

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, July 21, 1953.

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

ACQUISITION OF LAND: HUNDRED OF TOWNSEND.

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement on the acquisition of land in the hundred of Townsend.

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor intimated by message his assent to the Appropriation (No. 1) and Supply (No. 1) Acts.

QUESTIONS.**ELECTRICITY TRUST FINANCE.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—

1. What is the total amount of interest paid to debenture holders in the Electricity Trust since its formation?

2. What is the number of debenture holders in the trust?

3. What is the average value of debentures held by each holder?

4. What number of debentures has been redeemed by the Government under the Electricity Trust of South Australia Act, 1946?

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

1. The total amount paid from the date of the formation of the trust to June 30, 1953, is £4,445,000.

2. 10,850.

3. The average value of debentures held, excluding the South Australian Treasury, the State Savings Bank and other large institutions, is £1,012.

4. The number of individual holdings of debentures redeemed is not known, but the total amount redeemed by the trust is £1,054,400.

BIRKENHEAD SHELL DEPOT.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (on notice)—Is it the intention of the Government to ascertain whether the Shell Company of Australia Ltd. employs watchmen continuously at its Birkenhead installation in accordance with the provisions of the Inflammable Oils Act, 1908-1935?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—Inquiries into this matter show that the company is not committing a breach of the Inflammable Oils Act.

VEHICLES PASSING STATIONARY TRAMS.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—Is it the intention of the Government to refer to the State Traffic Committee the question of making it compulsory for any vehicle to stop before passing any tram which is stationary for the purpose of allowing passengers to board or alight?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—This matter is at present receiving the consideration of the State Traffic Committee. A decision has not yet been reached.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech:—

May it please Your Excellency—

1. We, the members of the Legislative Council, thank your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open Parliament.

2. We unite wholeheartedly with Your Excellency in re-affirming our steadfast and affectionate loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and pray that it may be the will of Almighty God that Her Majesty's reign may be fraught with great personal happiness and with peace, unity and prosperity throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations.

3. We convey our assurance that a most affectionate and spontaneous welcome awaits Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in South Australia.

4. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

5. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Southern)—I am deeply conscious of having the honour of moving the adoption of the Address in Reply on this historic occasion. The recent surge of national sentiment, and indeed the lively interest occasioned throughout the civilized world, was a true manifestation of regard and respect for our charming and gracious young monarch as she dedicated herself to a life of service to her people. Although barely necessary in this sovereign State of South Australia (and I trust we shall always remain one), I feel that it would now be appropriate to express the opinion that nowhere in the parliamentary institutions of the British Commonwealth exists any greater loyalty than that given by all members of this dignified Council, so ably led

by you, Sir. Needless to say, I concur wholeheartedly with the formal motion applauding the Royal Visit next year. I was delighted that the new itinerary enabled our near city of Mount Gambier to be included, and I can assure you, Sir, that on this great occasion the citizens of the South-East will rally to their centre with gusto and that the civic pride of the Mount will see that nothing is left undone that will ensure the worthiness of the occasion.

The arrival of our new representative of the Crown at this time was a most happy coincidence and an augury for the continuation of those bonds of friendship and loyalty to which I have referred. South Australia has been most fortunate in its Governors. I do not know how much credit the Government may take to itself for that, but I do feel that the people's first reactions to Sir Robert George and his most charming consort augur well for a happy sojourn in this State for them both. I am also sure that they on their part will do all in their power to advance the welfare of our people. The assurance that you were able to give, on the opening day, Mr. President, to the query of my worthy friend opposite, that you were not dead was received with pleasure on all sides. I am certain that this Chamber, though naturally zealous to guard its traditional procedure, would be most averse to any change in the Chair or the conduct thereof.

Certain paragraphs of His Excellency's Speech are a resume of the financial and production results of the State during the last financial year. While we were undoubtedly favoured by an excellent season and markets, the credit for the general stability of the State and its virtually full employment lies mainly with the Government—a Government, Mr. President, which now enters upon its sixth consecutive Parliament and which led by the same Premier and with practically the same team, has wrought achievements of a lasting nature in this State. We all, or perhaps not quite all, reserve our right to disagree from time to time with individual pieces of legislation, but there is no man in this Chamber who fails to appreciate the work that has been done, often with the goodwill of the Opposition, before, through, and after the strife and tumult of these recent years.

We were all very pleased that Mrs. Playford's health rallied enough to enable her to accompany the Premier overseas. I have no doubt that his trip abroad has enabled our Premier, whom history books may well refer to as "The Atomic Apple Grower," to uphold

the prestige of the State. Indeed, the decisions to be founded on his recent experiences may well guide the future economic destiny of South Australia and all sections will await their unfolding with the greatest interest. Because of the extraordinary and unflagging energy of the Premier there is sometimes a tendency to think this Cabinet is a one-man show, but recent months must have shattered that illusion. Although he has suffered indifferent health, the performance of the Chief Secretary, as acting Premier, must have excited the admiration and pride of all members of this House. His attitude at the Loan Council must have been most upsetting to his opponents who had underestimated him and his common-sense approach to this difficult problem earned the generous adulation of our people. I am pleased that the Government intends to appoint two additional Ministers. Although our small compact team has its undoubted advantages and has been so successful, the requirements in administration and knowledge are becoming so far-reaching that there is far too much work for even these broad shoulders. It reminds me of the world famous six-cylinder car which needs no extra oil, is never out of commission and won't wear out. However, in this age of speed I think it will be wise to instal the new 8-cylinder—and I trust it will be a straight 8—which will have the same attributes and turn out to be the real people's car.

Land settlement results are becoming more attractive as the schemes develop and, notwithstanding the usual criticism invariably associated with such projects, the inescapable fact is that soldier settlement, although limited by available land and many other problems, has, in general, been an unqualified success. Many of the earlier settlers are well established on properties of which they are justly proud. What we have been able to do we have done well. Naturally there are usual anomalies which are gradually being ironed out. Moreover, the settlers appear to have been well selected and I prophesy that the number of misfits or natural failures will be almost negligible. As land settlement increases and land usage becomes more intense we should do everything possible to encourage small holdings throughout our better country areas. The movement of casual labour is such a wasteful and difficult factor that we must endeavour to provide a permanent living for people in their own districts. The Government's example to landholders may do much to meet this problem.

Two problems arise from closer settlement. The first occurs in connection with the enormous development on Kangaroo Island which is rapidly bringing the matter of transport to the mainland to a head. It may be claimed that terrific expense is involved but I remind members of the millions which will undoubtedly be spent there. This problem is by no means easy. It is no use having additional shipping unless ancillary services are provided and these cost money. As the Commonwealth Government has agreed to accept an interest in nearly 200,000 acres on the island the time might be opportune to investigate the position more fully. We must look ahead. It is no use developing the island unless we make best use of it. If we do not solve the problem perishable production will languish there.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Don't you think that air freight is the answer?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—That may be so, but the problem must not be left until it is matter of extreme urgency. We are developing the island so we must develop the transport. The second problem is easier of solution. The great development still taking place in the Murray Valley demands the immediate building of at least one more bridge over the river. At present I have no intention of entering into a discussion on the merits of road versus rail transport. I realize that cost is the problem and that the Government has already reduced punt fees to a minimum but the man and machine hours lost by thousands at these punts must be astronomical.

I was pleased to hear of the proposed abattoirs to be built by private enterprise at Kadina but this will not overcome any problems that may arise this year and possibly next. For some time I was under the impression that the Government had been unable to extend the facilities at the Metropolitan Abattoirs but I have ascertained that this is not so and that they have been improved and the killing and storing capacity has been dealt with in accordance with the views expressed by the committee of which Sir Wallace Sandford was chairman. The real cause of the trouble is the seasonal labour problem combined with an extremely short working week. It is gratifying to know that a recent conference resulted in an agreement to work the necessary overtime. I cannot help feeling that the moment the Government started to take steps to provide alternatives it got results. Members have only to think of the old coal problem and of how thankful we have been for Leigh Creek.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—You were not thankful in the early years.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I never opposed it. The fact cannot be gainsaid that almost every year primary producers are held to ransom by this bottleneck which costs them and indirectly other people many thousands of pounds. No system of rostering will ever handle a glut in good seasons. The answer lies chiefly in a differential price for the early lambs but even that will not overcome the absolute glut. If such is impossible we must permit the necessary conditions to deal with this seasonal rush and preferably under private enterprise. I trust that the Government will not be satisfied until it has scotched this wasteful annual threat. A further step in the standardization of the railways of Australia has been completed by the broadening of the gauge to Mount Gambier and I have no doubt that, given a little enterprise and imagination, this route could become one of the best patronized in the State. I hope that the earliest consideration will be given to using two permanent sleeping coaches and a refreshment car on the night train. The night train schedules are so satisfactory for business men and producers that very soon probably a bogey motor train will be able to deal with all the day time passenger traffic, and a fast daily diesel freight train would give our Victorian competitors quite a lot to think about. These and other works—some under examination and some already proceeding—have done much to make the people feel that the South-East, where the long shadows sometimes seemed to rest, is at last coming into its own and that its development is now well under way.

Now I turn to the problem of increasing road traffic and would like to congratulate the Commissioner of Police on the large measure of success he has achieved with his courtesy tactics and his gradual culling out of the drunken driver, but as I have advised this Council twice previously, we cannot afford to ignore the lessons learnt by other more thickly populated and built up countries; we cannot be content for ever to meet developing problems by merely increasing restrictions. Let us prevent those troubles where we can by stopping ribbon building along arterial highways and mushroom villages springing up besides many of our main roads every few miles. One of the secrets of dealing with fast traffic is separation and diversion. Is the inter-section speed limit throughout the State to remain for ever, or are we to recognize the

rights of major roads? The secret of safe travel, as is well known by experts and certainly by the police, is in even speed and not continual acceleration and deceleration. As our countryside develops we will have dangerous cross roads, perhaps carrying only a vehicle or two a day, over our arterial highways. Is it suggested that the existing speed limit across those intersections shall continue to be the law, or will we not be forced to develop the same system of major roads as America and Great Britain have had to do before us? I hope that the deliberations of the State Traffic Committee will be carefully considered and that it will be recognized that country areas demand proper consideration while the country is yet young. The Commissioner's report clearly shows that most accidents are due to failure to give way, and the only logical answer is better education upon the matter. It is quite obvious at busy intersections throughout the city that the hesitant and worried driver is far more apparent than the deliberately discourteous one. What are the possibilities of increasing their education by visual means or films? I have heard them spoken of very highly and if it is the answer to the obviously uneducated driver we must push on with it. I invite members to go to a place like Brown Street on a Friday afternoon and observe the hesitancy upon the faces of dozens of quite courteous drivers; they just do not know what to do, and the very fact that the Commissioner has drawn attention to this point makes it incumbent upon the Government to take practical steps to deal with it. Therefore I hope that, quite apart from the State Traffic Committee, the Government will take progressive steps, as it has done in other matters, and commence a long term policy on traffic matters.

All Governments have had more than a fair share of administration problems during the rapid and difficult period of development in latter years. On the other hand, both the primary and secondary industries have enjoyed a period of prosperity rarely known hitherto, and labour has known virtually full employment. We would be foolish to deny that much of this has been due to one commodity—wool—as well as a market for whatever we have cared to produce. Let us beware, therefore, and endeavour to provide for changing conditions—for change there will be. If we do this we'll have little to fear for the future welfare of the people of this State. I have much pleasure in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)
—I congratulate Mr. Jude on his excellent speech and regret that he did not continue longer. I join with him very wholeheartedly in his remarks about the Coronation year. We all feel very excited about the forthcoming visit of Her Majesty and Her Consort, and I am sure that South Australia will be by no means overshadowed in its reception to Their Majesties. I congratulate the Government upon its arrangements during Coronation week. All who attended the various functions must have been impressed by the excellence of the arrangements, and much credit is due to the officers responsible for carrying them out. I add my congratulations to the Chief Secretary who so very ably took on the onerous task of shouldering the Premier's duties in his absence, and carrying them out to the satisfaction of everybody and the great delight of many citizens.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Not forgetting members of this Council.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—We are once again fortunate in the selection of our Vice-regal representatives in the persons of Sir Robert George and his charming Lady. I am sure that the citizens of South Australia are delighted to feel that in them we have a couple who will be sympathetic to all their interests, and I wish them a long and successful period in office.

We are all happy to feel that the season has at last broken favourably. Prior to the bounteous rains we are now enjoying many people were feeling rather anxious that perhaps we were in for another of those long dry spells which this State has happily escaped for a long time. I therefore look forward to another bounteous harvest and I hope that considerably more land will be sown to crops. Despite a more than average long run of good seasons, on the best information I can get I find that primary production is falling off, and in this connection I draw attention to a paragraph which appeared in the April issue of *Jobson's Investment Digest*, a well known financial magazine. This article was written by the A.N.Z. Bank on Australian land settlement and reads:—

In spite of closer settlement and war service land settlement schemes, the numbers engaged in rural pursuits in Australia have declined On the basis of average output from 1923-24 to 1927-28 equals 1,000, quantity production of the agricultural, pastoral, and farmyard and dairying industries had reached 1,285, 1,329 and 1,714 respectively in 1950-51. On the basis of production per head of total population, however, . . . the indices

moved downward to 926 and 961 respectively for the first two groups of industry and upward to 1,237 for the third group.

The point I want to bring out is that despite a long run of excellent seasons there are fewer people on the land and, notwithstanding all the appeals and challenges for increased production, the cold facts are that we are not producing anywhere near what we were in the years quoted.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Does that take into account the greater aggregation of land in the holdings?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I daresay it takes all factors into consideration. Those are facts which we must face. We are asked to increase production, not only to supply our own needs but the needs of the world. It cannot be said that there is over-production in any country when there is under-consumption. There cannot be over-consumption when people have not the power or means to purchase the produce.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Why are so many flour mills on reduced time and others idle?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I shall be glad to hear from the honourable member in that regard later. I think that what I have stated are facts and that production is decreasing. It is a challenge to all who are responsible for increased production in this country. It is pleasing to note the excellent return from afforestation. We have always been in the van pressing the Government, particularly in South Australia, which is so badly off for indigenous and natural timbers, to do something more in regard to afforestation and today we are beginning to see the results of Government money spent in the field of afforestation. Last year we reached a record in timber products from our forests. On one occasion I was bold enough to say that I thought that if afforestation were pursued properly we would, some day, be able to pay off South Australia's national debt. The returns from our forests have not done that, but they have made an appreciable contribution towards our economy. I thank the Government for opening up further areas for planting and increasing supplies of our soft timbers. I turn now to the question of our railways, a huge enterprise in which we are all interested and sometimes become anxious about. The railways are costing the State a considerable sum every year. The Government has to keep making blood transfusions in order that the railways accounts may get somewhere near a balance.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—We are only down £2,000,000 this year.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—The Government is most concerned about that and is searching in every direction to see how the deficit can be overcome. We cannot do without our railways, which are most necessary in the country's development and have contributed largely to the State's progress. They are, however, a losing proposition and naturally one asks "What is the reason for it and why is our public transport system such a liability to the State?"

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Haven't they always been a losing proposition?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No. I recall when a small length of line was run by private enterprise and paid dividends. Because it was a paying proposition a Socialist Government thought it was a good opportunity for taking it over. It did so and ever since the line has lost money. Whenever an industry becomes socialized it soon begins to lose money.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—What do you mean by a Socialist Government?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—It was done by a Labor Government. Naturally the Government is considering the question of efficiency in the railway service and many people think that it should be looking towards that angle of management. In two or three States the railways are managed by boards. Victoria has three commissioners, but I have always held the opinion that management by a board would be better than management by a commissioner. It is a big responsibility to place the administration on the shoulders of one man, and it is wrong for any industry to carry on when its policy is framed by one man. Under a board, which could still have the Railways Commissioner on it, the burden could be more evenly spread and increased efficiency gained.

I am pleased that reference was made in the Governor's Speech to a continuation of the work on the Goodwood-Marino line. It was embarked upon three years ago and is still unfinished; in fact, it is in a very serious stage of incompleteness. All kinds of railway materials are lying alongside the track and no additional service has been rendered. Much settlement has taken place in the district during the last few years and it is becoming a problem how to handle the traffic efficiently. Until the duplication of the line is completed the problem will remain. If the line were extended to Edwardstown it would give the public some relief.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—Don't the railways lose money on suburban traffic?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I do not think there is a line in the system that is paying dividends.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—What about the Port Pirie line?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—The Port Pirie-Broken Hill line, which carries the ore traffic, is the only one that pays. The whole matter should be the subject of serious examination by the Government and people are looking forward with great interest and a lot of expectation to the completion of the duplication of the Goodwood-Marino line. As regards water supply extensions, these have been due to unforeseen circumstances. Many of the difficulties are caused by the large increase in population; the Government has found it impossible to make proper provision for the people. Although our reservoirs are full many of the lower levels in the metropolitan area are still up against it for a reasonable water supply.

The Hon. R. R. Wilson—Isn't it largely a question of a shortage of materials?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No, it is a question of bigger mains, most of which are wanted in the metropolitan area. I hope that the Government will soon catch up with the work, as it is a question of getting water to the people. The Government has been fortunate in obtaining water from bores to augment supplies, but much of the water that has been forced into the pipes has done a lot of damage to electrical equipment and is not a pleasant substitute.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—The biggest sufferers live in the western districts.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Trouble is experienced in other districts, too. Voluminous references have been made in His Excellency's Speech to education. I have every sympathy with the Minister in his endeavours to administer this most important department. There, again, the increase in population has made his task most difficult. It applies to our high, primary and infant schools.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Won't the position become worse when the school age is increased?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—It probably will, but it is bad enough now. I appreciate the extra cost to taxpayers in providing additional classrooms. Recently the department was under fire by many people who expressed their interest in education and offered all kinds of sug-

gestions on how the system could be improved. I was glad to see that the Deputy Director of Education stepped into the breach and most ably and adequately answered the questions they were asking. It is a good thing that the public should take an interest in education. I was also glad to see the department answering their questions. The public has a right to know the answers and it would be a good thing for the Minister or the Director of Education to make a public statement periodically and let the people know what the department has in mind. Education is something that is constantly changing; it is always in the melting pot and if the public knew from time to time what the department's policy was and what changes it was proposing it would stop a lot of this unfair criticism. The question of staffing our schools is still most difficult. Most of the teachers who were imported here, chiefly from England, have resigned and returned to their native land. Some have tired of the job, others did not like the country and others again got married.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Weren't they exchange teachers?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Yes. The department has been fortunate in securing the services of women who were formerly attached to it. We should be grateful to these temporary teachers and hope that they will continue to fill the gap until more young people are attracted to the profession. Although the department has a vigorous recruiting system I feel that teachers in the high schools should point out to their students the advantages and worth-whileness of teaching. In this way we may get more teachers than are at present being recruited.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Education costs the State about £5,000,000 annually.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Education is worthy of that money so long as it is well spent. Although there is a shortage of teachers I am pleased that the number of students in each class has not been increased. Reference was made in His Excellency's speech to uniform taxation which is a question that has agitated the minds of members for a long time. Many of us are totally opposed to the Commonwealth Government retaining the taxing powers of the States. It was originally a war measure which was to be restored at the earliest possible moment. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then but the Commonwealth still retains its hold upon the taxation field. It would be better if the powers

were returned to the States as the responsibility would then be theirs to balance their own budgets and it would remove the temptation which must exist to overspend.

I was disappointed that His Excellency's speech indicated that we would again be asked to continue price control. Every progressive country in the world has long since abandoned price control and has been better for it. It is sometimes suggested that price control assures a reduction in prices but in a pamphlet *Facts and Figures*—No. 34, the following statement appears:—

Retail prices: Compared with the preceding quarter, the All Items ("C" Series) Retail Price Index increased in June quarter, 1952, by 5.1 per cent in the average for the six State capital cities. This brought the increase in the average since September, 1939, to 140.8 per cent. Increases in individual groups were:—Food, 179 per cent; rent, 7.7 per cent; clothing, 270.7 per cent; and miscellaneous, 102.8 per cent.

That indicates that since the introduction by a Liberal Government of price control as a war measure in 1939 the overall prices have in some cases more than doubled and in others trebled. The evidence of countries which have abandoned price control disclaims that it stabilizes a country. Price control aggravates the things it was intended to cure. A booklet entitled *Price Control*, authorized by the Australian Council of Retailers, commences with these words:—

In practically all the democratic countries there has been a strong movement in recent years away from controls, including price control. Those countries such as the United States, Canada, Belgium and Western Germany, that have gone furthest in dismantling the apparatus of war-time and post-war controls and that have placed their reliance on free markets, have been the most successful in overcoming post-war shortages, in increasing production, curbing inflation, and in restoring a healthy balance to the economy.

Control has completely upset our economy. Government restriction prevents production and is responsible for black markets. The booklet refers to what has happened in the United States, Canada and England since they abandoned price control. It is a fact that today Australia which should be the cheapest country in the world in which to live is one of the

dearest. It is cheaper to live in England than here. That is an indictment of all controls, whatever they be.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—Does the booklet mention the unemployment figures in other countries?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—There is not much unemployment in Great Britain and I should not think the unemployment in the United States on a percentage basis would be worse than here. We are living in an expensive and shoddy period and notwithstanding our high wages are no better off than before the war. The sooner controls and shackles are removed from industry the sooner our economy will be balanced. If we had abandoned controls 10 years ago there might have been disorganization for a time but our economy would soon have righted itself and we would be immeasurably better off now. I do not think members will require any further illustration of the iniquity of price control, nor will they require evidence of the benefits other countries have derived since they did away with restrictions. The sooner we are free the sooner will business and relations between man and man come back to some sort of sanity and reasonableness. I was very interested in what the mover had to say about traffic. This State is not very thickly populated and the thoroughfares of our city are wide and well laid out, yet we are confronted with these traffic problems. One only has to drive down the principal streets to see most of the roadway, which has cost the country great sums to build, lined with motor vehicles. I realize the difficulties people have in parking their vehicles, but are the thoroughfares to be used as parking space for private cars? I saw something recently which surprised me, namely, a constable hanging a tin plate up at a corner in this modern city to direct traffic which way to turn. Surely that is a primitive method, but it is only one of numerous instances which could be mentioned. I thank members for their patient hearing and have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.17 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, July 22, at 2 p.m.