge a heavy pall of smoke over the vicinity. The use of bottles, which are reusable and therefore recyclable, would comply with the requirements of the Minister of Environment and Conservation. I suggest that bottles can be used equally as well for orange juice as for milk.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The way in which milk is provided in schools will have to be reviewed for two reasons: the first relates to the Government's general policy on the use of containers and the charging of a deposit on their sale, so that the kind of problem to which the honourable member has referred can be avoided generally in the community; and the second reason relates to the decision of the Commonwealth Government to

modify the free-milk scheme. Perhaps I would be offending against Standing Orders, because of a Question on Notice, if I said more about that matter at this stage.

Mr. Hall, for Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice): Is the Government in agreement with the decision of the Commonwealth Government either to abandon or to modify the free milk scheme for schoolchildren?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The proposal of the Australian Government is for the provision of milk, or substitutes, to schoolchildren on a needs basis. A meeting of Ministers has been proposed for the end of September to discuss details. It is not possible to express agreement or disagreement at this stage as no details of the proposed modification of the scheme are available. The possibility of orange juice being one of the available substitutes will be raised at the meeting of Ministers.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Mr. EVANS: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation a reply to my recent question concerning the effects of the zoning regulations and the Building Act on building in the Stirling District Council area?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The honourable member has asked that the supplementary zoning plans and regulations for the Stirling District Council area be gazetted before the new Building Act is put into effect. In my earlier reply, I undertook to establish the likely timetable of the supplementary plans for the area and whether I could give the honourable member the assurance he seeks. The Stirling District Council area has formed part of a total Mount Lofty Ranges study, which has now been completed, and a report is being printed. The proposed supplementary development plan to vary the metropolitan plan will shortly be forwarded to councils for comment. It is expected that the draft proposals will be placed on public display later this year. The State Planning Authority is implementing interim development control within the Stirling District Council area at the council's request. The size of allotments upon which a house may be erected in Stirling has been governed by a by-law made by the district council under the Building Act. This by-law may not be deemed to be valid when the new Building Act comes into operation on January 1, 1974. As a matter of policy, interim development control can be used after January 1, 1974, to implement the provisions of the present building by-law until the interim control is replaced by zoning regulations. Applications for new allotments could be refused under the subdivision control powers of the Planning and Development Act exercised by the council and the Director of Planning. Further regulations are being drafted to strengthen this land subdivision control in areas such as Stirling, where larger than normal minimum sizes are desirable.

LAND TAX

Mr. BECKER: Has the Premier a reply to my question of August 9 concerning land tax payments?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Land tax is payable at post offices if payment is tendered on or before the due date for payment shown on the account. Specific arrangements are made each year with the Director of Posts and Telegraphs for the acceptance of the payments at post offices during the land-tax billing period, which usually extends from October to May. A final date for their acceptance is determined, having regard to the due dates of the last batch of accounts billed and those for amended accounts which may have to be issued subsequently. For 1972-73, the due date for the last batch of accounts was May 1, 1973, and to allow for amended accounts the final

date for payment at post offices was extended to July 31, 1973. Apart from follow-up notices issued where payment has not been made by the due dates of the original accounts, few land tax notices are issued after the completion of the main billing programme. Their volume does not justify the cost of maintaining the machinery for collection through post offices. The accounts concerned are clearly endorsed to the effect that they cannot be paid at a post office.

GLENELG TRAMS

Mr. MATHWIN: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to my question of August 9 concerning the upgrading of the Glenelg trams and also concerning the existing drab and uninviting colours in which they are painted?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Municipal Tramways Trust plans to upgrade 16 trams used on the Glenelg route, and to restore them to the original livery of tuscan red and rich cream. A vast majority of the comment made on the new colours has been favourable, and there have been the following two added benefits: first, the tramcars are more easily seen than the silver grey colour, which tends to blend with the background, particularly if the sky is overcast and, secondly, the dark red colour does not show the rust marks which develop from the iron filings thrown on to the side of the trams from the cast iron brake shoes.

X-RAY UNITS

Mr. ALLEN: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my recent question regarding X-ray units?

The Hon. L. J. KING: The last X-ray survey at Marree was carried out on August 7 and 8, 1962, when 173 X-rays were taken. No active cases of tuberculosis were found. There are no plans to carry out another X-ray survey in the area until the latter part of 1974.

ZONE 5 SETTLERS

Mr. CHAPMAN: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Lands why the State and Commonwealth Governments agreed to reduce the rentals charged to zone 5 settlers in 1971? This question is supplementary to my question of August 16, to which the Minister of Education replied in the temporary absence of the Minister of Works. However, the reply given me on that occasion explained how the State and Commonwealth Governments had determined the rentals, whereas I asked my question in an effort to ascertain why they were reduced.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will ask the Minister of Lands and see whether he can accommodate the honourable member.

ROAD TAX

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to my important question on the effect of road tax on country people?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The recommendations of the committee to consider conditions of operation of commercial road transport regarding hours of driving, gross vehicle weights, commercial vehicle speed limits and braking provisions have been considered by Cabinet and approval has been given for appropriate Bills to be introduced during the present session of Parliament dealing with these questions. The committee has not yet considered the operation of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act and its possible replacement by a more equitable and convenient system of road maintenance charges. This is one of the terms of reference given to the committee when

it was established, and it is to prepare and submit to the Minister a report containing the committee's recommendation in relation to road charges. It is not the Government's intention to delay consideration by Parliament of the other matters mentioned above pending Government consideration of any report and recommendation that may come from the committee's deliberations on the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act.

WEST LAKES BOULEVARD

Dr. EASTICK: Can the Minister of Environment and Conservation say what action has been taken to ensure that a reasonable noise buffer zone will apply to the proposed West Lakes Boulevard? In a letter forwarded to me by the Wrath organization, the Chairman states:

Those remaining in the area will suffer from (a) proximity to the new road. Forging a new road through a built-up area will leave some houses with side walls and windows within 10ft. of the road. The noise emanating from the road will eventually force these people to attempt to sell a sadly-depreciated property. Road design authorities have recommended a noise buffer zone of 300ft. minimum between pavement edge of a road of this proportion and any adjacent property boundary.

The Minister knows that the effect of a residence being within 10ft. (3 m) of a road will be to reduce the value of the property. If a property owner is eventually forced to leave his premises, his chance of selling at a reasonable price and of recouping his outlay is markedly reduced. It would be advantageous (and certainly a recognition by Government of a responsibility to people affected by the action to be taken) if, before acquiring property to provide the boulevard, the opportunity is taken to determine the area of the noise buffer zone or to provide for the resettlement of those affected.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Although it seems to me that the distance of 300ft. (91 m) referred to as a buffer zone is substantial (I am not sure just which authority has recommended a buffer zone of that size), I shall be pleased to have the matter examined and inform the Leader.

FENCING WIRE

Mr. RODDA: Has the Minister of Works obtained from the Minister of Agriculture a reply to my recent question about the shortage of fencing wire?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Minister of Agriculture has informed me that this problem has been discussed with the major distributors of fencing wire to farmers, those distributors having confirmed that serious shortages exist. Orders placed in February, 1973, have not been filled and it is unlikely that the situation will improve for three or four months. The industry claims that shortages have been caused by heavy demands by users (I think I pointed out to the honourable member the other day that, just prior to June 30, there was a heavy demand), especially from primary producers and the building trade. A shortage of labour to cope with manufacture has also affected supplies.

TORRENS RIVER FLOODING

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to my recent question about flooding of the Torrens River?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: It is sometimes necessary to close the ford at Silkes Road, Paradise, because of the occasional flooding of the upper reaches of the Torrens River. This ford connects local roads under the control of the municipalities of Campbelltown and Tea Tree Gully, which are responsible for the operation of the ford. At times of flooding, traffic is able to cross the river at the

Paradise bridge on Lower North-East Road, which is only some 550 m downstream. In view of the relatively few occasions when the Torrens River is in flood, additional bridging in this vicinity is considered to be unnecessary.

VICTOR HARBOR RAILWAY

Mr. McANANEY: Will the Minister representing the Minister of Transport obtain for me details of the revenue and expenditure in connection with the Mount Barker Junction to Victor Harbor railway line for the last two years, as well as details of the number of passengers and amount of freight carried on that line?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be pleased to obtain that information and let the honourable member know.

KEITH-NARACOORTE ROAD

Mr. RODDA: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to my recent question about the Keith-Naracoorte road?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The curve referred to about 23 miles (37 km) south of Keith on the Keith-Naracoorte road has no known accident record and is not considered dangerous in terms of speeds of the order of 60 to 70 miles (97 to 113 km) an hour. Surveys for no-overtaking zones on this road have been completed by the Highways Department, and line marking is expected to be completed in about two months.

ROAD SAFETY CENTRE

Mr. RUSSACK: Can the Minister representing the Minister of Transport say whether it is intended to establish a second driving safety instruction centre and, if it is, when the project will commence? Further, is the Government putting money aside for this purpose from drivers' licence fees? A recent quarterly report of the instruction centre states, in part:

There has been a continuing increased demand on the centre services embracing (a) defensive driving; (b) driver assessment; (c) occupational, children's and (d) the student driver education scheme ... It is not possible to meet the rising demand for the above services in any reasonable time, let alone other requests, e.g., professional driving instructors' course; motor cyclists' course and re-education of drivers. Hence it has been necessary to apply for substantial increases in the field officers' establishment and to strengthen the administration.

It has been brought to my notice that up to 50c of the driver's licence fee can be allocated for safety purposes, and this could amount to \$250,000 a year.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: As indicated by the honourable member, the driving centre has been completely successful, and there has been tremendous public response to it. As I am uncertain whether the Minister of Transport intends to consider establishing an additional centre, I shall be pleased to examine that situation and let the honourable member know.

OAKLANDS RAILWAY CROSSING

Mr. MATHWIN: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a reply to the question I recently asked, during the debate on the Public Purposes Loan Bill, about the separation of the grade at the Oaklands Park railway crossing?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Subject to the availability of funds and the terms of legislation covering Commonwealth aid for roads after June 30, 1974, the Highways Department intends to reconstruct Morphett Road from Anzac Highway to the Sturt River in 1974-75. The section from Sturt River to Oaklands Road and thence to Sturt Road, including the Oaklands Park railway

grade separation, is currently programmed to commence in 1977, to be completed about three years later. Other than by way of normal maintenance, no temporary improvements are proposed.

NARACOORTE CAVES

Mr. RODDA: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation ascertain when the electric fuse box will be repaired and the new electric range installed at the Naracoorte caves reserve? Further, will he examine the matter of erecting new toilets and ablution blocks at the reserve in order to cater for the increased number of visitors to the caves? It was brought to my notice when I visited the cave reserve at the weekend that the electric range in the kitchen had been out of order for two months and the fuse box supplying electricity to the kiosk needed repairing. Members of the staff are finding it difficult to cook in the kitchen and they are preparing meals in their own houses and taking them to the kiosk. More toilets and ablution facilities are needed because power points for 20 caravans have been installed recently. Since the Premier's visit on August 5 and William Reschke's article in the *Mail* on August 12 there has been a marked increase in the number of visitors to the caves, particularly the fossil cave. The facilities at the caves must be upgraded if they are to cater for this markedly increased number of visitors.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be pleased to examine the points raised by the honourable member with a view to solving the problems associated with the kiosk, and I will also examine the other matters raised.

LYRUP VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Mr. NANKIVELL: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Irrigation to consider setting up a co-ordinating committee to advise on and supervise the works project being undertaken by the Lyrup Village Association with money provided by this Parliament? I understand a similar committee was set up by the Minister of Works when he was Minister of Lands with respect to the works programme undertaken at Renmark. This is a similar proposition, being a private matter in which the Government is substantially involved.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to refer the matter to my colleague. I think the Minister will require assurance that the Lyrup Village Association itself is willing and pleased to accept such an arrangement, and it may be helpful if the honourable member will obtain from that association, which is in his district, an assurance that it will be willing to co-operate in relation to any committee so established. It may be a good idea for the Chairman or Secretary of the association to be invited by the honourable member to write to the Minister and initiate the setting up of a committee.

COOBER PEDY ROAD

Mr. GUNN: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation, representing the Minister of Transport, negotiate with the Commonwealth Department of Supply, which controls the restricted road from Woomera to Mount Eba, and then to Coober Pedy, to see whether it will be possible for a limited number of transport vehicles to use that road? The main road from Pimba to Coober Pedy is closed at the moment because of heavy rain. Some of my constituents are having difficulty in obtaining urgently needed supplies, such as fuel, in Coober Pedy, and they have been told that the Department of Supply is having second thoughts about allowing a large number of vehicles

to use its road. I should be pleased if the Minister could use his good offices on this occasion.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I will certainly raise the matter referred to by the honourable member and see what can be done.

LIQUOR PRICES

Mr. McANANEY: Will the Premier, in his capacity as Minister in charge of prices, say what action he can take under the Prices Act in regard to a recent statement made by the Commonwealth Commissioner of Trade Practices (Mr. Bannerman) that liquor prices in South Australia are being kept up by a combination of trade agreements, price-fixing and even the licensing laws? When an amendment was made to the Prices Act about six years ago I said that it would mean dearer liquor prices in South Australia, and it appears now that the Commonwealth Commissioner of Trade Practices is investigating this matter. I ask what co-operation he is getting from the South Australian Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Commissioner of Trade Practices is aware that co-operation is available from the South Australian Government: in fact, he has communicated with us from time to time about a number of matters. When the matter to which the honourable member refers was before this House we had the report of the Royal Commission on licensing, and it was quite clear from that report that the Commissioner considered that price-cutting practices within the trade were undesirable, that there could be in certain circumstances reason to provide maximum prices and in other cases to provide minimum prices for the health of the trade, but otherwise that the viability of licences would become considerably unstuck by the use of large wholesaling activities to cut the normal profit margins of the smaller outlets. That was envisaged in the original legislation. The recommendation of a price list is made by the Liquor Industry Council, which has been gazetted as an approved organization for this purpose in the terms of the Licensing Act. The Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs investigates the proposals of the Liquor Industry Council, and on numbers of occasions he has recommended that the council reconsider the prices it is proposing. This is a standard practice here. An investigation is currently being made into restaurant and dining-room mark-ups on wine in this State about which I am not by any means satisfied at the moment. The fullest co-operation is available to the Commonwealth Commissioner of Trade Practices, and he is aware of that. The basis on which South Australia has proceeded in this matter has been outlined to the Commissioner.

BLOOD-TESTING FACILITIES

Mr. RODDA: Will the Attorney-General investigate the possibility of setting up blood-testing facilities at the Keith Hospital to enable check tests to be carried out on the victims of road accidents in the Keith area? It has been reported statistically that Keith has one of the highest rates of car accidents for a country area in this State, mainly because it is on a straight section of Highway No. 8, but no facilities for the testing and storing of blood samples of road accident victims are available at Keith Hospital.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will ascertain the information and bring down a reply.

WHEAT POOLS

Mr. McANANEY: Will the Minister of Works obtain from the Minister of Agriculture figures relating to the

amount still to come from the various unfinalized wheat pools, and ascertain when payment is likely to be made?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to do that for the honourable member.

STOCK INSPECTOR

Mr. GUNN (on notice): What plans has the Agriculture Department to appoint a stock inspector at Ceduna?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Director of Agriculture intends to fill this position as soon as practicable. Two officers recruited in turn for the Ceduna position resigned before they had completed their initial training prior to taking up the posting, and no suitably trained officer is presently available. Further efforts are now being made to seek a suitable appointee.

SANGSTER REPORT

Mr. Hall, for Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice): What action has the Government taken on recommendations contained in the Sangster committee report on water rating?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Action has been taken directly along the lines of three recommendations of the Sangster committee report on water rating: (1) Stepped rating has been eliminated from the scales of water rates. (2) Uniform rates have been applied throughout the country water districts, both in the scale of water rates on tenements and vacant lands and in the scales of construction rates. A couple of exceptions exist in special areas where existing low rating scales have not been increased to the uniform standard adopted. (3) Active inquiries have been made as to the amount of exemption allowed for water rates under personal income tax, and legislation is being developed to permit exemption for some excess water charges.

TALL TREE PLAN

Mr. Hall, for Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice):

1. Is there an Adelaide tall tree plan?
2. If there is such a plan—
 - (a) what is it?
 - (b) has it been adopted by the Government?
 - (c) what action has been taken to put it into effect?
 - (d) what further action under the plan is intended and when?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The replies are as follows:

1. The Government does not have an Adelaide tall tree plan.
2. See No. 1.

PRICES ORDER

Mr. Hall, for Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice):

1. Has evidence been obtained that Dr. John Whiting has charged fees in excess of those recommended by the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs?
2. If evidence has been obtained—
 - (a) has a complaint been laid against him?
 - (b) has the summons been served?
 - (c) what is the date of hearing?
3. If no evidence has been obtained, why has a prices order been made against Dr. Whiting?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. No.
2. See answer to No. 1.
3. A prices order was made because Dr. Whiting made a statement to the press that it was his intention to charge fees in excess of those recommended by the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs.

LAND

Mr. MATHWIN (on notice):

1. What allotments or parcels of land have been sold by the Highways Commissioner in the 12 months to June 30, 1973?

2. Where is each of these allotments or parcels of land?

3. When were they purchased by the Commissioner?

4. What was the purchase price of these allotments, or parcels of land?

5. When were they sold?

6. What was the sale price of each?

7. Has the Commissioner been directed, in future, not to sell land at a profit in excess of 7 per cent a year?

8. Have similar directions been given to other Government departments?

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill, for the Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Some of the information requested by the honourable member will take some time to compile. It is requested that he place his question on notice for Tuesday, September 11, 1973.

PART-TIME TEACHERS

Mr. GUNN (on notice):

1. How many part-time teachers are employed by the Education Department in rural schools in South Australia?

2. Are there any plans to discontinue the employment of such teachers and, if so, why?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The replies are as follows:

1. Six part-time teachers were employed in rural and special rural schools as at February, 1973.

2. No.

EYRE DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Mr. GUNN (on notice): When will the Karcultaby and Miltaburra schools be built?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: A Samcon school is to be built at Karcultaby by contract. Site works are programmed to commence in mid-August, 1974, and construction in November, 1974. Occupation date is scheduled for September, 1975. I will visit the schools involved in the establishment of the Miltaburra Area School within a few weeks. A final decision on the projected dates for the school will be made on my return.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

Berri Irrigation Area (Rehabilitation of Pumping and Distribution Systems),

Cobdogla Irrigation Area (Rehabilitation of Pumping and Distribution Systems),

Moorook Irrigation Area (Rehabilitation of Pumping and Distribution System),

Waikerie Irrigation Area (Rehabilitation of Pumping and Distribution Systems).

Ordered that reports be printed.

**SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Savings Bank of South Australia Act, 1929-1971. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members may recall that, towards the end of last year, amendments to the State Bank Act were enacted to provide for matters relating to the application, to the officers of the State Bank, of the Public Service Act and for provisions relating to appeals against promotions and appeals in disciplinary matters. In addition, provision was made for the creation of classification committees to advise that bank on matters relating to the classification of offices.

At that time it was foreshadowed that amendments, having a similar effect, would be introduced in relation to the Savings Bank of South Australia Act. Necessarily these amendments must be spelt out in somewhat greater detail than they were in the State Bank Act, the reason for this being that, in terms of the State Bank Act, the Public Service Act, to some extent, applies to officers of the State Bank, but it does not so apply in relation to officers of the Savings Bank. Thus, one purpose of this Act is to enact provisions relating to the officers of the Savings Bank of a kind referred to above. At the same time, opportunity has been taken to bring parts of the Savings Bank of South Australia Act up to date and in conformity with modern banking practice and also to reflect certain changes in the law that have occurred since the principal Act was first enacted.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 of the Bill are formal. Clause 4 amends section 5 of the principal Act by inserting certain definitions the need for which will become clear in the consideration of the later clauses of the Bill. Clause 5 is formal. Clause 6 amends section 19 of the principal Act by striking out subsection (2). This subsection provided for the giving of security by persons employed in the bank. A provision of this nature is archaic and is now not required.

Clause 7 amends the principal Act by inserting new section 19a, which provides for the establishment of a classification committee or, if necessary, a number of classification committees to advise the bank on matters relating to the classification of offices; that is, the arranging of offices into classes based on the nature of the work to be performed and assigning salaries or ranges of salaries thereto. The composition of each committee is set out at proposed new subsection (4), which provides for a Chairman who will not have a direct connection with either the bank or the relevant industrial association but who is acceptable to that association and for one member to represent the bank and one member the association.

Clause 8 amends section 20 of the principal Act by somewhat modifying the basis by which, in certain circumstances, an allowance for service is paid on retirement or death. Previously this allowance was fixed at one month's salary, based on the average salary paid in the last three years of the officer's service for each year of service. It is proposed that the new basis of calculation will be one thirty-sixth of the notional total salary paid to the officer, during the last three years of his service, for each year of his service. This notional salary will be calculated on the basis of the rates prevailing, at the time the allowance becomes payable, for the office permanently occupied by the officer during the last three years of service. The effect of this amendment will be to ensure that any increase in salary payable in respect of the various offices during the period of three years will be reflected in the lump sum payment made to the officer.

Clause 9 repeals section 25 of the principal Act, which is now redundant since the bank does not appoint Commonwealth officers as agents of the bank. Clause 10, which inserts some 25 new sections in the principal Act, represents

a substantial addition of material to that Act. This group of sections is divided into two Parts, one dealing with the filling of vacancies in offices and the other with discipline. Honourable members will note that these provisions follow quite closely the comparable provisions in the Public Service Act and accordingly it is felt that a greatly detailed exposition of the provisions should not be necessary here.

New sections 26c to 26e provide for a system of nomination for appointment to an office, with a right of appeal by any applicant for the appointment who was not so nominated. New section 26f provides for an alternative method of proposed appointment, without calling for applications, but this section also provides for an appeal by any officer of the bank against the appointment. New section 26g creates an Appointments Appeal Committee to which appeals may be directed. New section 26h provides for proceedings before the committee.

I would draw honourable members attention to the fact that this Division does not provide for appeals in the case of appointment to one of the prescribed offices in the bank. It is the intention of the trustees and the Government that these prescribed offices will be the most senior offices in the bank which may, to some degree, be likened to the office of permanent head in the Public Service. Honourable members will recall that under the Public Service Act an appeal does not lie against the appointment of a permanent head.

Proposed new Division III inserted by this clause, at sections 26k to 26z, formalizes the system of dealing with disciplinary offences within the bank. I am happy to advise members that disciplinary offences do not often seem to occur in the bank. Hence it might well be asked why the need for these extensive and detailed provisions. The answer is, I suggest, that officers of the bank, no less than officers of the Public Service, have a right to have their rights and duties in matters of discipline spelt out in detail. In form the provisions closely follow the analogous provisions in the Public Service Act, modified to the extent necessary to suit the workings of the Bank. An Appeal Tribunal, presided over by a special magistrate, is provided by proposed new section 26s and on this tribunal both the bank and appellant are represented.

Clause 11 amends section 31a of the principal Act and, in addition to making a formal amendment, (a) increases the maximum amount of a personal loan that may be made by the trustees where the borrower can provide appropriate security; and (b) increases from three to five years the period in respect of which a personal loan may be made. Clause 12 amends section 32 of the principal Act by slightly enlarging the range of investments that the bank can make to include investments in investments authorized by section 5 of the Trustee Act.

Clause 13 amends section 38 of the principal Act by striking out a paragraph therein relating to payments to minor depositors who cease to reside in the State. This specific provision is now no longer necessary in the light of other amendments proposed by this Bill. Clause 14 amends section 39 of the principal Act by providing a simpler method for the trustees to exercise control over the school bank department. Clause 15 repeals section 42 of the principal Act, which in general regulated the conduct of business by the bank and replaces that section by a shorter and simpler section based on section 41 of the Commonwealth Banks Act, which simply empowers the bank, subject to some restrictions, to carry on the ordinary business of a savings bank. The detailed enumeration of the powers in section 42 of the Act as it stood

has, from time to time, caused some difficulty in the operations of the bank.

Clause 16 repeals and re-enacts section 42a of the principal Act, which dealt with deposits and withdrawals by minors, and sets out the powers of the bank in this matter in somewhat simplified form. Clause 17 repeals section 42b of the principal Act. The repeal of this section is a necessary consequence on the re-enactment of section 42 referred to previously. Clause 18 amends section 44 of the principal Act by substituting for the provision that interest on all accounts under the control of the Supreme Court is payable at the ordinary rates to depositors, a provision that the payment of such interest shall be at rates as are from time to time determined by the trustees. It is felt that this provision will give greater flexibility in the bank's operations.

Clause 19 makes a provision similar to that made by clause 18 in relation to moneys deposited by the Official Receiver. Clause 20 repeals and re-enacts section 46 of the principal Act and, substantially, continues the restriction on the bank's having, as a customer, a body engaged in profit-making activity. However, this restriction is now subject to one modification, in that the bank may accept such a body as a customer, to open and operate a credit cheque account only, if its acceptance is approved of by the State Bank. In fact, it is expected that such customers will be customers who would operate accounts with the State Bank but who for one reason or another cannot be serviced by the State Bank as conveniently as they can by the Savings Bank.

I should explain to members that this provision is aimed particularly at those cases in which individuals are now operating credit cheque accounts with the Savings Bank but then proceed to incorporate a private company. Under the terms of the Savings Bank Act, although they are exactly the same people carrying on exactly the same business, they can no longer operate a cheque account with the Savings Bank. It is desirable that they should be able to do that and also that, in this field, the Savings Bank should not operate in the normal field of the State Bank.

This is part of the rationalization between the two banks and it will not be necessary for Savings Bank managers to communicate with the local State Bank manager and say, "Will you approve this?" The administrative arrangements of the two bank boards relating to the categories have been worked out and will be communicated to staff. There should be no difficulty about operating this arrangement and it should be continued as a service to people who already are operating a Savings Bank account.

Clause 21 of the Bill repeals section 50 of the principal Act which will render it unnecessary in the bank to open separate accounts in which moneys received are deposited. Clause 22 amends section 51 of the principal Act by striking out paragraph (2), which required notice of withdrawal of sums over \$100. It is thought that a provision of this nature is now quite unnecessary. This clause also strikes out paragraph (5) of section 51, which again is not necessary, in view of the powers conferred on the bank by new section 42.

Clause 23 amends section 52 of the principal Act by granting considerably more flexibility in the manner in which interest can be calculated on deposits. Clause 24 repeals section 53 of the principal Act. This section again circumscribed the manner in which interest is to be calculated and is now thought to be unnecessary. Clause 25 repeals section 57 of the principal Act. This section merely stated, in relation to a particular form of property,

what is now a general law in relation to married women's property. This section is, hence, no longer necessary.

Clause 26 amends section 60a of the principal Act, this being the section that deals with deposit stock. The amendments proposed are to obviate the need for the stock to be dealt with in amounts of \$20 or some multiple of \$20 and also the need for individual notices to be given to stockholders as to variations of interest rates. In fact, in the case of stock deposited for a specific term the interest rate is fixed in advance and in the case of stock held for an indefinite period appropriate public notices seem to be all that is required. I would indicate that there are about 20 000 deposit stock accounts and the need to notify each of the holders does impose an unnecessary burden on the bank. Provision is also made by this clause to enable interest on deposit stock to be credited at intervals other than half-yearly.

Clause 27 amends section 65 of the principal Act by substituting for the concept of "net profits" of the bank the concept of "surplus of income over expenditure". Clause 28 inserts a new section 67a in the principal Act and gives the trustees power to make rules providing for the payment of fees and allowances to the Chairmen of the Classification Committees established under the amendments proposed by this Bill, to the Chairman of the Appointment Appeals Committee, and to the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal as well as for the payment of allowances to witnesses before some of these bodies.

Mr. BECKER secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Audit Act, 1921, as amended; the Police Regulation Act, 1952, as amended; the Public Service Act, 1967, as amended; the Valuation of Land Act, 1971, as amended; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill, which is in substantially the same form as measures previously introduced into, and passed by, this House, is intended to adjust the salaries payable to the holders of certain offices the salaries of which are fixed by Statute. Honourable members will no doubt be aware that, following the settlement of a claim by the Public Service Association before the Public Service Arbitrator, salaries relating to the administrative and clerical grades in the Public Service have been increased.

The Public Service Board has already made recommendations to the Government covering appropriate adjustments that should be made to the salaries of certain permanent heads and senior departmental officers. The Government has accepted these recommendations and, in so accepting them, is aware that, in making them, the Public Service Board had in mind, amongst other things, the substantial increases that have recently been granted to senior officers of the Victorian and Australian Public Services. This measure, with one exception being that of the salary of the Valuer-General, does no more than provide for the maintenance of the existing salary relationship between the salaries of the permanent heads in the Public Service and those of the statutory office holders. At the same time it also applies to the statutory office holders the national wage increase of June 4, 1973, which has already been otherwise applied throughout the Public Service.

In considering the Bill in some detail, clauses 1, 2 and 3 are formal. Clause 4 increases the present salary of the Auditor-General which now stands at \$21,300 to \$21,856 from June 4, 1973, and to \$25,400 from August 27, 1973. Clause 5 is formal. Clause 6 increases the salary of the Commissioner of Police from his present salary of \$19,700 to \$20,224 from June 4, 1973, and to \$23,500 from August 27, 1973. Clause 7 is formal.

Clause 8 adjusts the salaries of the Chairman and Commissioners of the Public Service Board, in the case of the Chairman from his present salary of \$21,300 to \$21,856 from June 4, 1973, and to \$25,400 from August 27, 1973, and in the case of the Commissioners from their present salary of \$18,200 to \$18,694 from June 4, 1973, and to \$22,000 from August 27, 1973. Clause 9 is formal.

Clause 10 makes a somewhat different form of adjustment in the case of the Valuer-General. In this case, having regard to the nature of the duties of the Valuer-General and the level of responsibility appertaining to his office, the board has, in a manner of speaking, recommended a reclassification of this office with effect from June 4, 1973, and in this case the variations of salary are from a present salary of \$13,400. The salary of the Valuer-General moves to \$15,991 from June 4, 1973, and to \$18,000 from August 27, 1973.

Mr. COUMBE secured the adjournment of the debate.

SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Superannuation Act, 1969, as amended. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for the supplementation of pensions payable before a day to be fixed by proclamation by $8\frac{7}{10}$ per cent. This increase is the same increase that will be provided for pensions for former members of the judiciary and former Parliamentarians, and it is intended to reflect the rise in the cost of living since the last increase in pensions was made. In considering the Bill in some detail, clause 1 is formal and clause 2 is an amendment consequential on the proposal to supplement pensions.

Clause 3 repeals section 100d of the principal Act and replaces it with two sections 100d and 100e which are in much the same form as in previous pension supplementation Bills. As is usual in this case, an operative date will be fixed by proclamation in order that all pensions payable pursuant to the relevant Statutes will be increased at about the same time.

Dr. EASTICK secured the adjournment of the debate.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1948-1972. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This short Bill, which is in substantially the same form as a measure introduced and passed last year, is intended to increase pensions that had a determination day, as defined, that occurred before June 30, 1972, by $8\frac{7}{10}$ per cent. Honourable members will recall that it is customary to increase pensions in this manner so as, to some extent, to reflect increases in the cost of living. Action is being taken to increase pensions payable to

former members of the judiciary and former members of the Public Service by a similar percentage.

Dr. EASTICK secured the adjournment of the debate.

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence. Report received and read.

THE REPORT

The Select Committee to which the House of Assembly referred the Crown Lands Act Amendment Bill, 1973, has the honour to report:

1. In the course of its inquiry your committee held two meetings and received written evidence from the Lyrup Village Association.
2. Advertisements inserted in the *Advertiser* and the *News* inviting interested persons to give evidence before the committee brought no response.
3. Your committee is of the opinion that the further financial assistance to be given to the Lyrup Village Association under this legislation will be beneficial to the association and enable it to complete the necessary and urgent works in the area.
4. Your Committee is satisfied that there is no opposition to the Bill and recommends that it be passed with the following amendment, namely:
 Clause 2, page 1, line 18, leave out the word "five" and insert in lieu thereof the word "fifteen".

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Advances to association."

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

In paragraph (b) to strike out "five" and insert "fifteen".

The effect of the amendment is to increase by \$10,000 the amount the Government will make available to the Lyrup Village Association. During a meeting of the Select Committee that deliberated on this important matter, the member for Mallee, in his usual assiduous manner, drew the attention of the committee to the fact that there might not be sufficient funds to complete this work, because of inflation, higher cost of labour, and similar increases. I pointed out to the honourable member that, as this was the case, the Government could further amend the Act at a later date. The honourable member pressed me and, acting under that pressure, I obtained further reports from the Lands Department and the Engineering and Water Supply Department. It was revealed that the member for Mallee was correct: the estimate was not up to date. In fact, there was a shortfall of about \$4,000. We should have allowed \$209,400 instead of \$205,000. In the light of that information I decided to tack another \$6,000 on to the original sum to be sure, hence this amendment. While the grant by the Government will remain at \$95,000, an additional \$10,000 will be made available on loan so that the work may be completed. The committee was satisfied that this was a reasonable step and commended the honourable member (even though he was absent from the second meeting) for his initiative in this matter.

Mr. NANKIVELL: I am pleased I was able to screw that drop of charity from the Minister. I appreciate what is intended by the amendment. True, the Lyrup Village Association was concerned that it might have underestimated the amount required. The Minister with his usual understanding has taken note of this and I am sure that the association will appreciate the additional loan and the spirit in which the Minister has granted it. I support the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed,

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 23, Page 506.)

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I support the Bill, although I have some reservations about it.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: What's wrong with it?

Mr. GUNN: There is nothing wrong with it, but I believe the Government is not even trying to grapple with the major problem facing Australia today (indeed, this is affecting every Australian, especially those with limited means or receiving social services). If the Government was determined to do something to halt an increase in prices it would agree to the Leader's suggestion that the Premier confer with interested parties in this State. If inflation is to be seriously tackled we must not look only at prices: we must look at incomes as well. Restrictions on prices alone cannot keep prices down in the long term. Indeed, this method has not proved successful elsewhere in the world, and in the short term it has not been successful either, as has been proved by the situation in England and America. I shall be interested to see what happens in New Zealand. There are one or two provisions of the Bill that concern me. The first of these is the fact that the Premier does not intend this matter to be considered annually by Parliament. However, Parliament should have an opportunity to scrutinize legislation: it is the duty of members here and in another place to review such legislation as often as possible and to keep abreast of the opinions of people in the community.

Further, information collected by the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs and his officers can be made available to others, yet this information should be treated confidentially. When officers of the Public Service deal with matters of a private and confidential nature, as few people as possible should be able to view the material and information that companies and individuals have provided for the Commissioner. I hope that the Government will not continue to follow the lead of the present Commonwealth Government (the Australian Government, as it likes to be called), because one of the greatest causes of inflation is the Commonwealth Government's action in spending large sums in the public sector. The other cause of inflation facing the community is the irresponsible wage demands certain trade unions are making on employers.

Mr. Wright: What about the profits bosses make?

Mr. GUNN: I will refer to those in a moment. The member for Adelaide, who has a hatred for private enterprise, thinks that every time someone makes a profit he is fleecing the community. That is also the attitude of the member for Spence.

Mr. Crimes: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: A major problem we face in our fight against inflation is the attitude of trade unions which are encouraging their members to do as little as possible while asking for as much as they can possibly get. Instead of encouraging them to produce more—

Mr. Max Brown: You have not worked for a living.

Mr. GUNN: Members on this side have worked for a living, and those involved in primary industry, especially the wheat industry, have worked under price control since the introduction of the Wheat Stabilization Act. We have been under price control and, if the honourable member wishes to study the information available, he will see that wheatgrowers in Australia were able to survive only because they became more efficient and worked harder.

That is the only reason they have been successful, unlike the unions which encourage their workers to do as little as possible while asking for as much as they can get. Unions have encouraged their members to be disruptive in industry. Members on this side realize that people are entitled to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, but we also say that employers or people who have invested money are entitled to a fair return.

Mr. Max Brown: Are you suggesting that 90 per cent of the workers are bludgers?

Mr. GUNN: I never said that at all; that is the construction placed on it by the member for Whyalla.

Mr. Max Brown: Are you suggesting it?

Mr. GUNN: The honourable member is completely out of order, and I would not want to transgress Standing Orders by replying to him. However, members opposite will have plenty of time to discuss the matter. The member for Adelaide was crying about profits, but I point out that during the last three years profits have increased on average by 19.7 per cent, whereas wages and salaries have increased by 42.3 per cent, and the gross national product has increased by only 36.6 per cent.

Mr. Crimes: Where did you get this from?

Mr. GUNN: This information was supplied by the Hon. Phillip Lynch, and it is good stuff.

Mr. Jennings: Will you table it?

Mr. GUNN: It has come from the library.

Mr. JENNINGS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable member has read from a document, and I think it is the prerogative of the House now to have it tabled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not a requirement of a private member that he should table a document: this is the requirement of a Minister, and I therefore cannot sustain the point of order. The honourable member for Eyre.

Mr. GUNN: Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker. This document comes from the Parliamentary Library, and I am sure that, if the honourable member takes the trouble, he will obtain it from there. I have not read from it: I have only quoted figures. I wish to refer now to another document, whose author was Mr. Clyde Cameron, and it is an address recently given on prices and income policy for Australia. The honourable gentleman said:

I want to begin by looking at our recent experience of inflation, because, after all, price-income policies are directed at controlling inflation. In a free enterprise society, they may prove to be the only way of ensuring a fair distribution of national production.

That is the argument that members on this side have been advancing. We do not believe that inflation can be tackled merely by controlling prices: one has to examine the income policy. I am pleased to see a difference of opinion there between the South Australian Government and the Commonwealth Minister for Labour who, we are aware, is often out of step not only with members of his Party in this State but also with members of his Party in Canberra. It has always been the policy of members of the Liberal and Country League to support price control as a short-term measure, but we do not believe that it is the sole solution to the main problem of inflation. I support the Bill.

Mrs. BYRNE (Tea Tree Gully): I support the Bill. Although I was not quite sure whether the previous speaker was supporting it or opposing it, I realize now that he was supporting it. The Bill is principally in two parts and, now that the Australian Government has again to some extent, with the establishment of the Prices Justification Tribunal, entered this field, it should be brought within the scope of the exemption.

Mr. Mathwin: That tribunal is a success, too!

Mrs. BYRNE: Whether or not it is a success remains to be seen, but at least the present Government has tried to do something in this direction, whereas the previous Government did nothing. At the time of the enactment of this legislation in 1948, the Commonwealth Government had relinquished price control. Since the passing of the principal Act in 1948, it has been reviewed each year and we are familiar with speeches made in this place each session, supporting or opposing this legislation, as members felt inclined. Clause 3 repeals the provision limiting the life of the principal Act and replaces it by a provision suspending the operation of sections 34 to 42 inclusive of the Act.

The emphasis on the action taken by the Prices and Consumer Affairs Branch has shifted gradually throughout the succeeding years from control of the prices of goods and services to a wider concern for the well-being of consumers generally, culminating in 1970 in the insertion of section 18a in the Prices Act, codifying the branch's responsibilities in this field. It is because the responsibilities of the branch have increased that the legislation should not be renewed year after year, as it has been in the past. The present responsibilities of the office of the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs thus laid down by section 18a of the Prices Act include the conduct of investigations and research into subjects of concern to consumers, the undertaking of consumer education through the publication of reports and the dissemination of information, the giving of advice to individual consumers on matters that concern them, the receipt and resolution of complaints from consumers, and the making of reports to the Minister on matters of importance, either as required by him or on the Commissioner's own initiative.

At present the branch also administers the following legislation: the Book Purchasers Protection Act; Unfair Advertising Act; Door to Door Sales Act; Second-hand Motor Vehicles Act; Misrepresentation Act; Mock Auctions Act; and the Unordered Goods and Services Act. Of course, this is in addition to the consumer protection provisions of the Prices Act. The Commissioner's report for the year ended December 31, 1971, reveals that the number of investigations into consumers' complaints completed during the year rose by 628 from 1 837 in 1971 to 2 465 in 1972, and this represents an increase of 34 per cent. This report, which is a lengthy one, is well worth reading, because it shows the value of the branch and of the Act, and for that reason I support the Bill. At the same time, I should like to pay a tribute to the officers of the branch, who are extremely co-operative; indeed, I am sure members will agree with me when I say that they are very helpful to us when we are required to contact them.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): In the past, I have supported each year the passage of this legislation, realizing that it is enacted on a yearly basis and has had to be renewed. I have supported it, because I believe that, as price control affects mainly the cost-of-living items in the community, it plays an important part in South Australia's activities. For some years we in South Australia enjoyed a cost of living that was lower than that in other parts of Australia. We now have a move to make this legislation permanent, and I reluctantly accept this move, believing that it is better than to have to deal with the matter each year.

On the other hand, I appreciate the different circumstances in which the Commissioner operates under certain Acts that he has to administer. We are concerned here mainly with cost-of-living items, which are the major items

under price control, and I am not referring to the recent controversy involving certain professions. We must look at the way the Act has been administered in recent years. I have been told that the result of the 5c a gallon (4.5 l) increase in fuel could mean an increased cost of 50c a ton (tonne) on goods carried by interstate hauliers. We must remember that most goods produced in South Australia are taken to the Eastern seaboard by road and that certain goods are brought by road from the Eastern States to South Australia. This staggering increase in costs should make people wake up to what is really going on. The impost on brandy, which has been increased by 75c, will mean that a person buying a bottle of brandy will pay about \$1.20 in excise on each bottle. In this respect I point out that South Australia produces about 80 per cent of the total Australian production of brandy. How about price control in those circumstances! I suggest that members should not let themselves be carried away completely by this alleged efficacy of price control.

Mr. Becker: It is still under Ministerial control; it gives the Minister a fair say.

Mr. COUMBE: Yes, it does. It is not the answer to all problems; it is not a panacea for all ills. It is very important, when considering this Bill, to see how price control has really worked in South Australia in recent years. I will quote figures from a Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics article which was submitted to the Prime Minister recently in relation to the Prices Justification Tribunal. These figures were put forward because South Australia is the only State with price control. The article states:

South Australia has implemented a wider range of price controls to restrain a growth in prices and therefore it is very useful to compare the following figures:

The figures quoted are percentage increases from the December quarter, 1968, to the December quarter, 1972 (the latest figures available). In respect of consumer prices, food prices rose in Adelaide by 16.6 per cent and in the other six capitals by only 15.2 per cent. Prices of clothing and drapery rose in Adelaide by 20.4 per cent and in the other six capitals by only 19.4 per cent. In housing we had an advantage: prices rose in Adelaide by 27.1 per cent compared to 29.9 per cent in the other capitals. Household supplies and equipment rose in Adelaide by 10.4 per cent and the increase in the other capitals was 11.9 per cent. Prices in the miscellaneous group rose by 26.6 per cent in Adelaide and by only 24.1 per cent in the other six capitals. Food, clothing, drapery, and household supplies and equipment are important items and the figures I have quoted show that their prices in South Australia suffered a greater increase under price control than occurred in the other six capitals.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Were things more expensive?

Mr. COUMBE: What an inane question to ask! I am quoting figures from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics over a four-year period.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: What about the total price? Does it say that?

Mr. COUMBE: If the Minister can contain himself, I will now quote figures relating to wages and salaries. In South Australia, as one would expect, the minimum wage rate for adult males rose by the same as it did in Australia, namely, 26.6 per cent. Average male earnings in South Australia rose by 31 per cent compared to an Australian average of 32 per cent. The growth rate of inflation in South Australia between 1968

and 1972 was 18.1 per cent, the same as the increase in Western Australia and Tasmania. In Adelaide the greatest increase occurred in the sectors influenced by the Government's pricing and budgeting policy, that is, the housing and miscellaneous groups. However, that has been glossed over by Government speakers.

Obviously, money incomes in South Australia rose at the same rate as they did in other States but they did rise at a faster rate than prices, so in South Australia in real terms South Australians were no more than marginally better off, if at all, than workers in other States. In terms of improving the living standard (and this is very important), on taking the higher real income and reducing it by the rate of inflation, the conclusion of this submission is that the South Australian price-fixing system does not seem to have had an appreciable influence over the past four years.

I refer members also to an article written by Professor R. C. Gates on the subject of inflation and price control. This article appears in the *Economic Activity Journal* of July, 1971, and the writer draws the same conclusions. We can see that once again this is not the be-all and end-all of the problem of inflation. I have previously said that, although price control can, if properly implemented, in certain sectors play a significant part or have a partial effect on the control of inflation, we shall never get the complete answer until we accept the implementation of a prices-incomes policy in this country. The Opposition is willing to co-operate with the Government at any time in the holding of a national conference to decide on a prices-incomes policy. I firmly believe that by dealing with only one-half of this problem we will never get anywhere: we must deal with the whole problem. The matter of profits has been referred to. The Opposition believes that a reasonable profit is a healthy and necessary adjunct to business affairs. However, we completely oppose malpractice and exploitation. It is just as well someone makes a profit in this State, or only the Government would still be working.

Mr. Venning: That's what they want.

Mr. Jennings: You're working for the Government and getting plenty of money.

Mr. COUMBE: I am working for the people in my district. That is why I am here and that is the work for which I am underpaid.

Mr. Jennings: My interjection was directed not to you but to that black-leg over there.

Mr. COUMBE: When one realizes that company tax has increased to 45 per cent and in some cases to 47 per cent (it will be 47 per cent in all cases next year), one wonders whether it is worth working at all. It is just as well some companies make profits, or we, as individuals, would be harder hit in the personal income tax we would have to pay. I do not want to take this matter further.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member has gone far enough on that score.

Mr. COUMBE: The provision in the Bill relating to the Commonwealth Government is a little doubtful. I realize that, if the Australian Government—

Mr. Venning: The Commonwealth Government!

Mr. COUMBE: The term "Australian Government" is commonly used, although I believe that officially the correct term is still "Government of the Commonwealth of Australia". As I have said before, I have noticed that "O.H.M.S." is disappearing from envelopes, too. By this provision in the Bill, it appears that the Commonwealth Prices Justification Tribunal will have access to information obtained by the South Australian Commissioner for

Prices and Consumer Affairs. I have always understood that one of the reasons for the successes that have occurred in relation to the Prices Act has been the confidential nature of transactions between companies and individuals and the Commissioner. Of course, I am not referring to cases where prosecutions have occurred. As it seems that information will now be made available to the Commonwealth, I should like the Premier to give more information about this aspect later. I am not referring to leaks of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization type, but confidentiality has been an important facet of the operations under this legislation. Will South Australia be the only State to produce material to the Prices Justification Tribunal? If that happens, someone in South Australia might get it in the neck. Of course, I realize that the tribunal will deal only with companies whose turnover is \$20,000,000 or more.

I believe that we are going only half way towards tackling the problem of inflation which is the most insidious problem in Australia today and about which workers and pensioners are greatly worried. Since the Commonwealth Budget was introduced, people have told me that, although they are grateful for some of the welfare grants, they fear that these grants may be eroded by inflation. The only way to solve the inflation problem is to have an incomes-prices policy on a national basis. This was done in the United Kingdom, and the steps taken are beginning to produce results now. So far, the response to challenges made to this Government on the matter has been a blunt "No".

Mr. Jennings: You must know something about the Constitution.

Mr. CUMBE: I have said that we will support a conference on a national basis.

Dr. Eastick: We'd support one on a State basis.

Mr. Jennings: Would you support a referendum?

Mr. CUMBE: At a conference, the policy to be implemented could be discussed. The member for Ross Smith knows the constitutional methods that can be followed in this connection. What we should be doing is getting around the table, beginning to discuss this matter. The Opposition is willing to play a responsible part in setting up a conference to look at this problem.

Mr. PAYNE (Mitchell): In supporting the Bill, I wish to read the following paragraph from page 2697 of *Hansard* of November last year, when the matter of the annual renewal of this legislation was being considered:

The merit of the Prices Act is shown when we compare the economy of South Australia with the economies of the other States. We have stabilized prices, maintained a competitive position with the other States, and kept costs down.

That statement was made by the member for Kavel, a shadow Minister from the front bench opposite who is now missing temporarily. At that time, he apparently agreed with the policy followed by the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs, with whose operations he seemed more than satisfied. Therefore, we ask what has happened in about the last 10 months to cause the collective voice of the Liberal and Country League to sing a different tune.

Mr. Jennings: They know that they will not be back in office for about 20 years, so they can be irresponsible.

Mr. PAYNE: One may conjecture that members opposite are singing a different tune because, thank God, a Government of a different political complexion occupies the Treasury benches in Canberra. Some of the speeches made by members opposite ranged from ludicrous to, as the member for Tea Tree Gully has pointed out, almost

unintelligible (I refer to the speech by the member for Eyre here). That was in keeping with his feelings about this matter. Incidentally, I congratulate him on having purchased a house in my district so that he can be sure he has adequate representation in this Chamber.

The extract from *Hansard* to which I have referred shows that, apparently, until a short time ago, the Opposition had no quarrel with how the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs and the legislation were operating in South Australia. We assume that, since then, something has happened to require them to suddenly take a different line. I cannot recall any member, except the new member for Davenport who can be excused and not labelled with what I am accusing other members of (that is, playing politics), having asked questions in this House of the Premier about the operation of the Act.

That new member probably is not playing politics, because he has not had sufficient experience to try that: doubtless, his colleagues will coach him in that matter, but the honourable member has had experience in other roles. He has done some acting. He managed to stand for election with one political colour and, after being elected, he hoisted another colour. He has the ability to put on an act when required and we will doubtless have further evidence of his ability.

There has been no real comment from the Opposition about how the principal Act has been operating. Members opposite are trying to make political gain and to sheet home to the South Australian Commissioner the blame for what is happening on a national scale. I agree with what the member for Tea Tree Gully has said about how the Commissioner and his department operate for the benefit of the people of this State. I appreciate how the department has been functioning, and I am sure that the people of South Australia would not want a change made. If members opposite have doubts, that is another example of how they have got out of touch with public opinion, which will be the case as long as they have their present policies. They do not know what the ordinary man in the street thinks.

Mr. Jennings: Would they care?

Mr. PAYNE: It is highly unlikely that they would care: they represent another group in South Australia on this sort of question. I shall also refer to comments made by the Leader some time ago. He said:

I ask myself whether this is a totally desirable Bill, because it will release material beyond the State's boundaries.

My reaction to that is that it is generally considered to be fairly useless to engage in conversation with oneself. When I read the remainder of his speech in *Hansard*, I found that what the Leader said on that occasion was useless. My second reply would be that his whole line of reasoning was shaky. In effect, he said that, in relation to section 7 (4) of an Act that had been in force in this State since 1948, he was concerned about the possibility of leakages. He rambled on about the number of people who would have access to information and he said that the information was now going beyond the State's boundaries, those sacrosanct lines on the map that are so dear to the hearts of members opposite.

If there had been, since 1948, occasion to be concerned about whether this Act was functioning well, one would have expected that the Statute Book would be full of amendments catering for the imagined things, such as leakages, that would occur. However, not even one amendment has been made to that provision, so we can be pardoned for saying it has worked well. The Leader's other point was that information would pass beyond the

State's boundaries. That has always been happening, or the possibility of it has existed, as the Leader probably well knew.

Dr. Eastick: No. Read again what I said.

Mr. PAYNE: I have read it and I have noted where the apostrophe is. Perhaps the Leader did not notice that. So far as I recall, it is the singular possessive, implying one State's boundaries. I suggest that the Leader look at *Hansard* again. He must have missed that by not correcting it to what he had in mind. Clearly, he was trying to cast doubt and create misgivings about what could happen. I remind members opposite that the Leader was saying that, since 1948, information available to the Commissioner had been available to various State authorities throughout Australia and that there had been no doubt and no concern. He was happy that the legislation had functioned without harm to people and without leakages.

However, now he says that the Commonwealth Parliamentarians and departmental officers are less trustworthy than their State counterparts. In saying that, the Leader is attacking the integrity of Commonwealth officers and those in the Legislature, and casting a slur on their ability and character. I suggest that this is an unworthy way to bolster his case in order to receive some political mileage from this matter. It is not worthy of a person representing Her Majesty's Opposition. I have every confidence in the character, integrity, and sense of duty that have been displayed by Commonwealth authorities who require this information.

Mr. Mathwin: How do you feel about the Minister?

Mr. PAYNE: I have no doubt about the integrity of Ministers of the present Government in Canberra; I have every confidence in them. Mr. Acting Speaker, I have shown that the efforts of the Opposition in this debate (where they have been intelligible) have not been based on an accurate and reasonable case, but have been suggested in an attempt to score politically from the present situation in the country in which, as has been said by Government members, there is some inflation. This amending Bill, which seeks to make information available to the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs on a wider scale, extends the operation on the Bill but not on a yearly basis. The member for Davenport, in giving a dissertation on economic theory, backed the horse each way and did not commit himself. He referred to the index comparison between South Australia and the Australian average between 1964-65 and about 1971-72. Saying that the South Australian index was 40.1 and that the Australian average was 43.3, he tried to show that, because of this marginal improvement in South Australia, the Prices Act was not functioning as it should. Mr. Acting Speaker, I remind the honourable member that the 3.2 difference is thoroughly enjoyed by all consumers in South Australia who are pleased that the figure was that way and not reversed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling on the next speaker, I draw members' attention to the fact that, whilst I occupy the Chair during second reading debates I should be addressed as "Deputy Speaker" and not "Acting Speaker". I did not interrupt the previous speaker because I did not wish to change his line of thought at the time, but I now draw members' attention to that small detail.

Mr. HALL (Goyder): This is a political piece of legislation, as past events have proved. It began as a war-time measure, and lived on through the Playford

Administration because of the politics involved in removing it. The Playford Administration would not remove price control, because it believed it would have been a political disadvantage to do so. Price control has lived through a long period because it has been believed that it is a useful method of containing price rises in the community. It is interesting to note that the grudging approval given to it by members of the Liberal and Country League in the past few years has now changed perceptibly, and it is now reasonably well approved by them. I shall vote for the Bill, although I shall vote against one clause. However, I view the Bill with much suspicion.

The powers of the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs have been invoked and long-ranging Parliamentary discussions have taken place when the price of basic commodities has risen by 1c or 2c, but Government action can increase these prices in the community without any apparent opposition from any other Government. I refer to the increase in the price of soft drinks in South Australia: 3c for a 26oz. (738.8 ml) bottle. This has been imposed because of the policy of the Commonwealth Labor Government but, apparently, it has not been opposed by this State's Government, which for years has concerned itself with the control of this item, an item which, although now uncontrolled, may be considered by the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs. Therefore, it is with some suspicion that one considers the enthusiasm for price control shown by a Party which at times recklessly raises the price of a commodity although that price is supposed to be controlled under this Act.

An illustration of the inequitable application of this Act is provided by the control of the price of petrol. An intelligent user of petrol living in the South-East of this State could obtain a 10c reduction in the purchase price on a farming property ever since, as far as I know, price control has been established. However, fuel use in my district has not attracted that reduction, although in the South-East there has been a substantial price difference to the consumer. Such inequities under this legislation tend to bring it into disrepute. In addition, the Government's view is that price control is an effective weapon to keep prices down, but we realize that it can be little more than profit control when applied by one State in isolation. It cannot isolate this State's goods, which are traded in the Australian community, from the effect of interstate trade and relevant prices. It is farcical in many of its applications.

The Premier has declared that he can control doctors' fees: how many doctors will he gaol under this legislation? I will bet that he will not gaol one, because he will not face the political criticism resulting from a doctor's putting on his door a sign stating that his services are unavailable because he is in the Adelaide Gaol. The Premier knows this fact quite well, and it is hypocrisy for him to say that he will gaol a medical practitioner under the provisions of this Act. Such a statement brings the Act into the realm of politics and into disrepute.

There are some naive attitudes to this legislation. There is that attitude, firmly held by members opposite, that price control is a big factor in keeping prices in South Australia down. The attitude that the L.C.L. has latched on to in recent weeks is an incomes-prices policy. However, in that regard I refer to what Mr. Nixon has done in the United States where the nation is waiting for the lifting on September 12 of his latest freeze on prices and incomes. That will cause the price of meat to sky-rocket, and it is a short-sighted policy of L.C.L. members to say that an incomes-prices policy will stop price increases.

In this regard I refer to the latest report of the Reserve Bank on this matter. Because it is too long to quote fully, I will quote only two paragraphs, as follows:

Although the transmission mechanisms are only now beginning to be clearly described, there seems to be a good deal in the view that powerful and pervasive forces have been operating through our external accounts either to permit or to promote domestic inflation which, of course, if tolerated, would tend eventually to restore external equilibrium.

It continues:

The role of incomes and prices policies, working against such forces, would seem to be at best palliative, and would tend to be associated with evasion, disguised increases in prices, shortages and other forms of non-price rationing. Moreover, any initial success that the controls had in a situation where the main source of the problem is external would subject the controls to even greater pressures.

I view the L.C.L. cry for an incomes-prices policy with almost as much suspicion as I do the naive claim by the Government that this legislation will effectively control prices here. When either of these policies is reviewed in isolation from the main factors causing price movements in the community, it is clear that they will not apply and produce the result sought.

I am surprised that the L.C.L. has adopted a policy that will lead to a black market and two prices in the community. This is a peculiar policy for a Party supposed to believe in private enterprise. Further, I do not like the impact of legislation that says that the financial affairs of South Australian companies and concerns can be transmitted to the Commonwealth Government. I object to this because commercial concerns and businesses in the other States will not be subject to such an intrusion into their privacy. Why is South Australia singled out? I say it is because we have here a Labor Government and because we have a Labor Government in the Commonwealth sphere. This is an unfair imposition on South Australia in isolation, and it is another factor adding to many others that will make South Australia less attractive to those operating in the industrial and commercial field.

There are other less savoury reasons why the secrets of South Australian businesses should not be known to the Labor Party in isolation. We know of pressures that can be applied to people as individuals and to people in business because they may not have the right political attitude. I can refer to a case, although I dare not provide details about personalities, where the person involved was informed that the protest she was to make against certain legislation resulting from Government policy could result (she was informed by her superior) in her losing her job in the Public Service. Although every citizen should enjoy the right of self-expression against the Government of the day, that right was denied her. This instance is factual, and I stand by it.

I do not like the implication of transactions and prices being transmitted to a Government other than that which legislated for it. It is a bad principle. While we do not select people to blame in advance, we know from experience that pressure can be and has been exercised. We should not tolerate that provision in this Bill. Indeed, unless a similar provision is approved by the other States I will vote against it. I object particularly to this legislation being made a permanent feature of our Statutes. Why is this being done? Do we believe that this Parliament is going out of business? Will it not meet once a year? That is an easy question to answer, because members on both sides jealously guard their privileges and their right to represent their districts. There is no possibility of this House failing to meet each year to pass this legislation,

which is extremely restrictive and denies many freedoms in the name of helping the general consumer of goods. It should not become permanent and it should not operate without the express permission of Parliament each year. What is wrong with that principle?

Mr. Gunn: Nothing.

Mr. HALL: If members opposite are so keen on referendums, as they have been at times, what is wrong with having this Parliament each year expressing its approval of the Prices Act (and its overwhelming powers) on behalf of the general community? I object strongly to this legislation being made permanent and hanging over everyone in the community involved in business and commerce. These reasons are cogent and I intend to call against these parts of the Bill. However, I am willing to grant another year's approval for the operation of the Prices Act in South Australia. It is eminently reasonable that all members do this, but it is reasonable also that we should know we can revise our decision next year. I do not believe any member should give his approval to the Bill on the basis of it becoming a permanent feature of our Statutes.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I support the Bill. I have listened with much interest to members on both sides expressing their views this afternoon. The history of price control in South Australia has been referred to. It was introduced by Sir Thomas Playford in 1948 under whose leadership it was most effective in this State, although the situation has deteriorated since then. The effectiveness of the Prices and Consumer Affairs Branch has deteriorated to the extent that its effectiveness must be reconsidered. The L.C.L. has supported price control for some time. Although at times Sir Thomas Playford faced dissent from his supporters, the policy of the L.C.L. at present is that it supports price control.

Reference has been made to the ineffectiveness of price control in other States, and in this regard I refer to petrol as a basis of comparison. South Australia has the cheapest petrol in the Commonwealth (I am not referring to cut-price schemes operating elsewhere), and this is known throughout the Commonwealth to be brought about by the operations of the Prices and Consumer Affairs Branch in this State. I believe that the branch has been effective, to the extent that, if anyone dissatisfied with treatment he may have received applies to the branch for it to investigate a possible unfair practice, the branch can investigate the matter, and it will either satisfy the consumer concerned that the practice was not unfair or make the necessary adjustment.

One thing that has worried me, when I think of some of the unfair practices taking place despite the activities of the branch, concerns the milk industry. I understand that dairymen have over the last two years applied for an increase in the price of milk, and I know that the Milk Board is involved in this situation. However, there was recently an increase of 1c a pint (.57 l), and this increase has had to be shared among members of the industry at its various levels. The milkman, who delivers milk seven days a week, 365 days a year, receives only a fraction of that increase, even though it is the only increase he has received for two years. I think, too, of days gone by when, say, a widow who ran a delicatessen was fined \$50 or \$60 for selling a pasty ½d. above the fixed price.

These are some of the things that irk me, especially when I see excessive profits being made on the sale of secondhand motor vehicles, the purchaser having no comeback. I believe that the branch could have been more effective and more sympathetic in regard to some of

its past investigations. I have each year supported the relevant measure introduced to continue this legislation and, having done that, I think we are justified in having it placed on the Statutes permanently. If at any time we desire to remove it from the Statutes and we have the numbers, we can do so. Therefore, I do not believe that there should be any argument about continuing a situation that has existed since 1948. I support the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I support the Bill, and I bring to the House's attention a few points that I think the Government should try to understand. I do not believe that it is at all effective to have price control without wage control: these two things must go together. The only way to combat inflation is to introduce both these measures, but this Bill represents only one of them. The last time this matter was referred to in the House, Government members said that there already was wage control and, of course, there is minimum wage control. However, over-award payments are encouraged, and the unions do not like the bonus scheme, which encourages people to earn more money by working harder. Also, we are aware that the Government is against subcontractors not only in the building industry but generally, and I recall a certain Bill that was introduced at one stage.

Another method of combating inflation is to reduce Government spending, and I am surprised that the Government has not seen fit to carry this matter through, if it is really as concerned about inflation as it professes to be. The Leader recently offered the services of our Party whereby we could, by means of a round-table conference, discuss this matter of inflation, but that offer was completely ignored by the Premier and his Ministers. They did not want to hear what we had to say or take part in any discussions. Therefore, I wonder whether the Government is serious in its attitude to the present problem of inflation.

Mr. Langley: Who started it?

Mr. MATHWIN: I do not think there is any doubt that the present Dunstan Government started it in South Australia. The Commonwealth Minister for Labour (Mr. Cameron), speaking in New South Wales last May, said:

During the 1960's inflation was never much more than 3 per cent a year, but in the latter part of 1969-70 and throughout 1970-71 there was a rate of inflation of nearly 5 per cent per annum. In 1971-72 the rate of inflation was 6.6 per cent, the biggest since 1952-53.

What do we see now? In South Australia, prices in the housing industry have increased by 18 per cent. One cannot even buy a nail! I went to buy some 3in. (76.2 mm) and 4in. (101.6 mm) nails this morning but could not get them. There is nothing to be bought at all. This is the trouble we are in in this State, and I am blaming the Dunstan Government. Most of the materials involved in constructing houses are under price control at present. The member for Mitchell supported nothing and he told us nothing. I learnt nothing from his speech. All he did was quote the remarks of members on this side, and he tried to upset my colleague the member for Eyre, trying to incite him to interject from out of his place in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member cannot make such insinuations. The honourable member for Glenelg.

Mr. MATHWIN: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. The member for Mitchell posed as the worker's friend and said that his was the only Party that supported the workers of this State. There was never a greater mis-statement of fact than that. We on this side represent the workers just as well as if not better than do Government members.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I presume the honourable member for Glenelg can link up his remarks to the Bill?

Mr. MATHWIN: Yes, Sir; I am dealing with inflation and with payments being made to workers. However, I should now like to make a brief reference to the Premier, who said that the Commonwealth Government had now entered the field of price control with the inception of the Prices Justification Tribunal. In explaining this Bill the Premier said:

Secondly, it repeals section 53 of the principal Act. This section, among other things, provides that the principal Act will have an effective life only until January 1, 1974.

We all know that this is what has happened throughout the years. The matter comes up for review annually and we are given an opportunity to discuss and alter the Act if we so desire. Further on in his speech the Premier said:

All in all, there seems little doubt that there is something quite wrong in a situation where a fundamental part of the legislative framework of consumer protection in this State depends for its very existence on what is in effect "an annual Act". This is, of course, quite aside from the fact that certain of the Commissioner's "price fixing" functions are likely to be with us for some time to come.

That gives us a fair warning that, so far as the Government is concerned, it is a permanent measure: that price control is here forever, and it is Socialist policy that price control is the only answer to the problem. An annual review is a good thing. It has been with us for some time, and I do not see any reason for the legislation to be altered so that it will become permanent.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Declaration of secrecy."

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): In the second reading debate I said that confidentiality was a real issue. The member for Mitchell discussed this matter in a different way from that which was introduced in the debate last Thursday. We were told that information would be made available to many more people than received it in the past, because it would be made available to the Commonwealth and certain territories. I would like the Premier to say which territories will be involved. Will it be made available to Cocos Island, Norfolk Island, Papua and New Guinea, Jervis Bay, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory? I can understand its being made available to the A.C.T. and the Northern Territory.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): It is intended that this should apply in relation to that part of the territory of the Commonwealth obviously involved in the kind of activities subject to the price control that we have here, namely, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. There would be absolutely no point at all in our communicating this information to Papua and New Guinea (which will not be a territory much longer anyway), Norfolk Island, or Cocos Island. The relationship between Cocos Island (or indeed Norfolk Island) and the material in the hands of the Commissioner would be remote. The purpose of this provision is to have an arrangement with the Commonwealth similar to that which we have had with Prices Commissioners in some of the other States. For instance, at present we obtain from the New South Wales Prices Commissioner information concerning movements of prices (there are still a few prices under control in New South Wales). In these circumstances, information relating to these matters passes between

the two Commissioners and, under this provision, there will be a similar arrangement with the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. COUMBE: South Australia has been the base with regard to petrol prices, the other States following an arrangement whereby they have taken the lead from the price fixed for petrol by our Commissioner.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: New South Wales has been the only State involved. The Commonwealth now has an inquiry into the whole cost structure of the oil industry that will be more wide ranging than have been the investigations by our Commissioner. Much of the information from this inquiry will be of considerable use to us in the fixation. From memory, the fixation in other States has depended previously, first, on the New South Wales Commissioner's taking our fixation as the basis for the fixation in New South Wales, and secondly, on the companies' agreeing that, in relation to the other States, they would maintain no less than the differential existing between the prices fixed in those States and the price fixed here. In some other States, there has not been a normal price fixed in relation to petrol. Where prices offices have existed there has been an exchange of information.

Clause passed.

Clause 3 and title passed.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) moved:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr COUMBE (Torrens): I wish to make one point clear with regard to our support of the Bill. I have already said that our Party has supported year by year the enactment of this legislation. We have reluctantly agreed on this occasion to accept the legislation on a permanent basis. I want to make clear that my Party understands that unless this legislation is dealt with, because the circumstances are so different from what they were a few years ago, there would be a danger of much of the State's credit transaction legislation collapsing. On this basis, we support the Bill. Had the credit transaction legislation not been operating and had we been looking at this legislation as we used to look at it some years ago, possibly we would have taken a different view. However, I would not want to belong to a Party whose attitude led to the downfall of credit transaction legislation, which mainly works for the benefit of the people of the State.

Mr. HALL (Goyder): I believe that the argument of the member for Torrens is specious. We can expect this Parliament to pass this legislation each year, as long as the legislation is being properly administered and the public is not being intimidated by its provisions. One of the greatest safeguards in relation to the administration of this all-powerful legislation has been that the Government has had to come back each year to Parliament and ask for permission to renew the legislation. This has been the greatest safeguard against misuse of Government power. There can be no greater safeguard than having this legislation before the Parliament each year. It is specious for the member for Torrens to argue as he has and to hand over to the Government a power that the people who have elected him to this Parliament would not want handed over. There are danger signals now that, when the Government has the right to administer this legislation without having to renew it each year in Parliament, it will use powers under the legislation dictatorially.

Members interjecting:

Mr. HALL: Members may laugh. Today I gave an instance of a public servant's being intimidated because of

his political views; his superiors threatened him with the loss of his job. That is only one small instance: one person is silenced. We know of the pressures that exist. The Premier may look amazed and confused, but I believe that it is undesirable to pass this legislation in its present form.

Mr. Nankivell: Why didn't you call for—

Mr. HALL: I do not have the numbers to defeat the Bill: all I have been able to do is call "No" as its clauses and readings have been passed. I hope that the Upper House will use some semblance of its waning power—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that at this stage he is permitted only to debate the Bill as it came out of Committee, and I ask him to confine his remarks accordingly.

Mr. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I answer the inane interjection by the member for Mallee about why I did not move to have it struck out by saying that I did move.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mallee is not mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. HALL: He was not game enough to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member for Goyder to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. HALL: I have explained why I voted against the two clauses and why I regretted that the Bill, if passed in another place, would provide for the Act to operate in perpetuity unless it was repealed. That is undesirable and I hope that we do not have the Act on the Statute Book in that form.

Bill read a third time and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 23. Page 500.)

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): On behalf of my Party, I support the Bill to increase the number of Ministers from 10 to 11, because this State has one of the smallest Ministries in Australia, excluding that of Tasmania, and the work load on Ministers is heavy. I speak from experience and do not cavil at the increase. However, the provision in the Constitution Act as to how the Ministry shall be constituted is rather curious, providing that at least three members of the Ministry shall (not "may") be members of the Legislative Council. There is no upper limit on the number of Ministers who shall be appointed from the Upper House.

The Bill before us provides that not more than eight (there is an upper limit here) Ministers shall be members of the House of Assembly. This leaves it open for Ministers to be appointed from either House and there has been conjecture about who the eleventh Minister will be. Will the unlucky person come from this House or from the other House? Only the Party opposite can resolve that matter. I suggest that, as the other place has been reconstituted, if I may use that term, by the recent amendment to the Constitution Act, there is likely to be a difference between the Parties regarding representation.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: It's been "reconstructed".

Mr. COUMBE: All right. One should not take for granted that the new Minister necessarily will come from this House. I would have appreciated more non-financial legislation being initiated in the Legislative Council in the past 12 months or so. Of course, legislation dealing with money matters must be initiated here. We support the appointment of an additional Minister, but such legislation has not always been supported. I recall the unfortunate incident that occurred in 1963 or 1964 when the Playford Government provided in the Estimates for an additional Minister and the late Frank Walsh (whom I had the

pleasure of regarding as a friend) opposed the appointment. Unfortunately, the Minister was not appointed then but members who were in the House at the time will recall that subsequently the size of Cabinet was enlarged and that enlargement was supported by members of this side.

The appointment of an additional Minister will involve the State in additional expenditure, which I assume will be provided for in the Estimates to be introduced later this week. Whilst the matter is entirely in the hands of the Party opposite. I ask that, in the selection of the new Minister, extreme care be taken regarding his portfolio or portfolios. I consider that there are areas of administration in this State that need more attention, more detailed work, and more application. At present, Ministers hold several portfolios and administer several departments. The work load on them is heavy. At one time I administered three departments, and that proved to be too much. I ask the Government to consider providing for the more effective administration of the various departments for which Ministers will be responsible. I wait with interest to find out who the new Minister is and from which House the appointment is made.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I support the Bill and look forward to seeing Mr. X grace the front bench.

Mr. Coumbe: Does it have to be a male?

Mr. RODDA: We are getting a little specific if we speak of Mrs. X. The work load on a Minister must be experienced to be believed, and I had the privilege of experiencing it for a short time. No-one other than a Minister realizes the responsibilities, the long hours of work and the amount of work performed. South Australia has one of the smallest Ministries in Australia, and the central State is an important place. If we are to honour our place in the sun, we must have a sufficient number of Ministers in our Cabinet. When one considers portfolios, one realizes that the present Ministers have a heavy work load and, in today's progressive society, their problems will not lessen. Whether the additional Minister is selected from the other place is a matter for the Government to decide, but I am sure that the new Minister, whoever it may be, will soon realize that he has many responsibilities and perhaps it may not be long before he will not be as fit and robust as are the present suggested candidates.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): This Bill has been introduced at the wrong time. Recently, we have discussed the inflationary trend affecting the country, and we must consider this aspect whether we like it or not. As we have to consider the cost associated with the appointment of a new Minister, we should do our sums and add them up. When the most recent Minister was appointed much expense was incurred, and the Minister of Labour and Industry is now sitting in an \$8,000 seat, because that is what it cost to extend the front bench. If a new Minister is appointed, where will he sit? Will he sit on someone's knee? Will a mezzanine be built so that he can sit higher than anyone else? Will he sit in the aisle, or on the floor of the House? As an extra microphone will be necessary and rewiring will be required, it will be a big job to fit in a new Minister. Perhaps in its wisdom the Government may choose someone from the other place: that would be an easy matter, because there is plenty of room on the front bench there. Also, a new Minister will require a secretary, a public relations staff, and an office in this House as well as in his District.

Mr. Langley: Are you in favour of progress?

Mr. MATHWIN: My word I am, indeed.

Mr. Keneally: Progress backwards!

Mr. MATHWIN: No. In addition to the extra staff a car will have to be provided. Probably, I shall be the only member speaking against the Bill.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: The only reason is that you want a bit of publicity. You are not genuine: you are speaking tongue in cheek.

Mr. MATHWIN: That is not correct. I visited the District of Millicent last week and was pleased to be there.

The Hon. I. D. Corcoran: You were lucky to be allowed in.

Mr. MATHWIN: I gave the Minister a good name.

The Hon. I. D. Corcoran: Thanks, mate!

Mr. MATHWIN: I think I obtained more votes for the Minister. I am not belittling in any way the job that Ministers do: they work hard and very well. They avoid replying to questions posed by members on this side but, other than that, they do a good job. It is not for that reason that I oppose the Bill. If I am allowed to be pleased with a Minister, I am pleased at the job they do in this House. The big \$50 question is who will it be: that would be anyone's guess. In this House we have good material that is not being used at present to its fullest extent. There may be a few surprises, and the member for Whyalla was referred to in the newspaper with much detail. We have the heavy gang—the members for Florey and Adelaide would fit the bill. I do not know whether it will be a Minister of Sport, but it will be interesting to see who is elevated to this position. No doubt what I say will not carry much weight in this debate, and if I call for a division I may not have a teller to count the votes on this side. However, I oppose the Bill.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): This Bill will benefit the Government and the people of this State. There can be little argument against the appointment of an additional Minister, although I sympathize with the member for Glenelg in his concern about the cost factor. I appreciate the point he was making: that we must curb inflation in South Australia. However, we must have true democratic Government and true representation in State Parliament, and the matter of cost does not come into it. I have always considered that there is a need for Assistant Ministers. Indeed, the system of Assistant Ministers was tried by the McMahon Government, and I believe that this system should be encouraged in South Australia. It is unusual for a member to be selected to hold a portfolio without previous experience. Indeed, a member may not have had any interest in a certain area, but he could be selected by his Party to hold a specific portfolio. Indeed, in some instances he need not have had any administrative training or any other training associated with that portfolio and, on being placed in charge of a large Government department, he finds that the responsibility is great. There is responsibility to Parliament, to the Party, to the State, and to the people of South Australia.

The argument in favour of having a system of Assistant Ministers is strengthened by the fact that they can undergo their basic training under several Ministers, so that, if the need ever arises, an Assistant Minister can be called on to take his place on the front bench of either House. Ministers may fall sick, take holidays or attend conferences, and they must have someone to fill in for them. We currently have an Acting Minister of Transport, because the Minister is overseas. Certainly, I do not begrudge him the opportunity of going overseas with members of his staff to study transport developments throughout the world. I only hope he comes back with some workable ideas this time. The Minister of Environment and Conservation is now representing the Minister

of Transport in this place, and a Minister in another place is Acting Minister of Transport.

By appointing an Assistant Minister, even with the duties being transferred from one portfolio to another, the person selected will gain much experience. The eleventh Minister should be a relieving Minister, a Minister in training who holds a portfolio in this House or in another place, although I certainly hope he will be a member of this Chamber. The Premier holds the position of Treasurer and Minister of Development and Mines, yet the portfolio of Treasurer is a sufficiently large portfolio to stand alone. The Deputy Premier has a heavy work load as Minister of Marine and Minister of Works.

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

Mr. BECKER: The Chief Secretary, Minister of Lands, Minister of Repatriation and Minister of Irrigation (Hon. A. F. Kneebone) is a member of the Legislative Council; no doubt in that grouping of portfolios there is scope for allocating duties to the new Minister. The portfolios of Education and of Fisheries are strange bedfellows; I would have thought that the Education portfolio was considerable in itself. The Hon. Mr. King has his hands full, because he is not only Attorney-General but also Minister of Community Welfare. Similarly, the Transport portfolio and the Local Government portfolio make up a demanding pair of portfolios. Of course, the Agriculture portfolio and the Forests portfolio go hand in hand. The Minister of Environment and Conservation is also the Minister Assisting the Premier; he is more or less a relieving Minister. There are also the portfolios of Labour and Industry and of Health. So, there is plenty of scope for allocating duties to an additional Minister. I agree with the following statement of the Minister in his second reading explanation:

The Government feels that, following the creation of the additional Ministerial office, a redistribution and rationalization of Ministerial duties and functions can be effected that will be of benefit not only to this Parliament but also to the people of the State generally.

Of course, the new portfolio could cover other areas; the Opposition would like to see a safety portfolio, covering road safety, water safety, etc. A portfolio could be allocated to recreation.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Would you enlarge on that matter?

Mr. BECKER: I will do so tomorrow afternoon. At present, aspects of recreation are covered by various portfolios. Probably the most important area that should be covered by a portfolio is decentralization, which is at present dealt with by the Minister of Development and Mines. In view of the establishment of Monarto, a separate portfolio could be allocated to decentralization. At some times of the year it is eight weeks after the original letter has been sent before a Minister replies to it. Some letters I sent to Ministers in January this year were not answered until April or May; there was an election in the interim period, and perhaps the Ministers were hoping that they would not have to answer some of my letters. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): I support the idea of an eleventh Minister. If one looks at the front bench and notices how the Ministers have aged over the last three years, one realizes that we need an additional Minister. The present Ministers appear old now, whereas a short time ago they appeared to be almost boys. Because the Ministers are clearly showing the strains of office, there should be an additional Minister. I believe that the legislation should provide more clearly for only three Ministers in the Upper

House; indeed, perhaps there should be fewer than three Ministers in that House. Because the Upper House is a House of Review, we should limit the extent to which legislation can be initiated there.

The Government is entering into too many fields, and possibly some of our legislation is not sufficiently concise, particularly the Planning and Development Act. This morning I spent an hour with some planning experts but I do not know whether I am any wiser now about what the legislation means. Too many South Australians live in fear of how legislation may affect them, mainly because they do not understand it. We must carefully consider the matter of the efficiency of the Public Service. I commend the Government for initiating an inquiry into the Public Service; in saying that, I do not mean to criticize public servants. Of course, in all walks of life some people do not pull their weight and do not provide sufficient service. I believe that it would be easier for Ministers if the Public Service was streamlined; at present there are too many departments. I support the Bill.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I, too, support the Bill and sincerely hope that it will contribute to efficient administration. Further, I hope that the Government does not intend to alter the front bench again and spend another \$8,500 of the taxpayers' money. Recently, when I was in Western Australia, I noticed that one of the Ministers in the House of Assembly there sat in the second row; I believe that the taxpayers of this State should be protected from the Government's wild and irresponsible spending sprees. I hope the Government will not spend money unwisely by further extending the front bench. I support the Bill, and I hope the Minister appointed will be able to pay attention to the problems of South Australia, the main problem being to control the irresponsible wage demands put forward by the unions. I sincerely hope something will be done about inflation.

The SPEAKER: As this is a Bill to amend the Constitution Act and as it provides for an alteration of the Constitution of the Parliament, its second reading requires to be carried by an absolute majority. Therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 298, I now count the House. There being present an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the House I put the question "That this Bill be now read a second time". For the question say "Aye", against "No". The "Ayes" have it.

Bill read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The Bill having been passed by the requisite statutory majority, it may now be further proceeded with.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Number of Ministers of the Crown."

Mr. COUMBE: I do not want to be too precise, and I realize that the Bill must go through the normal channels before it receives assent. However, as this is a matter of some moment, I ask the Premier when such an appointment might be made.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I would hope within a fortnight if we can get ready assent from another place.

Mr. GUNN: What plans has the Premier for seating the additional Minister to be appointed? Obviously the appointment will be made in this House. Is it contemplated that the front bench will be further extended?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is difficult to see how it could be. We will examine the matter, of course.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 363.)

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I support the Bill, which ratifies the agreement entered into at the Premiers' Conference in June last. It has been correctly stated that the Bill as presented is substantially in accordance with the schedule which contained the provisions laid down at the time of the Premiers' Conference and negotiated between the Commonwealth Minister and the various State Ministers. It is clear from reading the schedule that alterations have been introduced for the specific advantage of one State over another.

The Commonwealth Minister for Housing, speaking in this State as recently as last Saturday, commented that alterations had been made to the schedule at the insistence of the Premier. I believe he said that, if there had not been a negotiated or altered schedule, the State of South Australia and the Premier would have gone to the barricades. I take this as a reference to the provision allowing more than 30 per cent of the funds to be apportioned to the Home Building Account. I am in complete accord with this. Over a period of time South Australia has shown a responsibility toward housing, and that responsibility goes back beyond the present Government's occupation of the Treasury benches. Over that long period there has been a realization of the need for housing and the activities of the State Bank and the Housing Trust have clearly given South Australia a most satisfactory housing position when compared to that in other States.

The Commonwealth Minister referred to something for which every person in South Australia should be thankful: that we in South Australia have not seen fit to go into the area of high-rise development. In Victoria, the Housing Commission has undertaken multi-storey development, with buildings rising to 20 storeys or 25 storeys. The Minister said that a review has clearly shown that the number of psychiatric admissions, of both children and adults, bears a direct relationship to occupancy of high-rise tenements or flats. I am sure all members will agree that we do not want to see such monstrosities appearing in South Australia. The quality of the houses built by the various agencies, especially the Housing Trust, is the envy of the other States, and I hope it will long remain that way.

The schedule to this Bill is entirely different from the one accompanying the Bill which was introduced in 1966 and which subsequently became Act No. 35 of 1966. The provisions of the schedule on that occasion were much narrower than those applying in this instance. This schedule, apart from being much larger, is wider in its effect and the introduction of the welfare housing concept is a new arrangement that will benefit many people. I am grateful for the help afforded by the member for Elizabeth in an effort to ensure that the quality of housing in South Australia will remain high and that the concept of the slum-type housing to be created on transport corridors will be set aside. There is a realization by the Government that second-class citizens must not be created as they were to be created by the type of housing the Government intended to erect at Smithfield Plains.

With regard to the rentals that will apply to welfare housing, several variable propositions will clearly require assistance from the departments concerned, whether the branch of the State Bank associated with house building or the South Australian Housing Trust, to identify and

clearly indicate to people what type of rental or loan will be available to them. In the past, there was a much clearer definition of tenancy that was associated only with the needs of persons in necessitous circumstances. Now we find a series of provisions introduced to allow people whose income is on or below a fixed average income for male persons to be specially considered with regard to rent.

Before and since the Commonwealth Labor Government was elected, the Treasurer and some of his colleagues said that, by virtue of the housing arrangements it had pursued over a period, South Australia would receive a greater percentage of funds in this regard. In explaining the Loan Estimates, the Treasurer said that the advance for housing was 9.2 per cent above the sum allocated in the 1972-73 Budget. In that year, it was the responsibility of the State Government to determine how much would be spent on housing; the Commonwealth gave no direction as to what percentage should be applied in this way. Although this increase of 9.2 per cent has been provided, this is not a greater sum for housing than usual, if we take into account the inflationary trend in the building industry. Therefore, the pronouncements made leading up to the Premiers' Conference in June this year, that South Australia would receive a greater proportion than previously of the national distribution for housing, were not vindicated.

The Treasurer and the Minister of Works have said that there has been some balancing of the amount of funds made available to the States in other areas by virtue of the fact that they did not receive as much for housing as they expected. In explaining the Loan Estimates, the Treasurer also said that our share of the aggregate funds was close to the share received in recent years. This fact has long been recognized by Opposition members. Members of my Party in the Commonwealth field have said for some time that the distribution of the national cake would be basically the same as had applied in recent years. The Treasurer's final acceptance of this fact is now documented in his own words in explaining the Loan Estimates.

In his second reading explanation of this Bill, the Treasurer said that the funds we were receiving would be close to the capacity of the building industry, both with regard to labour and materials, to use. It will be interesting to determine whether South Australia, as well as the other States, can spend the additional sums that have been made available for housing by the Commonwealth Government. If these programmes are to be carried out, will other areas of spending in the public and private sector have to be denied because of the inability of the building industry to increase its capacity to match the funds now available? The Treasurer and other members will watch this matter closely.

It is regrettable that, under the new agreement, funds are no longer available to building societies. Indeed, over recent months we have seen a difference of opinion amongst Commonwealth Cabinet members whether funds should be made available to building societies, and whether building societies are worth while. The denial of funds to societies at this time will also be watched with much interest. Without doubt, over a long period these societies have provided funds to an increasing number of people in the community who want to own their house. If it is found that there are increasing demands for funds to be channelled again through these societies, an alteration to the present agreement will have to be considered. The Treasurer has said that provision exists whereby a Minister or Ministers can initiate discussion with the Commonwealth Minister with regard to altering particulars in the schedule.

The Commonwealth Minister may initiate changes and, subject to the changes being accepted by the Minister of the State in which the change has to apply, or collectively by all the Ministers at a meeting, such alterations to the original schedule will be permitted. We will watch with interest to see whether the change with regard to building societies is made.

As I have said, the State Bank and the Housing Trust will have to give much information to persons who wish to use funds made available under this agreement. The Treasurer has made this clear. He points out that, although the agreement does not spell out a maximum rent chargeable, the Commonwealth Minister for Housing has suggested that rents charged to families at the upper limit of the needs test should not exceed 22½ per cent of income and that the proportion of rent to income should decline as income reduces. This does not indicate that there will be any annual adjustment with regard to persons whose rents come within the 22½ per cent of income category. The agreement provides that, at least once each financial year, the State housing authority should review its rentals and make adjustments when necessary. However, it does not indicate clearly the basis on which the adjustments will be made or whether those adjustments will relate to a major change in income that occurs only days or weeks after the arrangement has been made. This is a difficult and clouded area. One can hardly have an annual review and, at the same time, try to force people to make retrospective rental payments.

One finds the situation, for example, that has applied on many occasions where a person, soon after having had a figure determined, finds himself shortly after in a much more satisfactory financial position. Indeed, this sort of situation could easily apply to a member who suddenly became a Minister of the Crown, when his income was markedly increased. If such a person had his rental determined only days before he suddenly received a massive increase, he would receive the benefit of the reduced rental for a long time. This clouded area cannot necessarily be adjusted by this Bill. However, it is an area of administration that requires much consideration, and I ask the Treasurer to say how the matter can best be dealt with.

The other matter that I should like to pinpoint was borne out by the Commonwealth Treasurer in his recent Budget speech. The scheme under which young couples who have saved a certain amount can receive a subsidy on the construction of a house is to be phased out. Although some consideration is to be given to mortgage repayments, it is doubtful whether this measure will be as satisfactory as the incentive that has applied, whereby young couples who have put their money aside have gained a direct financial benefit.

Other matters detailed by the Treasurer when discussing the various clauses of the Bill cause some minor concern. I refer, first, to clause 5, which the Minister has said provides that any other moneys advanced to the State, other than moneys payable to the Home Builders Account, shall be paid to a special account at the Treasury and shall be paid from that account to the South Australian Housing Trust. The Treasurer continued:

Subclause (2) of this clause authorizes the Treasurer to use moneys paid to him by the trust, or moneys in the Home Builders Account, to meet interest obligations and principal repayments due to the Commonwealth under the agreement.

One asks whether this is before the appropriation. The situation is not clear. The Treasurer continued:

Clause 6 provides for the situation where, for any reason, payments to the State by the Commonwealth under the agreement may be delayed. This clause authorizes the Treasurer to make advances to the Home Builders Account to enable funds to continue to be available for mortgage lending.

One asks what delays are likely to occur and who will benefit from or be disadvantaged by the interest that will have to be paid to the Commonwealth Government from the funds that are available basically for the benefit of house builders. The Treasurer continued:

Clause 7 in substance will allow the State to anticipate the execution of the agreement, and indeed the passage of this Bill. In effect, it provides that moneys may be made available for housing purposes at any time in anticipation of the execution of the agreement and that any advances or repayments, referred to in this clause, will as it were be retrospectively validated.

Again, one asks how far back this retrospectivity will go. Is it intended that it will be advantageous, or disadvantageous, in the new scheme for the forthcoming five years, and will the retrospectivity on validation be advantageous to the people concerned?

I refer to one further area: the bridging finance that is available within the community. I have sought statements from the Treasurer on this matter; indeed, he told me early this afternoon that there were no provisions in the previous agreement for bridging finance to be made available for community facilities. He said that the agreement now provides that, before such finance is made available, permission must be sought from the Commonwealth Minister, and that it is believed that the initiative for the types of amenity for which bridging finance can be made available should come from local government or local communities.

It would appear, therefore, that the Government has not decided how this measure will operate. I am concerned that it will be necessary for the State Minister to obtain the permission of the Commonwealth Minister before bridging finance can be made available. I can imagine (and, indeed, accept) the situation in which a decision regarding which facilities will be provided or for which funds will be made available will be made by the State Housing Minister. However, I find it difficult to accept that he must obtain the Commonwealth Minister's approval before his previous decision can be implemented. The situation that has occurred for a long time in developing areas is a guide to the probable matters regarding bridging finance that will be put to the Minister, particularly, say, in the creation of Monarto or, for that matter, the complex at Redcliffs.

One can refer also to the situation that applied at Elizabeth, where community facilities were not available for a long time. The community itself was unable to find the funds to enable it to erect facilities. Subsequently, when the facilities were built with the agreement of the local council, with the assistance of the Housing Trust, a large sum remained to be paid by the council, which debt is still causing it a major problem. The sum of \$330,000 was originally made available for the construction of the Shedley and Octagon theatres at Elizabeth. This financial year the interest repayment, at a rate of 5.5 per cent, is \$12,845, and the capital repayment is \$12,471. The subsidy cost to the council is about \$22,000 a year, that is, the maintenance expenditure over the income. On that basis, the actual loss to the council is major.

It would be advantageous to any new development if the Government accepted the major portion of the cost of those facilities that would benefit the community. One could not argue that this would benefit the community

by giving it at an early stage in its development an interest area that would allow the community concerned to develop its own identity. However, one must then ask: if this type of assistance is to be given by the bridging finance provided in this arrangement for developing areas, will these areas receive this type of benefit plus the other type of financial assistance they may require, and will the existent communities receive no consideration at all? Will Monarto, Redcliffs or any other development have the benefit of this low-interest bridging finance plus Government assistance whereas other areas must maintain the repayment of the moneys they have in the past agreed to repay? Will the Government rationalize the situation having regard to the provisions now available, under this agreement, to new areas? Will the Government make available greater provision or subsidy to existent communities so that a balance can be achieved?

I realize, in asking these questions of the Treasurer or the Minister assisting him, that no clear-cut or specific answer can necessarily be given, but I make the point strongly that there must be a rationalization of benefit to communities in any action or promotion of a new area provided for by the agreement. Discrimination between communities will develop if the total benefits of the new provision plus subsidy are made available to one community whereas another community receives no consideration or only a minimal subsidy. This consideration will be of interest to the member for Mawson in respect of the developing community in his area. It is a consideration to which every member will be wanting a definite answer in due course. One can extend the type of facility that can be made available as a community interest far beyond the provision of halls for social and concert engagements by moving into the field of swimming pools, ovals, parks and playgrounds, which are necessary to make a new or existing development a worthwhile place in which to live.

Whereas I appreciate that provision is made in other circumstances for the development of parks and the constructing of swimming pools with funds from the Tourist Bureau, the Government needs to say clearly and soon in this five-year agreement period how it will distribute the bridging finance and for what type of project it will make it available. Even by a question to the Premier, which was answered earlier today, there is no clear indication, for this was his answer:

The agreement provides that before bridging finance is made available permission must be sought from the Commonwealth Minister, it is believed that the initiative for the types of amenities for which bridging finance can be made available should come from local government or local communities. If such bodies have a community amenity which they believe could be provided if bridging finance were available, then they should communicate with either myself or the trust and we will communicate with the Commonwealth Minister.

They are very broad terms of reference. Another point that clearly arises from that answer is that a local community, by making a direct approach to the Treasurer, may by-pass the council, which may become the group responsible for repayments or for providing a subsidy to permit adequate maintenance. Here, we ask the next question: will the local community that by-passes its council and makes a successful approach to the Treasurer be responsible, either individually or collectively, for any maintenance charges, or will the Government wipe its hands of that responsibility and subsequently put it on the shoulders of local government? I can envisage, and would like to believe, that a local community that makes such an application would have it directed to the attention

of the local council and that the Minister responsible would clearly determine whether the local council would accept the responsibility that would accrue from a successful application.

If the local council was not able, in its wisdom or having regard to its future responsibility, to assume responsibility for financing these matters, would it then find itself loaded with this cost or would the Government accept the responsibility of making good any deficiency in operating or maintenance costs? These are points that come readily to mind. We on this side support the concept of the inclusion of this provision in the agreement but, before we accept it, it is necessary that there be a clear indication of how it will be put into operation and whether or not it will eventually benefit the community.

My final comment is again by way of question to the Treasurer: what is the future, granted that the provision, which is the schedule to this Bill, is for a five-year period? There is provision for an amendment to be made during the five-year period, and that decision to make an amendment depends on action being taken by the Commonwealth Minister, or by the State Minister in conjunction with the Commonwealth Minister. But, can the Treasurer say whether this is to be the basis for future agreements? I accept that changing circumstances of personnel and of Governments will play a major part in the long term in that regard, but I would have expected that in making this five-year agreement arrangement there would be some questioning and seeking of detail from the Commonwealth Minister on the long-term effect of the new approach.

An extension of time beyond the five years would allow for an alteration or reappraisal of, or a new approach to, the interest rates that applied. While this is vital for the State and Commonwealth Governments, there should be some indication whether the overall effects are expected to be projected into housing, or into the financial aspects of housing, from Commonwealth sources beyond the five-year period. This relates particularly to the forward planning and development of the community facility, a feature to which I have referred previously. This Bill is vital for the future of this State, and it is necessary for several questions to be replied to by the Treasurer, preferably before the clauses are discussed in Committee. If the Treasurer finds some areas of grey that cannot be clearly spelled out, he should obtain further details. I support the Bill.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I, too, support the Bill. I suggest that, where the Treasurer is not sure of details when replying to the Leader's questions, he should give some idea of what he believes the long-term result may be. I support the principle of making money available for low-income groups to be able to purchase a house, because I believe that an important part of family life is to be given the chance to acquire a house. Generally, house owners take a greater interest in the property and its surroundings than do those who rent houses. That may not apply in all situations: many people who rent a house take a keen interest in it and many who own a house show little respect for it. However, a person usually takes a greater interest in something in which he has an equity.

I have referred in the House to the problem of houses which were built with low interest money and which were let by the trust to persons in the low-income group, or to those who may be underprivileged. We know it is an old story, but it is important that it be repeated until the Government (if not this one, the next one) makes the change. A young couple with a family may be in great need of a house but do not have the necessary money. An approach is made to the Housing Trust and, because of the

family's financial position, it is given a low-rental house. Over a period the husband improves his position in his employment (or may begin a business venture) and, as the children become more independent, the wife obtains a job. In that case two incomes are coming into the house although the family is living in a low-rental house built with taxpayers' money at a low interest rate.

If it does not buy material things, this family can invest the money that it should have been paying as rent or off a mortgage, and it has an advantage at the expense of its fellow workers, but particularly at the expense of other underprivileged people in the community who are waiting for a low-rental house. I have a letter from the Housing Trust indicating that it has applications dating back to 1970 for low-rental housing, but none is available: it has a three-year waiting list. The persons to whom I am referring may vote for my Party: that is not always the case, but generally it is. The argument used by the Government is that a person with equity in anything will vote for my Party rather than vote for the Labor Party. I am not trying to win votes, but trying to make it possible for underprivileged persons in the society, who cannot obtain a low-rental house, to obtain one.

It is the responsibility of the Government to make that modification to the conditions so that people must face a means test during a set period, whether it be one year, three years, or five years. I know of persons in this State who live in a Housing Trust house and pay no more than \$12 a week rent but earn more than \$24,000 a year. That is a disgraceful and an unacceptable situation. In this family both people work and one has a business enterprise. From the Treasurer's second reading explanation, it is apparent that a qualification is needed to be able to buy a house, so that we are starting the same process again, not for rental housing but for houses for purchase, because the Treasurer stated:

One of the more important aspects of Commonwealth housing policy relates to the building up of a stock of rental houses; thus, the agreement restricts to 30 per cent the percentage of family dwellings built with funds provided under this agreement which may be sold, either by direct sale or under agreement. Also, where such houses are sold, the purchasers must satisfy the needs test, and the interest charge to purchasers is limited to 5¼ per cent a year. A purchaser of such a house may not dispose of the house, other than to the Housing Trust for at least five years after the date of sale and, even subsequently, intending vendors will be required to give the Housing Trust first option to purchase at a fair market value.

Let us consider the case of a young married couple who have the required deposit and meet the qualifications referred to by the Government, but who may be young and need help. Subsequently, they both work and have a combined income far above the average income. They continue using that low-interest money (5¼ per cent) whilst paying off the house for the term of the agreement. The money they would normally have to pay as rent (as other persons in the community have to pay at a normal interest rate) can be invested and earn 10 per cent or perhaps 12 per cent. That is an illustration of what is happening now. These people could continue for the term of the agreement, say, 25 years, and pay this low interest rate. During this time they have an advantage over their fellow workers or over underprivileged people, and this situation is wrong.

I accept the provision that the house must be resold to the Housing Trust within the first five years, but I believe the Housing Trust should have the first right of refusal for the term of the contract. Who is to define "fair market value", the term used by the Treasurer? I

suppose we could say it was the value placed on the property by the Valuer-General, who now values all properties, and even councils accept his valuation. I hope the Treasurer will tell us why he has used the term "fair market value". He is doing what every other State that accepts this type of legislation is doing in setting up a situation that is already untenable in the case of rental houses. This same situation is now being developed regarding purchase houses, but this should be avoided. It is important that we have as much cheap low-interest money as is possible to be made available for housing for the underprivileged, but we are not doing this. We are merely telling a group that we will help them over the initial hurdle and that they can continue being parasites on the rest of society, in the case of rental houses for the rest of their lives, and in the case of purchase houses this will continue for the term of the agreement.

South Australia has a good record in housing. In fact, no State has a better record, and this is to the credit of both Liberal and Labor Governments of the past. Indeed, even our urban environment is better than similar environments in other States, yet we now have a classic example of what happens to the thrifty and responsible under a Labor Government. We can see as a State (not as individuals, not as poor John Citizen being trodden down by bureaucracy) that, having maintained a good standard of housing in the past, adequate sewerage facilities and a large percentage of properties connected to reticulated water, we finish up at the end of the line and find that our Treasurer has to argue with his Commonwealth colleagues, and tell them that they have neglected South Australia in the provision of funds for sewerage, because our allocation is only \$1,600,000, based on our population of 1 250 000. Victoria has been allocated over \$9,000,000; New South Wales over \$11,000,000; Queensland and Western Australia over \$3,000,000; yet the last-named State has virtually the same population as South Australia. We suffer under a Commonwealth Labor Government from having taken a responsible and thrifty approach to life. When that attitude is taken in the community, exactly the same fate befalls John Citizen.

I congratulate the Treasurer on his approach to the Commonwealth Government on this matter, because he said he was not willing to accept the conditions originally laid down by the Commonwealth about the amount that could be used under the Home Building Act. He said he wanted to give the people in this State a greater opportunity to purchase their own house. I believe that to be a responsible approach. It is the right approach and, if there is any action we should be taking throughout the community regarding housing, it is to encourage people to acquire their own house so that this matter no longer remains the responsibility of the State. People should have an interest in their house and have an equity in it as well.

The Leader has referred to the slightly greater amount available for housing this year. However, it is not a great deal more, considering the rate of inflation in the building trade. The Treasurer has referred to this rate as running at about 18 per cent annually. That is a high rate, but the Leader questioned the ability of the building industry to make use of the funds directed to it, considering its physical resources in South Australia. I have no doubt that the additional funds directed to the industry in the next year will create an even greater shortage of building materials. It will affect nearly all building supplies, and an area of bargaining for materials and labour will develop. Greater increases in prices will result. People selling their labour, be it on subcontract or day work, will be bargaining for higher

payments and we may find that the level of industrial unrest will increase, because people will consider that this is a good time to ask for a little more. Indeed, I foresee the rate of inflation from June, 1973, to June, 1974, to run at about 20 per cent in the building industry. That is frightening. This is a matter that has been glossed over. We have even been told that it does not matter.

Every young couple striving to buy a house should accept that during 1973-74 they will be going backwards in real purchasing power in their attempts to acquire one. Even though more money for housing is available from the Commonwealth, the shortage of manpower and materials will add to the inflationary rate. All young people saving for their own house will suffer considerably in the next 12 months through the loss of purchasing power. That is all that really counts in the long term: how many hours must one work to buy a house? It does not matter how many dollars are in the bank if the purchasing power is not there.

To the Treasurer and his Cabinet I say that this is an area of real concern and I hope they will keep their finger on the pulse; indeed, I suggest to all members and the people generally that many of their sons and daughters, who believe they will build a house at a cost of \$1,100 to \$1,300 a square during this fiscal year, will find that the cost will be closer to \$1,500 a square. I support the Bill. Every State is passing similar legislation. I congratulate those Premiers who have bargained for minor concessions from the Commonwealth, and I shall welcome the opportunity of hearing further comments from the Treasurer in Committee on the matters needing clarification as outlined by the Leader.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): Like the member for Fisher, I support the Bill, because I believe we have to support it. The funds required under this legislation have been made available to the States by the Commonwealth Government but regrettably strings are attached to these funds: the States must undertake certain things with these funds. This financial year the State will receive \$32,750,000 for housing, an increase of \$3,250,000 over the previous financial year. While it is encouraging to know that the State has received this additional amount, I question whether it will really assist the Housing Trust to overcome the heavy backlog of applications for rental accommodation.

Persons currently seeking to rent accommodation from the Housing Trust are informed that there is a waiting list of up to 3½ years for rental housing in the metropolitan area. This is not good enough, if we are to overcome the housing shortage in this State. The Bill provides particularly for people whose income does not exceed 85 per cent of average weekly earnings; actually, I believe that a large percentage of South Australians do not receive anywhere near that income.

I was recently confronted with the situation of a family of three in my district; the breadwinner was unfortunately on sickness benefits, and the maximum amount of rental he could afford to pay was \$12 a week. It is impossible to find reasonable rental accommodation in the private sector anywhere in the metropolitan area at \$12 a week. So, my constituent had to accept rental accommodation in a small country town about 120 miles (193.1 km) north of Adelaide, where the rental was about \$10 a week. It is a sad state of affairs when a man must take his family to the country in order to provide a roof over their heads, because he cannot afford a rental of \$12 a week.

One would have thought that the whole object of the Australian Government in providing the funds to the

States would be to overcome the housing shortage in all capital cities. Probably South Australia is not as badly off as are other States but, even so, our situation is not good enough. Nowadays most owners of blocks of flats are loath to accept tenants who have children. Let us take the case of a person who has been unable to save sufficient money to purchase a house and who therefore depends on rental accommodation. If he cannot obtain such accommodation through the Housing Trust, he has great difficulty in providing a roof over his family's heads. This situation becomes even more difficult at this time of the year. In the seaside suburbs in my district the rentals have been low in the winter but, as spring and summer draw near, flat rents will be increased by \$2, \$4 or \$6 a week. In that situation a worker on a low income will have to seek other accommodation. My file on housing is one of the biggest files I have.

The Housing Trust tries to provide houses for people on low incomes, and I believe that temporary accommodation should also be made available. It need not all be in the one area; rather, dwellings should be provided throughout the metropolitan area to meet any urgent needs that arise. The Treasurer has said that he is loath to re-establish temporary accommodation because he is afraid that slum-type ghettos may develop, but that possibility can be avoided through commonsense planning. Because the need for rental accommodation is so acute, I doubt whether the funds that will become available will make serious inroads into the huge backlog of applications. I hope that the Revenue Budget will provide additional funds for the Housing Trust.

We are shortly to have a Housing Trust project at Novar Gardens, near the Adelaide Airport. No-one will convince me that that project represents commonsense planning. Many complaints about noise pollution have been received from people residing near the boundaries of the airport. I therefore cannot see why anyone would plan for a further housing project there, particularly three-storey flats. I hope that the funds provided through this Bill will not be spent in that area. Let us provide accommodation, but let us provide it in an environment that we can be proud of; the politics of that will be spelt out in the next few months, and I am willing to tackle the Government in connection with it. The needs test has not been thoroughly spelt out in the Bill; it is provided that rentals will be based on the needs of families.

The upper limit of the rental shall not exceed 22½ per cent of the income of the wage earner. If we take the average weekly wage in South Australia as \$102 a week, we find that 85 per cent of that amount is about \$86, and therefore the rental (22½ per cent of \$86) will be about \$19 a week. That figure is extremely high and is not the type of rental we should be charging the type of person who will get this accommodation. I believe that 22½ per cent is a fair slice out of anyone's wage. It was always accepted in the bank in which I was employed that total housing loan repayments should not exceed 25 per cent of the breadwinner's weekly income. Yet here we have a Government that talks about welfare housing taking 22½ per cent of the worker's weekly wage; it is extremely unfair and does not give the worker any chance of providing a house for his family in the future.

It is an Australian characteristic that each person seeks to obtain his own house. Whether it be financed by heavy mortgage or not, every working man wants to own his own house, and the majority of the community makes the necessary effort. In looking at the latest Budgets and the attitudes of the Australian Government, we find little if

any encouragement for the working man in this ambition. If he is placed in a situation where he will be dependent on the State to rent accommodation we find, through the placing of the upper limit of 22½ per cent of his weekly wage, that he will have no hope; in other words, he will be dependent on the State for housing for the rest of his life. When that happens, one can bet one's socks that he will be dependent on the State for all his needs throughout the remainder of his life.

This is part of the basic concept of Socialism and we see the concept evolving in Australia with the Australian Government and its policy of centralism, the States acting as agencies in that centralist policy, and in a few years from now people of the future generation will be born into a welfare State, will be dependent on that welfare State throughout their lives, and eventually will be buried by it. The Bill, in my opinion, does little to encourage private enterprise or the initiative of the working man. It is a further nail in his coffin, brought about by centralism and Socialism.

I am disappointed with the amount of money made available for mortgage loans through the State Bank, although it is pleasing to note that 52.7 per cent of the money will be made available through that agency. Here again, those applying for the loan will be expected to meet the requirements of the needs test. The interest rate will be pegged at a maximum of 5½ per cent for those eligible families where the average gross income of the breadwinner does not exceed 85 per cent of the average weekly earnings. The minimum deposit will be 3 per cent and the houses being provided by the Housing Trust cost in the vicinity of \$14,000; 3 per cent would be \$420. Whilst that may be within reasonable reach of a working man earning about \$90 a week (although he would have to save for some years to have \$420), he receives no help with the payment of stamp duties, registration and stamping of mortgage documents, and the other charges connected with purchasing a house. The deposit may be \$420 for a housing costing \$14,000, but the purchaser could be up for \$500 or \$600 in fees that go to the State. This is where the State could assist the average man and those purchasing houses, particularly their first one.

If the State is genuine and wants to assist in providing welfare housing for those wishing to own houses, it should abolish stamp duties and registration fees paid to the Treasury on the first house bought by people qualifying for these loans. That would be a tremendous benefit, enabling the working man to acquire a house on a 3 per cent deposit. However, worse is yet to come. If he qualifies for this loan, the maximum mortgage he is able to obtain under the provisions of the Bill is \$12,500, so he receives a loan of \$12,500, his deposit is \$420, but on a house costing \$14,000 he is required to find another \$1,080.

The only avenue for raising this extra money would be from a finance company or a money-lender by way of second mortgage. Nothing is mentioned in the Bill about the provision of this finance. Again, if the Government were genuine and sincere, the State Bank should be permitted to make this money available at a lower interest rate, say 5¼ per cent or 5½ per cent, over a term that the breadwinner could afford. This all adds to the cost of servicing the loan and the weekly payments would be getting towards 25 per cent of his income.

This Bill does not go all the way, as we have been told. It does not move into the area that makes it so much easier for the average family to own a house. It is regrettable that not sufficient money was made available to

catch up on the backlog of rental accommodation. The Australian Government has not made enough money available to the State Government for the Housing Trust to eliminate the backlog of applications to purchase houses from the trust, an area of considerable demand. Cash buyers who arrange finance outside the State Bank or the Housing Trust must wait up to 12 months or 18 months; those who wish to apply for loans through the State Bank and the Housing Trust can be made to wait much longer. In my opinion, the Bill does not achieve what we would like it to achieve. We must provide more money for housing, more assistance for the average working man to own his house. The day we fail to do that, the day we ensure that the working man is dependent on the State for a roof over his head, we take from him the basic freedoms—initiative and private enterprise. Reluctantly, I support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Approval of execution of Agreement."

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I seek your guidance, Mr. Chairman. Is this the clause under which the schedule should be discussed or does the schedule become independent of the clauses?

The CHAIRMAN: The schedule will be discussed when it is reached.

Dr. EASTICK: Can the Treasurer say what will be the extent of alterations permitted to the agreement after it has been executed? How will effect be given to a changed emphasis with regard to house-building methods, or some other change that occurs in one State? How positive is the agreement? What areas of alteration may be effected in due course?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): Obviously, discussion takes place in some areas with the Commonwealth Minister. For instance, this relates to the Home Builders Account: we have reached agreement with the Commonwealth Minister that we can put a proportion of money to that account. In addition, in some circumstances we are able to use non-concessional interest money together with concessional interest money to achieve a high sales programme. The agreement is arranged so that, when there are areas of discretion to be exercised, discussions can take place. The Commonwealth Minister and his officers have been through the operations of the Housing Trust with us in relation to matters specified in the agreement. I believe we will be able to proceed satisfactorily.

Mr. COUMBE: In introducing the Loan Estimates, the Treasurer said:

... the new agreement lays emphasis on rental housing, and restricts to 30 per cent the proportion of family dwellings built with the special funds which may be sold.

In his second reading explanation of this Bill, the Premier states:

... the agreement restricts to 30 per cent the percentage of family dwellings built with funds provided under this agreement which may be sold, either by direct sale or under agreement.

He then says that just over 50 per cent of the special funds will go to the Home Builders Account for advances through the State Bank to intending house purchasers. These advances are subject to a means test. The only moneys that I can see available for those who do not qualify under or are not obliged to submit to the means test will be the revolving funds of the bank or the trust. I should like this point clarified. In addition, as a result of the reduction to 30 per cent in trust special funds available for houses for rental-purchase or purchase, will

the number of houses for sale or rental-purchase be reduced?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This agreement will not interfere with the rental-purchase scheme; it may make some difference to the total number of houses built for sale. However, it will not make a difference to the total number of houses built altogether. With regard to the moneys available for the house purchase schemes, I point out that at present the Housing Trust is fairly flush with funds for two reasons: first, mortgages have been repaid rather more quickly than expected, and secondly, we have specified a fairly considerable amount of semi-governmental loans for the Housing Trust. We put to the Commonwealth that in addition to the money specified under this agreement we could specify public Loan moneys and semi-governmental Loan moneys to the trust. This is the difference between what we do here and what happens in Victoria, where the Government relies on concessional interest money alone for rental and purchase schemes. We have given additional money to the State Bank as an advance against house sales. An additional sum of non-concessional interest money has gone in to cope with those needing assistance from the State Bank.

Dr. EASTICK: There is an indication that a percentage of the total funds must be made available for providing rental housing that will not be available for purchase housing. Over the years the position can change because of the increased earning capacity of the individual or because he inherits or wins money. He may then wish to purchase the house. At present, in these cases an agreement with the trust is made, with some consideration being given, when the actual purchase price is determined, to the past rent paid. Is the new agreement wide enough to allow such an arrangement to be entered into? If such an arrangement were entered into, would another house, which was outside the percentage that were never to be available for sale, be considered in balancing out the final stock of houses in the trust's arrangements?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I do not think that the arrangement is as flexible as that. The Commonwealth insists that the money which is provided at a concessional interest rate and which will go mainly towards rental housing should be used to provide an increasing stock of houses available for rental. In this respect, South Australia is also rather better off than most of the other States because we have always retained a stock of houses for rental. Most of our welfare cases are accommodated in the older stock of houses because, given the general position and interest on sinking fund payments on those houses, it is easier for us to house them in this manner. However, the Commonwealth Government insists that this stock of houses should be identifiable and that they should increase. I do not know whether it will be terribly hard and fast in this respect, as long as we are able to show that the stock has increased. There are some difficulties in accounting, however, and some houses have been built on certain bases. Houses built with non-concessional money cannot just be swapped around with those that have not been so built. We cannot just shandy the money in that way.

Dr. Eastick: It is conceivable that it could be disadvantageous to be housed in one of these types of house, is it not?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, it is not, because if a tenant has been accommodated by the trust for a period and then wants to apply for a purchase house, he would certainly receive assistance from the Housing Trust when

purchasing the house. However, he may not be able to purchase the same house in which he has lived.

Dr. Eastick: Notwithstanding that he may want to remain identified with the area?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The fact is that the houses built for rental are not, for the most part, the houses that are designed to be built for sale. The biggest stock of rental houses comprises double units, which are certainly not sold.

Dr. EASTICK: I am concerned about this matter because I know of three Swedish-type houses in the Wattle Park area, two of which were purchased for \$6,400 each and, when someone wanted to purchase the final house, he was faced with an account for \$10,200 or \$10,400. These were rental houses and had been such for 15 to 20 years. Indeed, one of the persons who recently purchased one of these houses had been there for only five years but, because he became identified with the area, sought and gained permission to purchase the house. Although I am probably getting into a depth of questioning that is beyond the general realm of the agreement, I want to ascertain whether a person, having rented a house for some time and thereafter deciding he wants to purchase the house and live there permanently, will be able to benefit from his own endeavours.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The position the Leader is putting is not likely to arise under this agreement because the Swedish-type houses to which he refers were originally built for sale. In fact, it was found that they could not be sold, so they were let. The Swedish timber frame houses were imported for sale, but the trust ran into considerable problems when it was found that maintenance on them was high and they did not have a good sale factor. Given the problems of rental pressure that built up at the time, many of them were let over a long period. However, they were available for sale if the tenants wanted to convert their rentals to purchase. Under this agreement it is unlikely that we will convert in that manner, and we will certainly not be building any more of the Swedish houses.

Mr. EVANS: I raise now a matter I raised during the second reading debate, that money is made available to persons, who have the necessary 3 per cent deposit to enable them to purchase a house, at a rate of interest of 5¾ per cent. Although in 1974 some persons may be able to meet the necessary requirements regarding rental, they may by 1980 become affluent and still be obtaining money at the same low rate of interest. Should this matter not be examined with a view to introducing a means test into the agreement, so that persons who have become more affluent later in life will be subject to normal ruling interest rates? Such persons should not be placed at an advantage over others in the community.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member will appreciate that it would be extremely difficult to write in a provision of this kind, because we could not have a constantly changing means test. A means test in relation to a purchase can only apply at the date of the purchase contract, because no other date can effectively be applied. In these circumstances some people can obtain a benefit from society; that may be their good fortune. This situation has always existed under the rental-purchase system. If people decided to enter into a rental-purchase arrangement they received money at concessional rates. If their means improved thereafter then that was their good fortune; that is one of the lotteries of life. I do not see how

we could specify a constantly changing means test in relation to interest payments on a contract to purchase. It would be extremely difficult to apply.

Mr. CUMBE: I refer now to the permanent building societies, which have been specifically excluded from the agreement. For some years money has been made available to these societies from Government funds, but this year this assistance has been cut out. It is part of the agreement that no money shall go to the permanent building societies, which perform a useful and necessary function in this State because of the mortgage finance they can make available and also because our young people, before being able to build, have deposited their savings with the societies. I am also aware of the philosophy of the present Commonwealth Government, which seems to be against the principle of building societies operating in this regard. I suppose this is why they have been excluded. Will the Treasurer, who is obviously connected with the negotiations, explain why the permanent building societies have been excluded?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The reason for the exclusion of permanent building societies arose from their operations, particularly in New South Wales and partly in Victoria, too. The honourable member will be aware that in those States they have a markedly different operation from the operation of permanent building societies in South Australia. The operation of these societies, particularly in the larger States, has been bitterly criticized by banks and bank officers, who have pointed out that the permanent building societies have really taken over a banking function and have markedly increased the rate of interest to the public as a result. Similar criticisms have not been made in South Australia about permanent building societies, which have not operated here to the same degree of detriment to the public in forcing up interest rates. Our permanent building societies have operated well and have done a good job. Their money has gone to the smaller house-builder.

Dr. Eastick: Do you agree with Mr. Crean's criticisms?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I agree with them generally, but not in respect of the operation of building societies in South Australia. Our building societies are only a tiny proportion of all the building societies in Australia. They have operated differently from those in other States and the total structure of our finance in South Australia has been completely different from that in New South Wales and Victoria. The reason why the Commonwealth Government did not consider it should make a special exception of building societies in South Australia was that, frankly, the building societies did not need the funds. Our building societies have been very liquid for some time and can find money to lend without help from the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Commonwealth felt it should make no specific exception of the building societies in South Australia, as it has done in respect of the State Bank. It did not consider it was necessary to find funds to provide liquidity for the building societies.

Dr. Eastick: What if the position changed during the period of the five-year agreement?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In that case, we should take up the matter and examine it, but at present that is not necessary and the building societies have not seen fit to approach me on that score. I have discussed with them their interest rates and the provisions of the new Bill we are introducing in relation to building societies, but this matter did not trouble them greatly. That is why the changes have taken place here. The Commonwealth Government insisted that it normally put its money through

State instrumentalities under fairly stringent conditions to ensure that that money went basically to welfare housing.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Is it possible, under the current schedule, for a person to obtain financial assistance for housing both under this Commonwealth-State agreement and from the permanent building societies? The building societies have obviously played an important role so far in house-building for young people in the lower-income group, both in this State and throughout Australia. In May, over 60 per cent of the people who were receiving finance for house purchase through the permanent building societies earned less than the average weekly wage in Australia. It is interesting to note the growth of these permanent building societies in relation to the banks in lending money for housing. In 1963-64, the building societies lent only \$47,000,000 for housing, whereas the banks lent \$255,000,000. In 1971-72 (only eight years later), the building societies' lending had jumped to \$666,200,000, a tremendous jump of over \$600,000,000, whereas the banks had increased their lending less than three-fold, up to \$656,700,000. I understand the building societies made very little money, right across Australia, in lending those funds. I believe they lent them at 6.5 per cent interest, making only about $\frac{5}{8}$ per cent interest for themselves, having to take from that money their administration costs. I would appreciate this information from the Treasurer in view of the great importance to this State of its permanent building societies in lending money for house building and house buying.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If someone was to get a mortgage from the State Bank, there would be nothing to prevent his getting a second mortgage from a building society, because it would be willing to lend money on second mortgage. Normally, in the case of either institution, one would be looking for further mortgage finance; the institutions will not lend jointly on first mortgage.

Mr. Becker: The honourable member is not referring to that. He is asking whether a person who gets a first loan from a building society can get a further loan under the Commonwealth-State agreement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If a person already has had a building society loan, there is nothing to stop him, if he comes within the means test, going to the State Bank and getting a second loan. A second loan is not normally given through the same institution. There is a certain reluctance about doing that, because concessional interest money is involved. If one simply had a straight building society loan on the first occasion and went to the State Bank for a Home Builders Account loan to buy a replacement house, he would not be likely to be knocked back by the State Bank or the State Treasurer merely because he originally had a building society loan.

Mr. CUMBE: Moneys should be made available for buying existing houses but, looking at this agreement, I can find nothing about that. I know that for some years there was resistance to this type of activity, but it was eventually agreed to because it became obvious that moneys could well be used in this regard to purchase, through mortgage, a suitable existing house. The old argument was that this was not proper because it was necessary to build more houses to help the building industry. Under this new agreement, what is the position about moneys being made available from welfare housing or by other means for the purchase of existing houses?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Home Builders Account loans for new houses, so far as my recollection serves me, indicates that that is so. On the other hand, money is available under the agreement with the Housing

Trust to purchase a stock of existing houses and refurbish them. This is a new departure. Previously, that money was not available but now the Housing Trust can buy a stock of existing houses, prepare them for occupation, and let them to people on a welfare-housing basis.

Mr. Coumbe: Only let them?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes.

Mr. GUNN: The Treasurer would be aware that there is a critical shortage of Housing Trust houses in country areas. What is the trust's policy about building such houses?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: With great respect, I think we are getting away from the Bill.

Mr. BECKER: I understand that about 4 500 applications have been made to the trust for rental accommodation. With the provision of new moneys, what inroads can be made into the backlog of applications in future?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It depends on the rate at which we can provide houses in the present circumstances. It was to make inroads into the backlog of housing that our transportable housing programme was prepared, but that has met the direct opposition from the Leader, even though the standard of housing was an improvement on many of the existing good trust houses and was supported by good planning and architectural advice. The suggestion that such houses would create slums was sheer nonsense. If we meet that sort of opposition, it is difficult for us to make inroads into the backlog of housing, because it is a matter of how quickly we can erect houses in order to overcome the backlog.

Mr. EVANS: Can the Treasurer say whether, if a contract is entered into to rent a house, the conditions cannot be changed? Conditions prevail in which people in needy circumstances obtain a low-rental house but then become better off. By remaining in the house they are denying needy persons the chance to obtain a house and, at the same time, are not paying what would be considered an appropriate rental. Will any action be taken in these circumstances?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I cannot say what action will be taken, but this matter will be considered. The question is how to cope with that situation without creating anomalies. The agreement requires us to review rentals regularly. At present, our rental programme is making a substantial overall loss each year of more than \$1,000,000. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the position concerning the rentals paid for older low-rental houses because, contrary to common belief, the rental payments on those houses are not enough to meet interest and sinking fund charges, pay maintenance, and pay off the principal. An examination will have to be made, but I cannot promise what action will be taken, because a rental component has been built into family budgeting and planning, and it would be difficult to take action without creating hardship in some circumstances. This agreement requires the Commonwealth to consider this matter.

Dr. EASTICK: The agreement provides that once each financial year the State housing authority will review this agreement and make adjustments where necessary. In some circumstances adjustments may have to be made more often than annually. I appreciate that there may be some difficulty in having a review more frequently but, because of the loss of more than \$1,000,000 to which the Treasurer referred, can he foresee any form of management that may solve this problem? On Saturday I was heartened to learn from the General Manager of the trust that the average weekly expected income of the trust is about \$325,000 and that State-wide arrears total about \$7,000.

That is excellent management, but there may be a need to rationalize rentals paid by people whose circumstances change.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It would be difficult to make reviews more frequently than annually, but the whole question is being examined.

Clause passed.

Clause 4 passed.

Clause 5—"Authority to make other payments."

Dr. EASTICK: The Treasurer indicated that subclause (2) authorizes the Treasurer to use the moneys paid to him by the trust, or moneys in the Home Builders Account, to meet interest applications and repayments due to the Commonwealth Government under the agreement. Are moneys being made available from the payment of rentals and principal and interest repayments? We had the situation earlier in the year in which moneys were held in the funds: these moneys were used not for the building or purchasing programme but for repayments. It is the long-term aspect rather than the immediate problem that I query.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes.

Clause passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 passed.

Schedule.

Dr. EASTICK: Mr. Chairman, is the schedule to be considered in its entirety or section by section?

The CHAIRMAN: In its entirety.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: There can be no amendments.

Dr. EASTICK: The schedule provides for funds to be made available for community facilities, but the Treasurer's second reading explanation did not indicate what areas would be considered. The Treasurer's earlier reply suggested that the application might be made either by a council or through a local community. If the local community in an area does not have a local government authority, I accept that, but what about if there is a local government authority? Is it the Government's intention that a local council would not find itself responsible in the long term for the repayments and maintenance as a result of approaches made by a local community organization? This matter would be important if local councils were to be made responsible by default.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: That would always be looked at. The Commonwealth Government's purpose in providing this was that it was considered that in some housing areas it was obvious that the provision of basic community facilities such as playgrounds, pre-school areas, community halls, scout halls, and the like had not been met by the housing authority. There was a need for such local facilities to be established, and the aim was to provide a basis of finance so that an advance could be made at concessional rates to provide additional facilities in creating a community activity in an area. Where it appears that at some time this may be assumed by the local government authority, that authority would be consulted.

Dr. EASTICK: Paragraph 17 of the schedule is a specific case where the opportunity exists for a variation of an earlier determination. The paragraph provides:

(1) At the initiative of the Minister and with the concurrence of the State Minister or Ministers concerned or at the request of the State Minister or Ministers concerned, the Minister may at any time vary all or any of the needs tests provided for by clause 16 either generally in respect of a State or States or specifically in relation to specified categories of persons or to localities or locations.

The means test is related to income expressed as a percentage of the Commonwealth index at December 31. Is the opportunity available to vary the means test to affect the contract already previously entered into? Will such an

alteration of the means test be applicable only to contracts entered into from that period onwards?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The alteration in the means test is in relation to the lettings or the sales. Therefore, it is related to lettings and sales after the variation. The means test relates basically to whether a person gets a house under a letting agreement or under an agreement for sale. The provision has been included here, because there were considerable arguments with the Commonwealth Government about the effect of the means test. The fact that within a year a means test could change in its effect on the community is important. If the December 31 quarter is taken, a national wage increase plus other general over-award payments may mean that there is an altered situation for people who would qualify in the first quarter of the year for the means test but who might not qualify in the last quarter of the year, although they are doing exactly the same work. We were able to point to several anomalies and we had arguments with the Commonwealth Government about this matter. This has been accepted subject to our being able to make representations after experience in working the means test and after being able to put a series of specific cases to the Commonwealth Government, if we found anomalies being created by these tests.

Mr. GUNN: I refer to paragraph 14 of the schedule. I seek information regarding the housing programme of the Housing Trust in providing rental and purchase houses in country areas.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: There is no intention of altering the trust's programme, which is to build a high proportion of both rental and purchase houses in country areas. Many of the houses built by the trust have been in country areas.

Schedule passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

GIFT DUTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 358.)

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I support the Bill. Its purpose is to clarify a situation that arose following an alteration of the Succession Duties Act definition. I believe that the operative clause of the Bill is reasonable. The Opposition expects that the authorities will not go too far down the ladder in connection with duties of the Commissioner that are, in fact, performed in his name by departmental officers. I appreciate that the importance of a matter will play a part in determining which officer will deal with it.

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

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 358.)

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens) : I strongly object to this Bill. However, being a realist, I know that it is a Government money Bill and that it will be passed by the numbers. The Bill increases the impost on the revenue of the Electricity Trust of South Australia from 3 per cent to 5 per cent, and it follows the move in 1971 to place a levy of 3 per cent on the trust's revenue. On his return from the Premiers' Conference in Canberra last June, the Treasurer said that he was extremely disappointed at the allocation given to South Australia. He had some caustic comments to make at the airport on his return from

Canberra, and he subsequently made further critical comments in the press. He admitted in this House that the State could look forward to a deficit of \$20,000,000 unless certain other actions were taken; those actions, of course, would involve a series of increases in State taxes, and we are now considering one such increase.

Some measures to increase State taxes have already been announced; some have been implemented through administrative action, and this Bill and another on the Notice Paper will substantially increase State taxes. I have not the slightest doubt that on Thursday we will see a whole host of additional imposts. I wish to refer to the latest report of the Auditor-General available to the House, the report for the year ended June 30, 1972. No-one on this side yet has a copy of the Auditor-General's Report for the year ended June 30, 1973. I suppose we shall be lucky if we get copies of that report on Thursday, but I hope we do get them. It is unsatisfactory if we have to wait for the report until after the Show adjournment, as we did last year. The year ended June 30, 1972, was the first year in which the full impact of the 3 per cent levy on the Electricity Trust's revenue was felt. The statutory contribution to State revenue in that year was \$2,080,629. In his report the Auditor-General states:

The above statement—

he is referring to the Revenue Statement—

reveals a deficit of \$334,000 for 1971-72—

that sum is much less than the sum of \$2,080,629 that I referred to—

and this is the first year since 1948-49 in which the trust's operations have not resulted in a surplus.

So, we can see that the statutory contribution played a great part in ensuring that the trust incurred a loss for the year. I admit that the output of power was not as great as had been expected, but there was an excess of income over operating expenses of \$18,804,268 in that year. If the interest charges on loans were taken into consideration, there would still have been a surplus, but the impost resulted in the first loss since 1948. What happened after that? It was left to the trust's management to announce increased tariffs, in view of the loss. The Auditor-General states:

A general tariff increase approximating 5.8 per cent overall took effect with electricity consumption from the first meter reading on or after 1st May, 1971, and operated for the whole year in 1971-72.

This Bill now increases from 3 per cent to 5 per cent the levy on the revenue of the Electricity Trust. Obviously, the value of the kilowatt-hours that are being sold has greatly increased since the Auditor-General's Report was issued. One can therefore expect a substantial increase in the tariffs that will have to be charged. So, an impost is being placed on the Electricity Trust, one of the most efficient organizations in the State, which is doing a magnificent job in supplying electricity not only to the metropolitan area and the larger cities but also to the far-flung parts of the State. We all appreciate the work of the trust and its staff, but I would hazard a guess that the tariff increase announced by the trust in due course could amount to about 10 per cent. Of course, I am flying a kite on that figure, but we shall see how far out it is. There is no doubt that the cost of electricity in this State must go up; the tariff to be charged to the average household must increase.

Unfortunately, we have the other announcement, made in the Coombs report, that the committee has made recommendations (although no action has yet been taken) regarding increased charges for freighting coal from Leigh Creek to Port Augusta. I hope that the recommendation

is not put into practice, but we must bear in mind that it is a recommendation to the Labor Government presently in power in Canberra.

Mr. Venning: And you don't know what will happen there.

Mr. COUNBE: The honourable member is quite right; we do not know what is going to happen next.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: I can tell you what will happen: there'll be changes made.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Torrens must confine his remarks to the Bill, and the Bill is not an open discussion on Canberra policy.

Mr. COUNBE: I shall try to do so, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Provided it is linked with the terms of the Bill.

Mr. COUNBE: I am suggesting that this Bill must go through as a Government financial measure, but I am highly critical of it because of what it will do to the people of South Australia. I also ask why this Bill and the next (to which I cannot refer at this stage) must be brought in. Many promises were made last year and earlier this year, but they have not eventuated. They were made on the basis that once we had a Labor Government in South Australia and a Labor Government in Canberra everyone would be buddy-buddy and everything would be fine. It would be Utopia, and we could have what we asked for. However, that has not been the case and we were \$20,000,000 short, so we have had to introduce a Bill such as this. That is the plain fact. It is no good asking me to make a suggestion, nor is it my place to do so. The Government no doubt will put up the same old argument, saying, "If you don't do this, what else are you going to do?" It is not for me to explain. It is for the Government to do that. The Government, after all, is putting up the Bill.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: That is right.

Mr. COUNBE: "That is right", says the Deputy Premier, and the people of South Australia will have to pay. The people will find, with the passage of this and subsequent Bills on the Notice Paper, that they will be paying for the doubtful pleasure of having a Labor Government in Canberra. Now they are finding that it is going to cost them plenty. A substantial amount was made available to the States last year in the Snedden Budget, but this year we are not getting the amount the Government expected. Those are the facts.

Mr. Venning: Where do you think they will strike next?

Mr. COUNBE: Perhaps lightning does not strike twice in the same place. However, I have pointed out why the Government has introduced this Bill, what its effects will be, and what they have been when this type of thing has been done in the past. I have quoted from the Auditor-General's Report, and it will be interesting to see the report which we hope to get this week but which we may not get for a couple of weeks.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: What does it matter?

Mr. COUNBE: What does it matter? Some members in this House like to do their homework and we will have an excellent opportunity to study this document, unlike the back-benchers opposite, who will take the week off. I am hoping we shall have the report so that we can do some homework over that time.

The SPEAKER: Order! Once again, the Auditor-General's Report is not a subject for discussion in this debate. The discussion must be related to the Bill.

Mr. COUNBE: I referred to the report containing the balance sheet of the Electricity Trust, and it will be most interesting to see what is the position of the trust. I

understand that sales of electricity have increased and I want to see what the effect will be in this year and, more importantly, in the current year, as revealed in the balance sheet for the year ending June 30, 1974. That is all I want to say on the Bill at the moment. I very much regret the necessity for its introduction.

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I wish to contribute only one item in this debate to highlight the situation outlined by the Treasurer in seeking to implement this increase so that it will be effective against the whole community. The wording of the statement was to the effect that the method of increase in revenue provided for by the Bill had been selected because it could be shared generally by the whole community and because it required no increase in administrative costs for its collection. The latter part of that statement is accepted without further comment, but for the first time we have heard the Treasurer acknowledge that this form of increased taxation or levy does in effect reach the whole community.

When it was introduced previously, it was almost simultaneous with the now infamous letter to the trade unions from the Treasurer, when he spoke of trimming the tall poppies and indicated that the measures his Government would introduce would trim the tall poppies to the advantage of the people of the community, that there would be an increase in the sum obtained from other sources, and that it would not be to the disadvantage of the community.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader must link up the remarks with the Bill under discussion. I cannot allow a Budget debate on this Bill.

Dr. EASTICK: I link it up in this way: at the time of this provision in 1971 (recorded at page 3737 of *Hansard* of March 3, 1971) it was said that the people in the community as a whole would not be disadvantaged by measures for increased taxation or revenue by the Government. On that occasion the Bill sought to take 3 per cent from the profits of the Electricity Trust, and that 3 per cent in effect meant an average 7 per cent increase in the tariff of the man in the street. On this occasion, the Treasurer has at least acknowledged that the increase of 2 per cent in the contributions the trust makes from its revenue to the Government will have an effect on the whole community. He says that this impost can be shared generally by the whole community. The same position applies in the case of increased charges for rebate and excess water.

When the 3 per cent levy was placed on trust revenue in 1971, it led to a 7 per cent increase in tariffs. If that position obtains in this case, the increase of 2 per cent in the levy will therefore mean a further increase in electricity tariffs of about 4¼ per cent to 5 per cent. The member for Torrens has suggested an increase in tariffs of possibly 10 per cent. Such an increase would not surprise me, as it would not only go towards providing the additional 2 per cent but would also cover the deficit that has occurred in 1971-72. The Minister has failed to refer to any deficit for 1972-73, but one can expect another deficit in that year. As this increased levy will cause the cost of production to rise, it will have a further effect on the inflationary spiral, which the Government seems determined not to face up to. Although I support the Bill, I point out that this increased levy will be to the disadvantage not only of the general community but also of industry in South Australia.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): I strongly oppose this increase in the trust's contribution to the revenue of the State. This levy is equally as bad as the increase in pay-roll tax, because it is inflationary. We should be trying by

every means possible to combat inflation. I suppose that the Government will collect nearly \$2,000,000 as a result of this increase in the contributions paid by the trust, and this can be used partly to offset the extra loss of \$5,000,000 made by the railways last year. It is time that an efficient Government did something about this.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must deal with the Electricity Trust.

Mr. McANANEY: Well, the railways pay charges with regard to electricity used at railway stations, and the cost of that electricity will now be increased. This means of gaining revenue is inflationary. The Government would be better off reducing expenditure so that this increase was not necessary. Although it is difficult to decrease expenditure in the Budget, the large expenditure generally means that a 1 per cent or 2 per cent decrease could be readily achieved without services to the community being lost. That method of saving could be used rather than increasing costs to the community. The increased pay-roll tax that will have to be paid by the Electricity Trust will probably amount to nearly another \$500,000.

Today we spoke about price control. In assessing increased costs to the community as a result of this measure, the Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs will have to allow prices to be increased. We must impose taxes that are not inflationary. In some cases, the cost to the Government as a result of these taxes amounts to as much as the revenue received from the tax increase. Therefore, the Government does not get as much out of the tax as it thought it would. Inflationary taxes cause the prices of everything the Government buys to rise, so that there is not nearly the gain that the Government expected. Income tax is a better form of taxation than the Government is using in this case, because the cost is not added on to everything that the Government buys, and the Government gains something out of it. Although this levy on the trust is not expensive to collect, it will result in increased costs that the Government will have to pay on everything it buys. We must have an assessment by experts of just what net gain there is to the Government from measures such as this. That gain would certainly not counter-balance the loss suffered by the community as a whole.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): Reluctantly, I must support the Bill, as it is a revenue-raising measure. This is the first thump to be felt by taxpayers this financial year. In the past, we had the experience of increases in seven areas, one being in relation to an impost on the Electricity Trust. If ever there was an unfair tax, I consider this would be it. The Electricity Trust is being taxed on its turnover and not on its profits. By this increase from 3 per cent to 5 per cent of its revenue, as the member for Torrens said the cost of electricity to the consumer could rise by 10 per cent. If that occurs, all citizens in the State will be severely penalized. We cannot do without electricity, which is the first power supply connected to a house. The average worker and his whole family will contribute to this means of raising revenue for the Government.

For the year ended June 30, 1973, the State received from statutory corporations \$2,818,000. This financial year, we can expect a considerable increase in that sum, possibly to about \$3,500,000 to \$3,750,000. This is the first area in which the average citizen will feel the pinch. Already the Commonwealth Budget has provided for increases in the price of cigarettes, liquor and petrol, and now there will be an increase in the tariff for electricity, which is one of the most essential commodities available. I consider that it is most unfair for the Government to

impose a tax for which no-one can really prepare. In addition, there will be a considerable impact on the whole operations of the Electricity Trust. Based on sales for the year ended June 30, 1972, the return to the State Government from this tax in a full year will be \$3,744,000. Although I realize that the new tax will operate for only nine months of this financial year, there will still be a two-thirds increase in receipts from the trust. As a result of the impost, the trust has made a loss instead of a profit. There is no doubt that when an impost like this is placed on an organization such as the Electricity Trust it must affect its overall budgeting and operations. It forces economies in certain areas and can retard progress. As it is not possible for the trust to absorb the impost, which everyone would like it to do, we must prepare ourselves for a 10 per cent increase in electricity charges. This is the first thump for the 1973-74 financial year.

It is regrettable that the State was unable to obtain sufficient reimbursement from the Commonwealth Government and that it cannot curb its spending and adopt modern economic practices, trying to save money wherever possible rather than having to impose increased charges and taxes to enable it to get out of its financial mess with regard to forward commitments.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I should like briefly to say how this impost will affect the installation of electric motors on pumps in the South-East. The advent of the reticulation of electric power for irrigation purposes throughout this area coincided with the downturn in the rural scene.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will have to link up his remarks with the Bill, which increases from 3 per cent to 5 per cent the contribution the Electricity Trust must make to the Government.

Mr. RODDA: I can easily do that, because this impost means that we will not in future have these customers coming on stream. Although I appreciate the Government's need to obtain revenue, I must place on record that much custom will be lost because of this Bill. I appreciate the position in which the Government finds itself and the reaction the Treasurer received from the Commonwealth Government. However, this impost will have a retarding effect on extensions for which the electric motors to which I have referred were to be used.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I oppose this measure, which is yet another indication that the chickens have certainly come home to roost. This is one of many Bills put before the House as a result of the Commonwealth Government's failure to recognize its responsibility and provide funds to this State on a scale that will assist it. This Government has merely taken the easy way out by jacking up the taxes. This is a completely irresponsible way to handle this State's finances. The Government has not tried to determine areas in which expenditure could be pruned or where more efficient ways of spending money could be introduced.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have told honourable members that we are dealing with a Bill to increase from 3 per cent to 5 per cent the Electricity Trust's contribution to the Government. This is not the Budget debate, and honourable members' remarks must be confined to the Bill.

Mr. GUNN: I thank you for your guidance, Sir, but we are discussing a measure that will raise revenue. The Treasurer said in his second reading explanation that, had the Government not taken this action, it would have had to reduce the types of service provided, I therefore thought it would be in order to canvass the way in

which the Government could have raised revenue without taking this step. I am concerned that last year the Electricity Trust suffered its first loss, and this was at the hands of a Labor Government.

This increase of more than 60 per cent in the levy will be passed on to the people of this State, and particularly to those industries that cannot afford it or have no chance of passing on their costs. I refer to the rural producers that I and the member for Millicent represent. This Government is following the irresponsible policy of its Commonwealth counterpart in belting the country people.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I register not only my disapproval but also my alarm that the Government sees fit to impose this tax, which will affect everyone, whether they be rich or poor. As the members for Hanson and Torrens said earlier, this Bill involves an increase of between 8 per cent and 10 per cent in electricity charges, which is indeed considerable. The hardest hit will be pensioners, who must use electricity. Indeed, they probably need it much more than the average person does, because they have the major problem of keeping themselves warm, and they have the added problem of receiving a meagre income to keep themselves going. Although they recently received an increase of \$1.50 a week in their pension, one can easily see what will happen to that. This is the first thump, as the member for Hanson said. I am concerned about the people who will not be able to afford this increase.

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

PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 359).

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I regret I have to take the same attitude to this Bill as I took to the one we have just passed. Here we go again on the inflationary merry-go-round: the more we go, the more we get on to this inflationary business. The effect of this Bill is to increase by 1 per cent, up to 41 per cent, pay-roll tax on taxable wages paid after September 1 this year, which is only two or three days away. Of course, pay-roll tax has always been regarded as a sectional tax. However, although it is levied on one section of the community alone, obviously it does flow right through the community.

Mr. Wright: Those who can afford to pay it.

Mr. Gunn: Nonsense!

Mr. COUMBE: I thank the member for Adelaide for his interjection, because it is proposed in this Bill to impose pay-roll tax on Government departments, which can afford to pay, according to the honourable member. As I say, it is a sectional tax and, on principle, I do not like sectional taxes: I prefer taxes, if they must be imposed, to be spread throughout the community. A sectional tax of this nature will flow right through the community—make no mistake about that. I say that for the benefit of the member for Adelaide. Let us look at the history of this tax. It was under Commonwealth jurisdiction for many years at the rate of 21 per cent, until that field was vacated by the previous Commonwealth Government and the States were given the opportunity of taking it over. All States agreed they would increase tax from 2½ per cent to 3½ per cent, and that has been the ruling rate since 1971.

Now, it is proposed to add a further 1 per cent, to bring it up to 4½ per cent. I am not in a position to calculate what this will bring into the Treasury but I should be interested to hear, in due course, what it will be. I have tried to find some explanation of the Treasurer on this but

could not find it, so I cannot tell the House what this tax is likely to bring in. Unfortunately, once again this will accelerate the cost-push inflationary spiral that we are experiencing at the moment. The Treasurer was quite open about this when he introduced the Bill, because he said:

The Bill must be regarded as essentially a revenue-raising measure, and it is introduced consequent on the stated intention of the Government to ensure that its certain substantial revenue deficit is less than it otherwise would be. I must repeat that that deficit is brought about because of the inability of this Government to obtain money from its friends in office in Canberra; the shortest way for it to overcome the deficit would have been to get more money from its friends, but unfortunately that did not come about. My comments on the Bill we have just passed apply equally here. Unfortunately, again, this tax will flow through the community and will have a deleterious effect on what we may call cost-push inflation. This is the tragedy of these measures that the Treasurer says he has no alternative but to introduce: the inflationary effect on the ordinary man, woman, and child.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): This is another taxation measure that, regrettably, we have to support. This tax directly affects industry, and industry will find it difficult to absorb it. The increase from 3½ per cent to 4½ per cent represents an increase of 27½ per cent. Whereas the State will have the benefit of nine months of the financial year at the increased rate of pay-roll tax, it is estimated that collections of pay-roll tax at the existing rate of 3½ per cent could total almost \$40,000,000. If we add the 27½ per cent increase to that figure, we see that for a full financial year the State could receive slightly more than \$50,000,000 from pay-roll tax. When the Commonwealth Government handed over the collection of pay-roll tax to the States, there was a fear that the States would continuously use this as their growth tax, and there is no doubt that they have seized that opportunity.

It is interesting to go back to the debates of August 25, 1971, when I spoke on a similar measure. When pay-roll tax was introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 1941, it was then at the rate of 21 per cent of wages and salaries in excess of a specified amount, and it was imposed mainly to finance child endowment. Of course, now pay-roll tax is a revenue-earning tax for the State. As I have said, we can see that within the next 12 months the State will benefit to the extent of about \$50,000,000 a year. As the tax, as I understand it, will not be absorbed by industry, it will be passed on to the consumer, and anything that brings about a tax that is passed on to the consumer can be described as nothing but distasteful.

It is a growth tax; it will continue to be of benefit to the Revenue Account. In a time of high inflationary trend, such as we have at present, the States have seized the opportunity to capitalize on it, and no-one can really blame them for doing it; but, at the same time, it is distasteful. We can object to it and protest about it but, regrettably, we have to support the Bill.

Mr. RUSSACK (Gouger): I oppose this Bill. It is an imposition that an employer should have to pay a tax for the privilege of paying wages. The member for Adelaide has suggested that all people on whom this tax is imposed have the ability to pay, but I suggest there are extremes in every case. The principal Act provides that the minimum amount of wages paid when this tax becomes applicable is \$20,800. That has not been amended, yet there has been a big escalation in wages. Therefore, many employers will gradually come into the field where they will have to pay this tax. It will be a big imposition on employers

with a small number of employees when they find that they are in this category and that in the first year they will have to meet and absorb an additional cost of about \$936, or \$20 a week.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Exemptions from pay-roll tax."

Mr. COUMBE: In the 1971 legislation, after the Commonwealth Government had vacated this field, Government departments and councils were exempt from this tax. It is now suggested that, because of work performed by some departments on behalf of contractors and others, there may be some difficulty in assessing notional pay-roll tax. The Treasurer made a bald second reading explanation, and perhaps the Minister of Works, whose department has had much experience with this tax, may be able to provide further information.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I ask that progress be reported.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

STATE LOTTERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 359.)

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): The Bill has been introduced as a result of representations made by the Lotteries Commission and the Auditor-General. Section 15 of the principal Act provides that the Auditor-General shall audit the books and accounts of the commission and at the end of each month make a report to the Minister. The Auditor-General now considers that this requirement is no longer warranted, particularly as he has found that the internal checks and controls of the commission are very satisfactory. Therefore, this amendment provides the Auditor-General will inspect and audit the books once a year instead of once a month, and this will remove a work load from his department. I consider an anomaly exists at present in the working of the commission, because it is not permissible for an agency of the Lotteries Commission to be also an agency of the Totalizator Agency Board.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must confine his remarks to the Bill, which deals with specific matters. This is not an open discussion on the operations of the Lotteries Commission.

Mr. ALLEN: With those few words, I support the Bill.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): Having drawn a lottery and having been shown over the premises of the commission, I was surprised at the efficiency of its whole operation. Credit must be given to the administrative ability and the strict control—

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that we are dealing not with the operations of the Lotteries Commission but with an amendment to the Act that concerns the accounts and their auditing.

Mr. BECKER: I appreciate your point, Mr. Speaker. The Bill deals with auditing the commission's accounts, and there is strong evidence of the extremely efficient operation that has been established in this State. Having seen the operation, no doubt the Auditor-General appreciates that it is not necessary for a monthly audit and that an annual audit will be sufficient. Because of the Auditor-General's recommendation, I am pleased to support the Bill.

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

REGISTRATION OF DEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 23. Page 501.)

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): I support this short Bill, which rectifies a situation that was overlooked when amendments were made to the Act in 1961. By clauses 3, 4 and 5 it makes appropriate amendments in regard to certain measurements, converting them to metric units.

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

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 22. Page 472.)

Mr. WARDLE (Murray): I support this short Bill, as I am sure other members of the Opposition do. It is largely an administrative Bill and its most important provision arose from a misunderstanding. In 1966 the State surrendered some of its power regarding weights and measures to the Commonwealth. It was then a gentleman's agreement that the Commonwealth would finally take over officially the approval and stamping of patterns. The Commonwealth has declined to do this. These measures have been stamped and verified over the years in accordance with the Act, although the public has not in any way suffered because of this, and to make it legal and retrospective it is essential to change the Act in the manner set out in this Bill. This fundamental change is necessary.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.56 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 29, at 2 p.m.