

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Tuesday, August 28, 1951.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Walter Duncan) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

**PRICES CONFERENCE.**

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—There appears to be some doubt about the conclusions arrived at at the recent Prices Conference in Perth. Can the Acting Premier state what really happened and what is the position as it affects the South Australian Government?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The conference was one which concerned the public of Australia, and not only the South Australian Government. I have not seen what appeared in the press prior to my return, but a general review of price controls was considered at the conference and a number of items which previously had not been controlled have been brought under control. The press reports I saw quoted a list of about 100 items, a number of these being covered under general headings previously, but from an administrative point of view it was found necessary for the items to be expressed in detail. Consequently the list would appear as perhaps greater than it really is from the point of view of control. In considering controls, if there are a number of items to be controlled it is necessary to be able to police those controls. Although a number of items were included, a number were deferred until a later conference because of the necessity to police items under control, and those included on this occasion are those considered by the Prices branches which they can police properly. On perhaps what was the most important subject considered which concerned producers, that of the price of butter, the position is that two States were not prepared to advance the price sufficiently to return a profit to growers as determined by a survey carried out by the Joint Dairy Industry Advisory Committee, which went into the question of the cost of the production of dairy produce and recommended that a certain advance should be made in returns to producers. The action of these two States creates some problems in the work of the equalization fund, because all butter producers throughout Australia benefit from it. All I can say at the moment is that the four other States are still conferring and it is possible that at an early date some definite announcement may be made regarding what is proposed in those four States.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Do I understand that it is the intention of those four States forthwith to increase the price of butter by 1½d. a pound?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I thought I made it clear that the four States are still negotiating with one another and have not yet arrived at a conclusive decision.

**DAMAGE TO WHEAT.**

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am informed that owing to the lack of suitable waterproof coverings on trucks a considerable quantity of wheat and barley is coming to Port Adelaide in a very wet condition. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Agriculture say whether that is correct, and, if so, will early steps be taken to remedy the position?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I will obtain a report from the Minister of Railways.

**TRANSPORT OF PARCEL POST.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my question of August 1 relating to the transport of parcel post on the railways?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I have not a report at the moment, but will look into the question.

**ACCOMMODATION FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN.**

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I introduced a deputation about 10 months ago to the Minister of Education from the Mentally Retarded Children's Association regarding the accommodation and treatment of affected children, but have received no reply. Has the Minister a reply now, and, if not, when can I expect one?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—The matter has been given very careful consideration and I am sure the honourable member is aware that very grave difficulties surround the whole matter. I will ascertain exactly what is the present position and let him know.

**POTATO SUPPLIES.**

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—In view of the inadequacy of the Potato Board and the great scarcity of potatoes in this State, whereas there are plentiful supplies in other States, does not the Acting Premier think that it would be a good time to abolish the board?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The question relates to legislation and therefore is a matter of policy. The board was created under a statute and obviously I cannot abolish it.

I am sure the honourable member would think it undesirable that any Minister should have that power.

#### ONE BRAND PETROL STATIONS.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Has the Chief Secretary a reply to the question I asked him on Tuesday last relative to one brand petrol stations?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—As the honourable member is aware, I left the State for Western Australia the day following his question and returned only this morning, and so I have no report. I have noticed, however, that in another State the distributors have met and decided to support this scheme, so evidently there are two sides to the question and it would appear that it is largely a matter of negotiations as to what is acceptable to the two parties concerned, rather than a matter for Government interference.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I appreciate the Minister's information, but I wish to make it clear that I am referring particularly to petrol re-sellers in this State. Will the Minister seek from the Crown Law department an opinion as to whether the action of the companies contravenes section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—Now that the honourable member has asked a precise question I will certainly get the information he desires.

#### EYRE PENINSULA RAILWAY SERVICE.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—Has the Chief Secretary a reply to the question I asked on Tuesday last in reference to provision of new rail cars for the Eyre Peninsula service?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The Railways Commissioner reports that consideration is being given to passenger facilities on Eyre Peninsula and it is hoped to reach a decision shortly.

#### SCHOOL AT BRIGHTON CEMENT WORKS.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—In this morning's paper it is reported that the Brighton council has stated that the Education Department is taking over portion of the office of the Brighton Cement Company for the purposes of a school. If that is correct, when is the department likely to proceed with the work?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—My attention has not been drawn to the paragraph mentioned, but I will take an opportunity to examine it and bring down a reply.

#### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The Hon. E. A. OATES (on notice)—

1. What are the duties of the Chairman of Committees in the House of Assembly?

2. How often was he called upon to perform duties other than when the House was sitting during the year ended June 30, 1951?

3. What is the emolument he receives as Chairman of Committees?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The replies are:—

1. The Chairman of Committees is appointed for the whole Parliament. His duties are laid down in the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

2. On three occasions he was called on to take the Chair as Deputy Speaker during the absence of the Speaker. He has addressed many parties of visitors and assisted in the entertainment of distinguished visitors.

3. £200 per annum, as set out in Act No. 9 of 1948.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE: HON. F. T. PERRY.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD moved—

That one month's further leave of absence be granted to the Hon. F. T. Perry on account of his absence from Australia.

Motion carried.

#### SWINE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 22. Page 398.)

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—Mr. Oates said he was looking forward to country members speaking on this Bill as they probably knew more about it than he did. In the two previous sessions we had the Swine Compensation Act Amendment Bill and the Cattle Compensation Act Amendment Bill on the Notice Paper and the debates on them centred round the question of proclamation or regulation, but as this Bill does not refer to that aspect there is not much need for discussion. Clause 2 proposes to alter the definition in section 4 of the Act to include swine dysentery by inserting in lieu of the term "swine plague" the term "infectious pneumonia of swine (including swine plague)." I interviewed Mr. Macindoe, the Chief Inspector of Stock, this morning to ascertain the losses in pigs from dysentery and he said that they are very

considerable. The causes are unknown; dysentery can be contracted by pigs which are kept in good conditions as well as those kept in bad conditions, although it is more probable in the latter case. I do not know of any animal treated worse than the pig. He receives all kinds of bad food; often rotten meat, decayed vegetables and anything which other animals will not consume, and this, as well as cold and damp quarters, tends to encourage dysentery. It is distressing, particularly in a wet season like the present, to see the conditions in which some pigs are kept, for some people do not care a rap, knowing that they will be able to get compensation from the fund in the event of losses. I approve of the fund entirely, because when swine fever breaks out through no fault of the producer he may well lose 100 pigs in one day. Prior to the introduction of the Act in 1936 there was an arrangement whereby the producer paid sixpence for each pig which sold at 25s. or more, but that money went to the purchaser and not the producer. In 1927 Victoria established a Swine Compensation Fund and South Australia copied it and it has proved of great benefit to the pig producers. At June 30 the fund stood at £51,944 and last year £8,550 was paid as compensation. I have been informed by Mr. Macindoe that there has been little difference in pig production in the last 12 months. I asked whether he thought pig producers were getting much benefit from the concessional price for wheat but he did not know that the concessions existed. I am a wheatgrower as well as a pig producer and it pays me to keep pigs. I market my wheat at 10s. or more a bushel and buy it back for 7s. 10d. This concession has assisted production in the pig industry to be maintained at the peak at which it has been for a number of years.

The Hon. E. A. Oates—How many pigs were covered by the £8,550 compensation?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I do not know. The pig producer contributes twopence for every pound in value of meat sold. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment.

Committee's report adopted.

## CATTLE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 22. Page 401.)

The Hon. J. L. COWAN (Southern)—There is little to add to what has already been said by other members. This is the third occasion on which the Government has attempted to amend the original Act and, although on this occasion the Bill is in a more acceptable form, it is not nearly so useful to owners of cattle who may be eligible to receive compensation.

The Hon. E. A. Oates—Why?

The Hon. J. L. COWAN—The purport of this Bill is to add two more diseases to the three already prescribed, whereas under the previous Bills any number of diseases which might come to this State and prove dangerous to stock could have been proclaimed. It may prove necessary to add further diseases to the list in the Act. This is a form of insurance and, like all insurance on which a premium is paid, it is desirable to have it as comprehensive as possible. This can truly be said of the Act and this amending Bill. By extending the scope of the Act it will not only assist stockowners but will tend to lessen the spread of other diseases.

The Hon. E. A. Oates—How do producers subscribe to this fund?

The Hon. J. L. COWAN—Whenever cattle are sold at public auction the auctioneers deduct three farthings for every pound in value per head of stock.

The Hon. E. A. Oates—If cattle are sold privately do they contribute to the fund?

The Hon. J. L. COWAN—No. In 1948 Parliament reduced the rate of contribution from one penny to three farthings because the fund had assumed large proportions. At present there is £48,000 to the credit of the fund. In the last 12 months contributions totalled £14,000 and compensation payments were £5,600. There is a possibility the fund will increase and that is all the more reason why the scope should be extended. I support the second reading but regret that the scope is so limited.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD (Central No. 2)—I had not intended to speak to this Bill, being of opinion that its meaning was clear and its objective was obvious, but in reply to Mr. Cowan I must say that I cannot see why there is any great disadvantage in the Bill requiring the diseases to be

specifically named in the Act as against being included by regulation. Over the greater part of the year the Parliamentary machine can easily handle the settlement of compensation for specific diseases. Without wishing to discuss the relative value of "regulation" as against "proclamation," I would say that it certainly makes the case clear if a disease has to be specifically mentioned as required by this Bill. I cannot see that it is much more difficult to do it that way. Mr. Cowan seemed to consider that if an animal had been sold privately no compensation was payable because the buyer had not subscribed to the fund. My answer to that is that where a transaction is made between two people it is necessary to put stamps, which are bought from the Treasury, on the receipt form and thus make a subscription to the fund. Under the present system with stamps having to be bought for various purposes, a firm is required to keep one or two clerks doing nothing but buying and sticking stamps on forms. Finally the firm has the privilege of paying pay-roll tax on all those salaries. I feel confident that the Bill will work satisfactorily and therefore support the second reading.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Midland—Attorney-General)—I am sure honourable members have appreciated the speeches made on the Bill, particularly that of my colleague, Mr. Melrose. There can be no doubt of the value of the information and advice he can give on this matter. I do not intend to enter upon a discussion on the merits of bringing a disease under the Act by regulation as against proclamation, but must confess that I agree with Mr. Edmonds. As a disease not covered by the Act may break out at any moment I still consider it would be wise to have power to extend the scope by proclamation. However, the Council has decided otherwise and if the list of diseases has to be extended it can be done only by Act of Parliament. If a disease not covered by the Act broke out while Parliament was not sitting we would have to wait until it met before compensation could be paid.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—The Minister said that two years ago. Have any of those diseases broken out yet?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—The honourable member knows as well as I do that although none has broken out one never knows when one will. By adopting the present method I

think we are employing a steam hammer to crack a nut, whereas we could achieve our purpose by issuing a proclamation. I thank honourable members for the support they have given the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—"Short title."

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE—I thank the Minister for his kind reference to my remarks on the second reading. I omitted to explain one small matter which I think the Committee will appreciate now, because I feel that members generally do not understand where the compensation operates under this legislation. Members seem to have the impression that the owner of any stock found to be diseased could make a claim upon the fund, but that is not so. The position is, as I understand it, that if an animal is forwarded to the abattoirs or sold at a market, or even on private property, is found to be suffering from or is suspected of suffering from any of the proclaimed diseases and is ordered by a departmental officer to be slaughtered, and the carcass then proves to be diseased, the owner receives from the fund three-quarters of the market value of the beast, with a maximum of £30. If on slaughtering the beast is found to be free of disease the owner receives compensation to the full value, but again with a maximum of £30. The only other class of people who enter into this are butchers. A butcher may buy at the abattoirs or market an animal which appears healthy but upon slaughtering proves to be suffering from one of the proclaimed diseases. It is possible for an animal suffering from tuberculosis to show no sign of it until slaughtered. The butcher would then receive the full market value for the condemned animal, with a maximum of £30.

The Hon. E. A. Oates—Even if it came from Queensland?

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE—It applies to all cattle sold in South Australia.

Clause passed.

Remaining clause and title passed and Bill reported without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

#### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 22. Page 401.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Central No. 1—Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill, which proposes to increase the salaries of Ministers

of the Crown, is long overdue and has the support of the Opposition. Four years ago Parliament fixed the amount for the six Ministers at £10,750; under the Bill it is proposed to increase the amount by £3,500. I consider that the South Australian Ministers and members of Parliament are the most poorly paid in Australia. Although the State's revenue has been greatly increased, there are still only six Ministers. They are often called upon to visit other parts of the Commonwealth, and it sometimes happens that there are only two or three left to administer the affairs of State. The Bill should receive the support not only of every member of this Council, but the public generally. Compare the work of the Ministers in South Australia with that of Ministers in other States. Tasmania, with half the population of South Australia, has nine Ministers.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Are they full Ministers?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes. Western Australia, which has a smaller population than South Australia, has 50 members in one house and 30 in the other and has 10 Ministers. We expect our Ministers to do too much and, although they are prepared to do it, we should see that they are adequately compensated and not compelled to undermine their health, as has been the case in many instances. What would be the position if the Government introduced a Bill to increase the number of Ministers? Under the existing law it would mean a reduction of salary for each, but I consider that specific amounts should be set down for the Premier and each Minister and then, if pressure of business necessitated it, the number could be increased without affecting the salaries of the others.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Do you think that is what is preventing the Government from increasing the number?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. I think it is because of devotion to duty, but it may lead to their early death. No man can go on working, as do some of our Ministers, without impairing his health, so it would be in the interests of the Ministers themselves if the number were increased. I shall say no more at this stage, for I will have another opportunity to deal more fully with the question of payment of members generally. I wish to say, however, that I appreciate the work the Ministers are doing. Their hours are not simply

from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., as some people seem to think, for they are on duty every day of the week and all hours of the day and the strain on them is constant. I compliment them on their work. I do not say that someone else could not do it better, but they are thoroughly entitled to what this Bill proposes and I am only sorry that the amount cannot be increased.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

Sitting suspended from 2.50 to 4.30 p.m.

#### SUPPLY BILL No. 2.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Northern—Chief Secretary)—Clause 2 provides for a further £5,000,000 to carry on the public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1952. The amount of £5,500,000 provided by Supply Act No. 1 is practically exhausted. The £5,000,000 now sought will, it is estimated, carry on the services of the State until the first week in November, by which time the Appropriation Act for the year ending June 30, 1952, should be assented to.

Clause 3 provides that payments shall not exceed last year's Estimates except in the case of increases of salaries and wages where, if the increases are the result of fixation by regulation, award, or determination of any court or other body authorized to fix same, the Treasurer is authorized to pay the increases out of the moneys provided for by this Bill. This is the usual form of Supply Bill and the only unusual feature is the amount of the supply which members will notice is much in excess of the supplies provided in similar Bills which have been presented previously. However, that is in keeping with the cost trend of today and it will be a feature of the Appropriation Bill when that is presented. I commend the Bill to members and move the second reading.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

## DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.

The PRESIDENT—I notice in the gallery the Right Hon. the Viscount Jowitt, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain. The Council is very honoured by his presence and we welcome him, and if he will take a seat on the floor of the Chamber it will add still further to the honour of the Council.

Lord Jowitt was escorted by the Chief Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition to a seat on the floor of the Council near the President's dais.

PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE  
ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 22. Page 403.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Central No. 1—Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill has been introduced for the purpose of increasing the travelling fees of members of the Public Works Standing Committee. I understand the same fees will apply to other Parliamentary committees. It is regrettable that members have not the report of Mr. President Morgan before them in order to see his reasons for suggesting the amounts stipulated. I have the greatest admiration for Mr. President Morgan, but there may be what we think to be some inconsistencies in his recommendations. However, if his report had been made available members might have been satisfied with his findings.

When the Public Works Standing Committee Act was passed in 1927 the amount provided for travelling within the State was 15s. a day, and outside the State 30s. a day. To qualify for the 15s. allowance a certain distance has to be travelled. The Bill proposes to increase the amounts to 30s. and £2 2s. a day respectively. I have been informed that certain public officials receive £2 10s. a day for expenses. If that is correct, members of the committee should receive the same amount. In some places in South Australia accommodation cannot be obtained for 30s. a day. I have just returned from Tasmania and at the hotel where I stayed there was a minimum charge of £2 a day, and some accommodation was £2 10s. The Prices Minister of that State protested against the charges but was told that hotels were compelled to charge them in order to carry on. I realize that we cannot alter this Bill but will mention what members have to contend with when travelling on public duties. Recently the Public Works Standing Committee

visited the West Coast inquiring into proposed works in relation to schools, water supplies and sewers. They received £9 as expenses, but their hotel charges were almost £14. That also applies to the Land Settlement Committee and other committees. We will not receive anything excessive by this amendment. No doubt the Government is compelled to refer many projects to the Public Works Standing Committee because of the cost involved. Although it has been suggested that the limitation of £30,000 should be increased, that has not been done. In Tasmania the limitation is £10,000, which is a very small amount.

I take this opportunity to refer to the Land Settlement Committee, the salaries of members of which are to be reduced under another Bill. I do not agree with that proposal. The Land Settlement Committee has rendered very good service. It is said that it has not sufficient work to do. That is the Government's responsibility, as quite a number of other inquiries could have been referred to it. I have great faith in it. There is no suggestion in the Bill that the payment to members of the Public Works Standing Committee should be increased, although their work has increased considerably.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—The amount can be fixed by regulation.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—If that is so, I ask the Government to consider the point.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—The committee has a full time job.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is so. Sometimes it meets four or five days a week and often regularly three times. When the committee goes away on inquiries it possibly accomplishes in four or five days work which would ordinarily take a fortnight, as the members leave early in the morning, travel all day, and sit until 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. night after night. During the past 12 months the committee has submitted 20 reports to the Government in addition to eight interim reports, and at the moment 18 reports are under consideration. Its operations involve much thought and time. It is the Government's duty to give every consideration to the work done by this committee and other committees, which are of assistance not only to the Government but also to Parliament and the public generally. The number of reports presented by the Public Works Standing Committee this year is a record, and had

the preparation of others not been delayed by pressure of work the number would have been greatly increased.

The Hon. E. Anthony—Do you think the ambit of the committee's operations should be widened?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is impossible for it to do any more, but its members would be only too happy to assist where possible. Its recommendations involve the spending of millions of pounds. For instance, the estimated cost of one project under consideration is £20,000,000, and that of another to bring

water from Mannum to Adelaide is between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000. No doubt the President of the Industrial Court was aware of these matters when preparing his report. I thought it was my duty to submit this information not on my own behalf but on behalf of all Parliamentary committees.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.55 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, August 29, at 2 p.m.