

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Thursday, July 24, 1952.

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

**ADDRESS IN REPLY.**

Adjourned debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

(Continued from July 23. Page 77.)

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—In supporting the motion I join with the members who have preceded me in expressing sincere regret at the passing of our late Sovereign, King George the Sixth. His Majesty ascended the Throne under what may be termed unfortunate and peculiar circumstances. He occupied his high office through times of trial and showed the utmost devotion to duty which was an inspiration to all his subjects in the Dominions.

Our late Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and his gracious Lady, by their kindly consideration for the people and their complete understanding of our way of life and the problems confronting us, and their visits to the remote areas of the State to make themselves familiar with the living conditions of the people, made a great impression on all. There was great regret in my electorate when it was known he was vacating his position. Governors come and go under the Constitutional set-up and I support a remark of a previous speaker that we have been singularly fortunate in our own Vice-Regal representation. We appreciate the excellent service rendered by Sir Willoughby Norrie and in no instance has greater service been rendered by any of his predecessors.

In listening to the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, and from a subsequent perusal of it, I was impressed by the comprehensive nature of the programme envisaged and the rather happy circumstance of the balance that has been secured between the different interests throughout the State. The proposals for public works deal not only with metropolitan schemes or the larger areas of population, but extend to country districts. The Government is to be commended on its effort to look after the interests of the people as a whole. The speech envisaged a comprehensive and ambitious programme. In the light of the financial position it seems that some of the proposed works may have to be curtailed. That is unfortunate and I do not envy the task of the Government or

departmental administrators in having to decide which shall be pursued and which shall suffer as a result of pruning.

Seasonal conditions throughout the State have possibly never been better. We have been blessed with a bounteous rainfall throughout our producing areas, with the possible exception of some of the far northern cattle country. That has been reflected in the excellent condition of the country. It is safe to assume that there is every prospect that primary producers will have good returns. I am convinced that primary producers will take every advantage of what nature is providing and will do their utmost to fulfil their obligations in producing the necessary foodstuffs not only needed for home consumption but for overseas. I emphasize that because I thought Mr. Condon was inclined to suggest that because of certain circumstances, and notably the incidence of taxation, primary producers were inclined to slacken in their efforts. They are measuring up to their responsibilities and the final picture will reveal that production and the acreage sown to wheat and other cereals will be not less than the average of the last few years. However, to achieve that result, certain difficulties will have to be overcome. Increased production implies something more than just the will of the individual to get on with the job. He has to be supplied with the wherewithal. For instance, many of the commodities wheat-growers and dairymen require are in short supply.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Do you mean capital equipment?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—Yes, for one thing. In this connection there is the question of labour. That is being overcome to some extent, but more will be required to get the yield of wheat and dairy products that is desired. Immigration has relieved the position somewhat, but many of the migrants have to pass through some form of apprenticeship before giving entirely satisfactory results to their employers. I am led to believe, however, that in most cases migrants who have accepted work in rural industries are showing an inclination to learn and to be as helpful as possible. Of necessity, some, by their upbringing and environment, are not suitable for rural avocations, but such difficulties are being ironed out and I feel sure that eventually our migration policy will be successful in overcoming at least some of the labour problems which have confronted the primary industries over the last few years.

Also there is a necessity to increase supplies of superphosphate. The supply of artificial manures is, perhaps, one of the greatest problems in the development of many of our new areas. As a case in point, on Kangaroo Island in the last few years we have been opening up considerable areas of virgin country which, before the introduction of artificial manures, had small productive potentialities. All such country throughout the State requires heavy dressings of superphosphate, and the enormous acreage developed and in the course of development on Kangaroo Island has taken from the common pool a considerable amount of superphosphate which ordinarily would have been available to those already established in agricultural pursuits. Efforts are being made to overcome this deficiency by the development of some of our natural resources. The utilization of the pyrites deposit at Nairn will go a long way towards furnishing one of the chief ingredients in artificial manure, and I trust that the curtailment of loan funds will not seriously detract from the efforts being made to bring that project to fruition at the earliest moment. Overall production will, I think, increase considerably in the not distant future because we will soon begin to enjoy the benefits from the newly developed lands on Kangaroo Island and in the South-East, on which, to a large extent, ex-servicemen are being settled. In addition, of course, private individuals are doing something in the same direction. It has taken some years to make much of a mark, particularly in the virgin scrub lands.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Are they wheat areas?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—In the main they are grazing and dairying propositions. It has taken some time for results to make themselves apparent on Kangaroo Island. I was privileged to go there as a member of the Parliamentary Land Settlement Committee some years ago when one of the first blocks of land had reached the stage where it was seeded with pastures. In the intervening period I have had the opportunity to visit the island on several occasions and in that way have been able to gauge the progress that has taken place. I feel sure now that the tempo of development will be considerably increased because vast acreages are now reaching the stage which will enable settlers to carry stock. I look forward with the greatest confidence to the ultimate outcome and I think that Kangaroo Island, the South-East, and the areas on Eyre Peninsula on which soldiers have been repatriated

will be highly profitable to the State and all concerned. Here again, of course, some difficulties must be ironed out. I do not pretend that everyone is fully satisfied; some criticism has been levelled at the methods of development, the allocations and rents, but I feel that, by getting together and adopting a sympathetic approach to the problems, as they arise, they will not be insurmountable and will eventually be solved and conditions made satisfactory to all concerned.

It is customary in such a debate as this for members to confine their remarks to one or two items with which they may be peculiarly familiar or which are of greatest concern to the districts they represent. I therefore propose first to touch on our railways. They present a major problem and the deficit is mounting yearly. We know that efforts have been made to meet the position, but the problem remains and in some districts services have had to be curtailed. The rate of depreciation has been more than our resources have been able to cope with and in some respects our railway system is, to say the least, open to criticism. Doubtless, other members like myself get requests from people, even in some of the older settled districts, for the reinstatement of services. Here again the question of adequate labour comes into the picture. I think it is amply borne out by experience that the introduction of the shorter working week has had its part in forcing the curtailment of services. The recommendation of the Royal Commission regarding the alteration of the route between Leigh Creek and Port Augusta has been presented and it means that the two important towns of Quorn and Hawker in my electorate will be cut off from the main railway system of the State. Frankly, in considering the economic aspect, I must concede that the Commission's recommendations are right. I appreciate what it will mean to residents of the towns mentioned, particularly to business people, when the new line is constructed and the main north-south railway line by-passes them. I trust that the overtures which are being made and the employment of some means whereby at least certain services can be carried on through those towns with the existing line will receive every consideration. There must be some way in which that service can be made profitable, not only to the people immediately concerned but to the State.

I am particularly interested in the Eyre Peninsula railway system, especially as it affects my district. I regret to say that the

picture is not a happy one. The Eyre Peninsula railway system has for years been the Cinderella of our railways. It is outmoded and has reached the stage where it is incapable of handling the produce from this vast area west of Spencer Gulf. I fear that the position will be accentuated in future.

It is now to road construction which, next to railways, is probably one of the most important things we have to consider in the State's development and in the maintenance of outlying districts. I have some doubt about deciding which is the most important, railways or roads. We cannot do without roads and our road haulage system is increasing in importance daily. I was associated with local governing bodies when a system of grading dirt roads was introduced. It was an evolution—almost a revolution—of the old methods. In the early days macadamized roads were built in main country areas, other by-ways and district roads being left to a great extent in their natural state. The grading system meant cheaper construction and we were able to build miles of roads for the same money as we previously spent in building chains. The picture completely changed.

Today we have reached another stage in road construction and more and more highways are being used for the transport of extremely heavy loads. Dirt roads were never intended to carry the loads they are carrying today and it was never envisaged that they would ever be called upon to do so. In those days a motor car, and perhaps one-ton or two-ton trucks, were the limit, but our main arterial roads now require constant attention to cope with the present heavy loads. I appreciate that on many of our roads I have traversed much more attention is now being paid to the foundations. The only surface that is capable of carrying these heavy loads satisfactorily is of bitumen or similar sealing. Recently I travelled extensively over Eyre Peninsula and noticed with great satisfaction the work that is being undertaken in the construction of a bitumen road which will ultimately connect Port Augusta and Port Lincoln. Good progress is being made with the work and a fine highway will result, but that is only one; more of these roads are required throughout the State. I was pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that this matter will receive full consideration and I hope that the present tempo of road building will be accelerated.

Another important matter is improved harbour facilities, wrapped up with which is the

provision of proper facilities for those engaged in the fishing industry, which is of vital importance to South Australia. To a great extent, those engaged in it are usually small men with small boats, who use old-time methods in catching fish with a hand line. In the aggregate, however, they produce a large volume of foodstuffs for the country and could do much more with encouragement. In many districts the fishermen have a laudable desire to help themselves by forming co-operative societies. They obtain their supplies and gear, as well as market their fish, through these co-operatives. In many ways they are building up an organization which, having regard to their resources, is highly creditable. I represent a district where a lot of fishing is carried on and would like to see more encouragement given to these men.

About four years ago I attended the annual meeting of the Fishermen's Co-operative at Thevenard and was able to tell the meeting that there appeared a statement in the Governor's Speech that the State would take steps to provide boat harbours, shelters, and slipways for fishermen and also assist their industry. To my knowledge very little has been done in that regard. I believe some facilities were provided at one of the South-Eastern ports but little, if anything, has been done for the Eyre Peninsula centres. I know that these projects are not simple and that plans have to be drawn, investigations made, and recognized authorities consulted. It cannot be done in a day but surely after four years we have a right to expect that something more definite would be apparent. I hope that the necessary preliminaries have now proceeded to a stage where some tangible result will be seen and some assistance given to those engaged in this important branch of primary industry. I am not unmindful that the Government, through the Industries Development Committee, has advanced considerable sums for building and equipping a fishing boat which is stationed at Port Lincoln. It has enabled those concerned to go further afield in their efforts to procure fish and they can operate in waters not usually covered by smaller fishing craft. I predict a successful future for that enterprise. We must not stop there but go ahead in the manner I have indicated, and encourage the formation of co-operative societies.

We will be interested when the measures dealing with relaxation of controls on materials and price controls are introduced. We all look forward to the day when we can do away with

all controls, but evidently the powers that be think the time has not been reached and some controls must continue. We are anxious to revert to the stage where people can use their initiative and enterprise to develop their individualities and carry on their businesses in the way they think best, having regard to the welfare of the people they serve. At present competition is curtailed and people do not know where they stand. Mr. Cudmore said that plans for the future have to be based on past experiences and achievements. That reminded me of the early days and of how the pioneers, without regimentation, carved out homes for themselves and a destiny for those who followed them. They worked and developed the country without having to go cap in hand to anyone and they worked out their own salvation. If we are to plan on the experiences of the past we must pay regard to those fundamental features.

Publicity has been given to the handling of wheat on Eyre Peninsula. In this regard I do not hold a brief for anyone and my opinions are based entirely on my own observations and knowledge. In press statements and radio broadcasts extravagant statements were made about tremendous losses that occurred in wheat stacks on Eyre Peninsula. The position arose out of a peculiar set of circumstances. The handling and care of accumulated surpluses of wheat was not a forgotten problem that was suddenly awakened by publicity. In association with my colleagues representing that district both here and in the House of Assembly I attended two round table conferences with the Minister of Railways. At those conferences were representatives of the Wheat Board, the railways and other transport services, employees and waterside workers. I have a communication setting out the undoubted advantages that accrued from those conferences. The position was well known and was met as circumstances permitted. A vast accumulation of wheat occurred through four exceptionally good seasons for the growing of cereals.

It is interesting to note that in the past three years deliveries to the Wheat Board reached colossal figures. Number 13 pool had 2,086,525 bags of wheat, number 14 pool 2,354,686 bags, and number 15 pool for last season 2,205,712 bags, a total of 6,646,923 bags. That is a huge quantity to handle. In addition, there was a big production of barley and a steadily increasing production of oats, all of which had to be handled with restricted facilities. In the pre-war days one of the important factors in getting crops

away was that there was a fleet of windjammers lifting a considerable quantity of wheat from those areas every year. They laid up at outports and a fleet of ketches lifted wheat from the smaller ports and loaded it on to the windjammers. Since the war only two vessels have been back. Most of the ketches went to the islands during the war and never returned and consequently that fleet, which was so useful in dividing up the shipment of wheat, is no longer available. We depend now almost entirely on steamers for the transport of our grain overseas. These vessels must go to ports where there are jetties and wharves as they cannot be loaded at different points off the coast as the old boats were. Members will see what this has meant, namely, the concentration of a big percentage of the crop of Eyre Peninsula at Port Lincoln, or alternatively at the other end at Thevenard. We have had an acute shortage of labour; I do not want to be always harping on this, but it crops up so often and it is such an important factor in many of our difficulties. It was difficult to get labour to shift the harvest, or to protect adequately the wheat stacks in the country, or to recondition or fumigate stacks attacked by mice or weevil. All this has added to difficulties, but I am happy to say they have been overcome.

Last week I travelled on the two lines on Eyre Peninsula from Kimba to Port Lincoln and from Port Lincoln to Minnipa, during the course of which I visited 27 railway sidings. I went by myself for the purpose of making a personal investigation so that I would know what I was talking about and I have no hesitation in saying that reports which have appeared to the effect that hundreds of thousands of bags of wheat have rotted are gross exaggerations. Some losses have occurred, but I can see little evidence of complete loss. The need to recondition some of the wheat entailed the employment of expensive labour. It involved the use of thousands of new bags, but much of the grain was recovered. I stood and watched a reconditioning plant in operation at one siding. Those familiar with the operation of these plants know that the wheat is graded from f.a.q. standard down to almost discards, and I was assured that of the 12,000 bags odd being treated at that point 75 per cent of the wheat was coming out at f.a.q. standard, but all of it was saleable.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—And a lot of it at top prices.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—I understand that some samples which we do not regard here as f.a.q. find a ready sale in certain foreign countries. Taking an overall picture I would say that the total loss was very small.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Those stacks must have gained a lot in weight over the years.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—That is so and they were insured against loss. I am reliably informed that insurance plus the gain in weight will fully compensate for any loss.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—That is the other side of the story.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—Those are the facts, so it will be seen that the alarming reports about terrific losses have to be discounted considerably. I have already mentioned what I regard as the reason for holding some of the wheat there, but the latest information I have is that the whole of the wheat now stored on Eyre Peninsula will be cleared by the end of the year if the present rate of shipment is kept up.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Is Port Lincoln the only shipping port?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—No, there is Thevenard at the other end. My investigation revealed that there is little of the No. 14 pool left.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Is it not a fact that much wheat from around Thevenard has been brought to Port Lincoln?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—Not to my knowledge. A considerable amount was taken from Buckleboo, which is at the northern end of the Kimba line, by road to Port Augusta and Cowell, but that was to relieve pressure on the railways and fit in with certain shipping arrangements. This is another problem which confronts those handling grain. When they get a ship they do not always know where it is to be made available; it may be Port Pirie or Wallaroo. Much to my amazement I was informed by a responsible officer of the Wheat Board that it is difficult now to make a forward contract for shipping, so the position can be imagined. When the merchants were operating, ships were chartered months ahead and the merchants were able to make arrangements to load them, but now it may be known only a week or a fortnight ahead where a boat will call. In these circumstances much of the wheat has had to be shifted by road—a pretty expensive business. However, what was the alternative? I think that the right course was followed in getting it away.

The Hon. R. R. Wilson—Will stock piling wheat at Cummins help the position?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—I am not an authority on that, but I have faith in the people handling the business. I certainly think that, in the face of great difficulties, they are doing their best and if they believe that stock piling wheat at Cummins will assist them that satisfies me. I understand that even if it was not suggested by the Railways Department it considers that it will be helpful in as much as it will provide a short haul when shipments are being made from Port Lincoln. Cummins is only about 40 miles from Port Lincoln and with a stock pile there it would be much simpler to maintain the loading than if it were necessary to bring the grain from 140 miles up the line.

It was reported in a local paper on July 3 that 2,000,000 bags of wheat were in the stacks at present. My information from the Wheat Board is that on June 14 last the wheat remaining on Eyre Peninsula was 1,251,917 bags, and the greater part of that is in No. 15 pool. As I have already said, a multiplicity of circumstances forced wheat to be stored for long periods, but beyond question the condition of the railways did not permit their handling the grain quickly enough. In addition harbour facilities are outmoded and the time is long overdue when the promised improvements should be provided.

The lands recently thrown open to returned soldiers will add to the volume of produce to be handled and I sincerely hope that the railways will be brought more up to date and further rollingstock provided. We have been promised that more rollingstock will be available when the broadening of the line to Mount Gambier is completed. If that be the case I hope that it will be reconditioned before being transferred to Eyre Peninsula, because in the report of the Public Works Standing Committee there is some evidence that the rollingstock in the South-East is not in any better condition than that on Eyre Peninsula, and I cannot conceive of any authority being so stupid as to send worn-out rollingstock from one place to relieve the position in another. In addition to rollingstock and better harbour facilities there is the question of strengthening the line itself, which was hurriedly built. I perused the report which appeared when the line was first proposed in 1907. In 1909 it was extended as far as Yeelanna. In a report the then Railways Commissioner recommended that secondhand rails be used and that

two "W" class engines which were little used on other lines be sent to Eyre Peninsula; that policy has been pursued for a long time. I am not hypercritical, but this is a matter which must receive immediate consideration if we are to make the fullest use of the huge productive possibilities of this vast area. I put these matters forward as constructive criticism and hope that notice will be taken of them. This is a very live question, in which I am vitally interested, and I feel that as a representative of the people in the district I have a definite responsibility regarding it. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern)—In supporting the motion I join with other speakers in expressing my great regret at the early passing of His Majesty King George VI. I feel that his devotion to duty, particularly during the war years, led to his early demise. I am certain that all members had great admiration for him and trust that Queen Elizabeth II. and Princess Margaret will have a long and happy life. The King's life was a model which could be copied with advantage by the rest of the community. I am certain that the training which Queen Elizabeth received during her early years will greatly assist her in carrying out her most onerous duties.

Earlier speakers referred to the departure of Sir Willoughby and Lady Norrie. They endeared themselves to all sections of the people in this State and the good wishes of all will go with them in their new sphere in our sister Dominion of New Zealand. I am sure that both will carry on the good work there that they did for years in this State. I deeply regret the passing of the former member for Gawler, Mr. L. S. Duncan. He endeared himself to every member, not only in the House of Assembly but in this Chamber during his term in Parliament. He was a man of lovable character and high endeavour and Parliament is poorer for his early death.

Several members have referred to the drift of population to the city. I regret that this is so, but the amenities which have been enjoyed by people in the metropolitan area during the past decade have, I am sure, been conducive to it. Attempts are being made, by joint action of the State and Federal Governments, to evolve a scheme to provide houses for agricultural workers in the country. The Federal Government has agreed to an exemption of 20 per cent per annum in income tax for five years to encourage this. I am hopeful that it will

be instrumental in absorbing many people displaced from non-profitable metropolitan industries. Although I represent a farming constituency I do not oppose the development of secondary industries which are essential to the welfare of the State. If we are to advance, both our primary and secondary industries must develop side by side. I fear, however, that in recent years we have developed a somewhat one-sided policy in this respect. I trust that we will be able to arrest the drift and place more men on the land.

As regards our export trade, Mr. Sargent, Federal president of the Australian Primary Producers' Union, in addressing a conference in Adelaide last Tuesday said:—

Unless we can obtain machinery and superphosphate and cornsacks we are not going to grow wheat at the expense of well developed pastures. If primary industry is not kept healthy enough to export neither primary nor secondary industries can survive. A year ago 400,000 people in primary industry produced 90 per cent of Australia's exports and 900,000 people in secondary industry produced less than 10 per cent.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—But they are all working for primary industries.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I admit that secondary industries are necessary to provide the essential requirements of our primary industries. It has been most difficult during the last 10 years to get farm machinery to carry on. A traveller in the Yorke Peninsula area told me that within the last 12 months he had orders for 320 headers but 12 were all that his firm could supply. I know of people who have had orders placed for headers for five years and cannot get them. Last year a secondhand header was sold in a northern town for £2,000. Today's cost is about £1,000, but this man was prepared to pay £2,000. He told me that it paid him handsomely to do so because it enabled him to get off a crop which was down. The claim that secondary industries are providing all the requirements of primary industries is not borne out by facts. During the past few years it has been most difficult for farmers to get the necessary machines to sow and reap their crops. I accept Mr. Sargent's figures. The latest figures available in the Parliamentary Library, showing the exports for Australia according to industrial origin 1948-49 are:—Primary produce, £507,787,000 and manufacturing £39,900. The number of people employed in factories in June, 1948, was 833,000, and those in permanent full time employment on rural holdings as at March 31, 1948, totalled 407,174.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Isn't it because many farmers are retiring and going to the city to live?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—When a farmer retires somebody else takes his place.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Would farmers be prepared to employ additional labour?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—Provided it was suitable and that men were able to work the machines. It would be impossible to get labour unless farmers paid competitive wages. They have done so and are still prepared to do so. Some criticism was levelled by the Leader of the Opposition about wheat production. I appreciate that because it will enable me to place facts before members. For years the wheat industry has had many schemes before it to enable it to carry on. During 1938-40 the wheat industry was in the doldrums. In 1938 the price of wheat was 1s. 8d. a bushel, the lowest level ever reached. Wheatgrowers were assisted by the flour sales tax and coupled with other measures about £10,000,000 went into the industry. Subsequently the wheat stabilization scheme, which provided a home consumption price, was introduced. Wheatgrowers endorsed the principle of a home consumption price in return for the help meted out to them during the low price period. They do not mind a home consumption price for human consumption but take exception to vast quantities of wheat being made available to other industries, such as pig and poultry raising, at concessional prices. The quantity so made available has a great bearing on the ultimate price received by the grower, a price which makes wheat less attractive to grow than other commodities.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—What percentage of the wheat grown would go to pig raising and poultry farming?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—Approximately one-third.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—In London butter is 3s. 6d. a pound. Do you suggest we should pay the same price here?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I do not suggest we should get the same price for wheat. We are prepared to operate on a home consumption price which is much less than the overseas price which Mr. Condon quoted at 21s. 6d. a bushel. Very little Australian wheat is sold at that price because we are not producing more than the quota of 185,000,000 bushels a year for export under the international wheat agreement. The majority of our wheat is sold under that agreement at 16s. 1d. a bushel.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—The South Australian Primary Producers' Association objects to stabilization.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—That is too big a problem to be discussed now. I believe in stabilization on a proper basis. I am opposed to the Australian wheat industry supplying cheap wheat for sheep in Queensland. There has been a drought in Queensland and relief should be given to the sheep but wheat farmers are asked not only to provide cheap wheat but to pay the shipping rates. These concessions have made inroads into the price of wheat and the farmer has turned his attention to barley growing. It is not necessary to fallow for barley and the land can be used for grazing for an additional three or four months a year. It can be worked for less because it does not require as much super, which is an important item, and barley stubble is more palatable for stock and has a greater grazing value. A crop of peas can be grown which will improve the soil and two crops can be sown instead of one at a lower cost for a higher return. It can be readily understood why the farmer gives more attention to growing other cereals at the expense of wheat. The position is that wheat acreages have dropped from 2,000,000 to 1,688,000 with a yield of 27,305,000 bushels. Barley growing has increased to 858,789 acres for 16,855,193 bushels; oats to 816,379 acres for 5,408,185 bushels; rye to 57,599 acres for 206,531 bushels, and peas to 18,435 acres for 290,033 bushels.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Add the whole lot up and the total is less than last year.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—The total crop is over 50,000,000 bushels.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—I was referring to acreages.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON.—The acreage is not so important. Although the acreage sown to wheat was reduced we produced over 27,000,000 bushels. The average return for the last 10 years was 32,000,000 bush. Although the acreage is down production is not down correspondingly and we are producing more per acre because of better soil treatment.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Our record was 42,000,000 bush. and yet we are down to 27,000,000.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I thought our record was 48,000,000 bush., but when that was grown we grew very little barley and oats. In addition we are now carrying nearly 10,500,000 sheep, but when the record wheat crop was

produced we had only 4,500,000 sheep. Not only are we producing the same quantity of grain now but we are carrying more sheep and with soil husbandry as we know it today we can hope for an expansion in the future.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Shouldn't we increase production instead of remaining stationary?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—In the last few years we have made 342,000 acres of developed land available to the Commonwealth. According to the Agricultural Department we are developing some 300,000 acres on Kangaroo Island and also large areas in the South-East and on the West Coast. The Land Settlement Committee has favourably reported on 185,000 acres on southern Yorke Peninsula and the A.M.P. has developed large tracts of country on Coonalpyn Downs. Altogether the picture is not one of standing still but of great development.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Statistics don't prove it.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—Our present policy of soil conservation is good. In the press recently a warning was given by the Associate Chief of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Plant Industry, Dr. J. Griffiths Davies. He said:—

The rise and fall of nations and civilizations seems to be closely associated with the rise and fall of soil fertility.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Speech referred to afforestation in this State and presented a bright picture of achievement. The return from our forests showed a profit of about £800,000, which is £200,000 more than the previous year. When in New Zealand last year I inspected the forests at Rotorua. The forests were planted in 1911, 1912 and 1916 and after comparing them with our forests I consider our Forestry Department has done an excellent job. New Zealand has a good climate and good soil but their plantations do not in any way compare with ours at Millicent because they allow undergrowth to rob the trees and young trees are springing up and taking sap away from their main trees. Our forests planted during those years are being milled, or have been milled and marketed. The Forestry Department should be complimented on its work. We are enjoying a bountiful season and it is gratifying to know that the ultimate returns are so promising, but that in turn brings its own problem, namely, the fire hazard. Although we had a very good season last year we were blessed with an absence of fires and I think this can be attributed in great measure to the

fire fighting organizations which have been set up throughout the State. I mention this as an opportunity to pay a tribute to the fire fighting crews who have devoted so much energy and time to the training which has brought them to a high state of efficiency. In the northern areas many fires had early attention and, instead of proving disastrous and involving great loss, they were brought under control early and resulted in a minimum of damage. After competitions in each district winning crews will furnish a display during the Royal Adelaide Show. The people of this State should be proud of the volunteer crews who are performing such excellent work on behalf of the community.

Mr. Cudmore in his excellent speech referred to the question of motor traffic and mentioned the courtesy extended to each other by road users in Great Britain. I have just had the privilege of visiting New Zealand where I found the same courtesies were practised. As members know, many of the roads in New Zealand are through mountainous and difficult country and this seems to engender in the people the feeling that they must be careful and help each other in order to avoid accidents. In going around some bends they will indicate to an oncoming driver that there are one or two lorries, as the case may be, behind them. The "come on" sign is used extensively. We have no comparable sign in our traffic code; the same signal is used for slowing as for stopping, with nothing to indicate to oncoming traffic that they are at liberty to pass. The R.A.A. in New Zealand has signs all along the roads such as "Do not overtake on bridge" or "Beware of children," and so forth.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—We have them in South Australia. Why write down your own State?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I am suggesting that our State might adopt some of those measures. I was in New Zealand for three weeks without news from South Australia but the first news I got was in the public reading room in Wellington where I saw a South Australian paper dated April 7, carrying glaring headlines about accidents in South Australia. Australian papers arrived in New Zealand seven at a time and when I went back on the following day another seven had arrived, and the issue for April 14 had splashed across the front page the number killed in road accidents in South Australia.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—The Monday morning report of motor bicycle accidents.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—Motor bicycles played quite a part, but other vehicles were involved. In the United States of America and Canada before a licence is issued the owner must present a certificate of road-worthiness for his vehicle and in New Zealand an examination of brakes has to be made twice a year. I do not suggest that would be necessary here as our terrain is not so difficult, but we could adopt with great advantage the American and Canadian system requiring a certificate that the brakes are in good order, for it is well known that the brakes on many vehicles in use here are in a deplorable condition. The police and the Registrar of Motor Vehicles have power to refuse to issue a certificate if they know that brakes are inefficient and that a vehicle is not road-worthy, but many escape notice. I feel sure that the adoption of this practice would lessen to a great degree the number of road accidents.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—How long would a certificate cover?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—After being put in order brakes should remain good for at least 12 months. It is not altogether a question of mileage; a driver may use his brakes more in driving 10 miles in the city than in 200 in the country. The number of young lives lost through accidents with motor bicycles is deplorable and this question has exercised my mind for a long time. One remedy suggested to me is that learners should be issued with a special disc indicating that the rider is a learner, that his speed should be limited to 25 miles an hour, and that he be not permitted

to carry a pillion passenger during his learning period. This suggestion seems to have some merit.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Has it been tried elsewhere?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—All new drivers in England have to carry a learner's disc.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—And in New South Wales all learners have to do so. I do not know about the speed limit, but without that there is little value in the disc. We are passing through a changing economy. During the immediate past we have had over-full employment and have been producing some things of little value to our economy. Now there is a tendency towards the production of things which are vital to the development and expansion of our country. I feel sure that if we face the future with confidence, and if each of us is prepared to make some sacrifice, as undoubtedly we will be called upon to do, this State will progress and that the dire calamities which many prophesy will not occur. However, it will depend upon the spirit of the people and how they tackle their problems. The fact that we have less money available to spend does not necessarily mean that we will not produce almost as much as heretofore; if all apply themselves diligently to their tasks I feel sure that we can look forward with hope to the future. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.44 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, July 29, at 2 p.m.