

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Wednesday, August 26, 1953.

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

**LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 19. Page 403.)

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—In addressing myself to this controversial subject I join with the sponsor of the Bill when he said that it was one of the most contentious questions which could be considered by Parliament. I agree, too, that it is not a Party political matter, and consequently I make it clear at the outset that I am not speaking as a Cabinet Minister but in the way in which any member would address himself to this subject. I think this Bill could have been more properly introduced in another place. Although the Constitution provides the right to initiate legislation in this Council, it is a recognized practice, at least from the Government's side, not to introduce contentious legislation in this Chamber and anything suggestive of this would be quickly taken up by members. I wish to congratulate Mr. Cudmore on his speech explaining the measure. He spoke dispassionately, giving us a great deal of history, and it was quite apparent that he had devoted a great deal of research to the subject. I would be justified in saying that his speech will provide a background for any debate on this topic for many years. I was very interested in his remarks on the early history of the licensing laws of this State. Indeed, I was carried back to my boyhood days when the old licensing benches existed. I remember that my father was a member of one of them—I think the Midland Licensing Bench—but of course they were abolished by the legislation of 1917.

Possibly all of us could support the ideals stated by the honourable member—freedom, sobriety, proper distribution of hotels and some improvement in the difficulties arising from local option polls as conducted today—but whether a complete scrapping of the present trading hours and local option polls is the correct alternative may give rise to a number of debatable issues. The honourable member quoted at length from reports and gave his personal observations overseas and comparisons with other States in Australia, and I think it is obligatory that we should properly analyze various opinions and endeavour to apply strict

impartiality in consideration of this matter. If I were to offer any criticism it would be that he was inclined to quote examples favourable to his own convictions and to describe any contrary opinion as being unworthy or as that of a fanatic. That is the danger inherent in controversial questions, and yet, on a subject which is so important to the life of the community, if there is one thing we must do it is to endeavour to maintain proper impartiality and respect for any opinion which may be contrary to our own. Although I was too young at the time to remember all the circumstances—and I have not had time to check up on them—I understand that at the time of the 1915 referendum it was the uncompromising attitude of the liquor trade that gave us six o'clock closing. I have been told that the Temperance Alliance was prepared to accept 9 o'clock, but the issue was made a straight out one for a later hour and in consequence, the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of 6 p.m. The referendum covered the hours of 6 p.m., 7 p.m., 8 p.m., 9 p.m., 10 p.m., and 11 p.m. The result was that 56 per cent of those who voted at the poll were in favour of 6 p.m. closing, with 100,418 to 61,362 for 11 o'clock. The only other closing hour that received any kind of support was 9 p.m.—9,865.

It is interesting to note what happened in individual districts. Then we had not the present electoral boundaries, but the old multiple districts. Speaking broadly, however, the vote showed that in Port Adelaide there was a majority of 2 to 1 in favour of 6 p.m. as against 11 p.m. and in the district of Murray, the vote was approximately 2 to 1. Barossa, with a vote of 5 to 3, indicated that as one got out into the rural areas there was not the same concern, apparently, as in the more closely populated areas. Wallaroo voted 4 to 1 for 6 p.m. closing; Port Pirie, coming again to an industrial area, was 2 to 1, but when we got into the country electorates of Newcastle and Flinders, which take in our outer pastoral areas and are less closely populated, the voting was 2,118 to 1,657 in Newcastle and in Flinders, 2,663 to 1,870, which rather indicates that in the less-densely populated areas electors were more inclined to have hotels open because of late shopping nights and they voted for a later hour than 6 p.m. At that time we had late shopping nights on Fridays, when shops were open until 9 p.m., and it was customary for the agricultural communities to make this their main shopping outing for the week, when they did most of their business without interfering with their normal activities. The people

felt that they were entitled to have the hotels open for them to enjoy a little refreshment when they visited the towns.

Mr. Cudmore will probably interpret that as an advocacy of the suggestion for the court to decide alternative hours of trading. In reply, I can only say that if a vote were taken under today's conditions, with shops closing at 5.30 p.m., there would not be the same inducement to produce even as good a vote as that given in 1915. The fact remains that the present conditions were established after other conditions had been given a practical test and rejected by the people when Parliament decided to seek their views. Whether the result was a proper answer or not there can be no doubt that they expressed their own views in regard to hours and, therefore, for anyone to suggest that we know what the people want is mere conjecture and we have nothing to indicate it other than the vote taken on that occasion, followed by votes in other States shortly after, and which have been repeated since, which rather confirms the opinion that the expression of opinion given at that time would manifest itself again today. In 1935, I think I voted for an extension of the closing time from 6 to 6.30 p.m. and I believe that I gave reasons for doing that.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—In 1938 on broken hours.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—My recollection is that I then moved for a closing period from 6.30 p.m. until 8 p.m. for bars and that this Chamber rejected it.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—No.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—On that occasion my amendment was to give a break from 6.30 p.m. until 8 p.m., but I was not game to take it to a division. The Leader of the Liberal Party was then Sir Walter Duncan, now our President, who supported me, whilst the sponsor of the Bill was Mr. Whitford. It was certainly challenged as class legislation, if not by Mr. Whitford at least by the late Mr. E. A. Oates, and was looked on as being a class distinction between people who were on the premises and could be served in a lounge as against the poor, unfortunate worker who might have a stain on his clothes and could not go into the lounge or, if he could, would not be welcome or accepted. The discussion went on to such an extent that Sir Walter Duncan said he had not given the amendment sufficient consideration and withdrew his support. My amendment

was lost. I have not been fortunate in my attempts to obtain Licensing Act reforms. I still believe that there is room for improvement in the Licensing Act. However, it is my intention to refer to the claims made by Mr. Cudmore. I am of opinion that there is a necessity for an alteration of the application of local options, but we should endeavour to do it without flouting the will of the voters who will be affected by any alteration. We recognize polls in the Local Government Act, have been maintained as a skid on local governing bodies in relation to the handling of money. That indicates that we have certain confidence in the opinions of responsible people and we cannot lightly disregard them.

For the purpose of orderly discussion I will comment on Mr. Cudmore's reasons for introducing this Bill. His first was based on his personal observations in England in 1951. I am the least qualified to speak on conditions in England as it has not been my privilege to visit the Old Country. I do not suggest that I do not have ambitions to go there but I suggest that the living, geographic, and climatic conditions of England are very different from ours. Consequently, it does not necessarily follow that what is accepted in that country is the solution of our problems. In South Australia families are, in the main, effectively housed and there are no tenements. In South Australia there is one privately-owned motor car to every six persons and if motor cycles are included there is one motor vehicle to every 3.69 persons. There is a wireless in almost every home, the exact figure being a wireless to every 3.57 persons. People here have not the same need to go to a "local," as inns are referred to in England, to obtain warmth and entertainment. They are available to them in their own homes and I think that is responsible for their expressions of opinion, and they are surely the persons to decide these issues. We should not wish something upon them because somebody has it elsewhere.

The second reason given was the success of later closing in Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia. The honourable member did not say how he assessed the measure of success, but he did say that there was an agitation in Western Australia to extend the hours from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. as operates in Tasmania and Queensland. I suggest that any interested party can start an agitation in the same manner as Mr. Cudmore suggested fanatics can oppose it. It does not necessarily convey any conclusion as to the physical betterment or greater morality of persons in those States.

During my visits to Tasmania and Western Australia I was interested in studying their conditions and my views were supported by a South Australian now resident in Western Australia that nothing had been gained from nine o'clock closing either in relation to a lessening of motor car accidents or to the creation of a wholesome atmosphere in the interests of young people. The "six o'clock swill" was referred to, but there was a swill at eleven o'clock when that hour applied and that condition would probably always obtain when there are insufficient hotels to cater for the customers at closing time. The same applies to the circulation of water through pipes between 5.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. when everybody wants the same service and pressure at the one time.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Is not that an argument for spreading it out?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—Spreading it out is all right, but I am referring to the hours problem related to the swill at closing time. No matter what closing time is decided the same condition will exist. What concerned me in Western Australia was that young men accompanied teenagers, frequently in their coming-out frocks, into the saloons of hotels which were habitated to the exclusion of boarders by S.P. bookmakers who operated on horse racing in the afternoon and continued in possession at night to operate on the trotting. Into that company, where there was no room for myself and two others, came these young girls with their escorts who stayed until 9 o'clock consuming their sherries, and then with the hip flask, which is supposed to be the product of 6 o'clock closing, went away to the functions where their parents expected they would have been earlier. For the honourable member's benefit, I am not introducing sob stuff into this discussion, but merely trying to be practical and relate for members' consideration what I have actually seen. I also claim the same privilege as the sponsor that I have not been approached by any organization—or rather, I have been approached but have refused to interview any organizations regarding this topic. I am stating what I have seen and I hope I am dealing fairly in debate with the matters raised by the honourable member.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Hear, hear!

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The third reason the honourable member gave was the disclosures in the Maxwell inquiry in New South Wales. I do not know whether he has any information on the result of that investigation,

but all that I have seen has been the reports which have filtered through the press, and the only conclusion that I can reach is that the State of affairs discloses administrative weakness rather than lack of opportunity to consume liquor. I think it is generally accepted that hotels in that State are allowed a good deal of latitude in the consumption of liquor on the premises. Whatever the result of that report a referendum as recently as 1947 gave an emphatic negative to any increase of trading hours. I have the figures showing how the people of New South Wales felt in 1916 and again in 1947. At both polls voting was compulsory. In 1916, no doubt benefiting from the experience of an earlier referendum in South Australia, the liquor interests—and I do not speak disparagingly in the way that temperance means wowserism and that liquor interests mean drunkenness—apparently decided, 11 o'clock having been such a failure in South Australia, to organize in favour of 9 o'clock. At least, that is how I interpret the figures. That referendum gave a vote of 347,494 for 6 o'clock closing and 178,842 for 9 o'clock; only about 10,000 votes were distributed over the hours of 7, 8, 10 and 11 p.m. Expressed in percentages it produced a poll of 62 per cent in favour of 6 o'clock and 32.1 per cent in favour of 9 o'clock closing. In the 1947 referendum the option was reduced to 6 p.m., 9 p.m., or 10 p.m. and the figures were:—6 p.m., 1,051,620, or 62.5 per cent of the votes cast; 9 p.m., 26,954; and 10 p.m., 604,833, or 35 per cent. In other words, there was an overwhelming vote of virtually the same percentage as in the referendum taken 31 years earlier—a difference of a mere .5 per cent, indicating that whatever Mr. Justice Maxwell decides no one can say that the people themselves have not expressed their opinion about it.

The fourth reason given by the honourable member was the consideration being given to the Licensing Act in Victoria. The last newspaper report which I read a few days ago stated that the Victorian Premier, Mr. Cain, on his return from England, had said that any alteration in the Act there would cause a riot. I think Mr. Cudmore rather ridiculed that statement. However, it is a statement by a Premier of a State and I suppose we should credit him with just as much sincerity as any other person speaking on this topic. I make these references simply to indicate how we must examine closely any claims established upon meagre references to places beyond our field of jurisdiction. The fifth reason given by

the sponsor was the question of drunken drivers. He made a strong reference to that and claimed that the remedy for drunken driving was an improvement of the licensing laws. I think I am interpreting him fairly on that.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—That is right.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—On this subject one could quote conflicting reports and authorities, but figures do not produce any confirmation that the results in other States even approach that of South Australia. I will quote first the report of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles who, I suppose, would be an acceptable authority to all members. He says:—

Statistics show that South Australia has the lowest road death toll in the Commonwealth compared with the number of motor vehicles registered in each State. There are more vehicles per head of population in South Australia than in any other State and for the year ended June 30, 134 road deaths were reported in South Australia.

I will not quote the figures for all of the States, but for purposes of comparison will confine myself to South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia. They were as follows:—

South Australia, one road death for every 1,542 vehicles.

Tasmania, one road death for every 1,133 vehicles.

Queensland, one road death for every 996 vehicles.

Western Australia, one road death for every 737 vehicles.

The last figure is nearly double that of South Australia and the population of that State is far more scattered. South Australia, the only State which does not have driving tests, has the lowest road death rate.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Would those deaths be attributable to drunken driving?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I have not said so and am simply dealing with the arguments used by Mr. Cudmore who referred to drunken driving as his fifth reason for an alteration of trading hours. There have been later hours in the States I have mentioned and that is the only reason for quoting them. Reverting to my visit to Western Australia, when I was returning from Bridgetown to Bunbury on the Sunday I saw three cars in the bottom of a creek along the road as a result of accidents the night before.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—You are assuming that they were due to drunken driving.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I am assuming what the honourable member assumed and if he made a weak point it is not my job

to apologize for it. I am merely dealing with his fifth reason for advocating later trading hours, namely, that it was the answer to drunken driving. To assist Mr. Anthoney, who asked whether it was due to alcohol, I will quote from a report of an address by Sir Stanton Hicks to a convention of the Australian Section of the Institute of Brewers. He said:—

The average speed of a vehicle in congested streets in some cities was 4 miles an hour in peak periods. In Regent Street, London, one would at any time of the day make better progress on a water buffalo, whilst Adelaide's King William Street and Melbourne's Swanston Street need no words of mine.

That indicates again how futile it is to make comparisons. I am not advocating them but discussing the point raised by the honourable member. When we speak of conditions in England they could be about as comparable with traffic conditions referred to by Sir Stanton Hicks. Police reports rather indicate that fatal accidents due to drunken driving do not present the major problem in road traffic. That view is supported by facts. A police report says:—

Motor cyclists between the age of 17 and 30 who use the Port Road between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays are the most accident prone road users in South Australia. According to statistics for the year ended June 30, the Port Road has the worst accident record of any road in the State, with Anzac Highway next.

Both roads have two-way traffic and it is obviously speed which is the cause of the trouble. Those accidents did not occur after the closing hours of hotels, so that is something which could well be left out of the argument. The sixth reason given by the honourable member was the report of the Social Service Committee of the Church of England in 1951 and the reception it received from the press of this State. One could doubtless obtain reports from other committees in rebuttal, and I suggest that if a Methodist social service committee, for instance, printed a report with opposite views the same publicity would be afforded it through the press. Are we to understand that because somebody gets headlines in the *News* on a subject which will provoke discussion or attract attention any request in question must be granted? Like myself, Mr. Cudmore would be the last to become excited or worried over anything because it received prominence in the press. The final decision on this question must remain the personal responsibility of members, who must make up their minds on the conditions

we have and deal with the temperament of our people and our own problems rather than being influenced by any association or what they have read or seen elsewhere.

I agree that the removal of the embargo which has been placed on the entertainment of visitors is rather irksome. I recall that an attempt was made to alter the situation but it was defeated here because of the suggested difficulties of policing it. It is ridiculous that having given visitors the privileges to which they are entitled and of receiving attention for which they pay when staying at hotels in this State, because one invites a person to dine with others and upon arriving 10 minutes after 6 p.m. for a 6.30 p.m. dinner, and being introduced to others, he cannot, as a non-exempted persons, indulge in a sherry or similar drink and everybody should be refused a drink. That has happened and I think there should be a solution of that problem. The answer is that there should be a little more reasonableness by every interested party. Let us work out something which is a little more sensible and is in the best interests of everybody.

As regards local option polls, I think the greatest anomaly exists in the obtaining of licences for the sale of alcoholic beverages. The position is that polls are held at election times. These can be promoted by persons who wish to obtain an increase or a decrease in the number of licences in a licensing district. All that is necessary is for a certain number of voters to sign a petition asking for a poll and, under the law, it must be held. Petitioners seeking perhaps one additional licence, whether for a hotel, club, or wine shop, frequently overlook the fact that if there is a vote in favour of an increase the law provides that the court may grant an additional one-third of all existing wine licences in the district, even if only one licence is sought. On the other hand, if petitioners ask for a reduction in the number of licences, the number of licences in the district must be reduced by one-third. The reduction is compulsory. On the one hand we have a compulsory reduction, but on the other, where an increase is favoured by the people, it is subject to final decision by the court, which is not consistent.

Mr. Cudmore explained fully how the questions are put at local option polls. Temperance voters naturally do not desire any change, but prohibitionists always desire a reduction in order to bring about abolition. The genuine temperance advocates would not necessarily desire any reduction, rather would they

prefer that things remain as they are. There are two disabilities from their point of view. First of all, any person who wants a new licence can petition for a poll and put everybody to the expense of opposing an increase. It may happen that if the parties are indifferent or hotelkeepers are over-enthusiastic there could be an unwanted vote for a reduction, resulting in a compulsory reduction of one-third, whether it is in the best interests of the town or not. The second objection from the temperance advocate's point of view is that a properly organized campaign by a community that desires a community licence or a returned soldiers' club which wants a licence could achieve that object by carrying a poll on the question with the result that all licences could be increased by one-third. That is not imagination. It happened at Port Pirie when the Associated Smelters' employees wanted a club and a local option poll was held and carried. Not even one hotel licensee opposed it. What was the result? Three more hotel licences were granted, storekeepers' wine licences were increased by two and they could have had a third one, but a local option poll held at the succeeding elections stopped the third, because it was a vote for the *status quo*.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Why did it grant three when only one was required?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The honourable member had better ask the mover of the Bill, who advocates that these matters should be dealt with by the court. It was not imagination or the desire of that unanimous poll of ratepayers for three additional licences or that any increase in the number should take place. The time is opportune to bring both sides together in order to obtain a common-sense agreement and see if some alteration cannot be brought about in the local option system rather than to suggest its complete abolition, in other words, take the franchise away from the people. I think that temperance workers would resist violently if the right were taken from them to decide whether a hotel was to be built in a residential area or not. On the other hand, I do not think that people living at Keswick should decide whether residents of Brighton should have a licensed hotel or not.

Mr. Cudmore stated his objection to smaller districts and the abolition of polls, but a poll is justified, because all ratepayers in a particular area should decide whether they wish to have a hotel or not.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—They can appeal to the court.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—That is another point. Provision is made in the Act for petitions and memorials but nothing is as effective as a poll to ascertain the wishes of the people. Some people are presented with a petition and they sign it, then they are approached by a person with a counter petition, and not wishing to be considered as wowsers or to hurt anyone, they sign that. That is one of the weaknesses of human nature. However, people are expected to express their opinions and their own ideas when they vote through the ballot box. I agree with Mr. Cudmore that the 587 hotels in this State would be adequate if they were properly distributed. They are completely out of balance with today's requirements and I have obtained a few figures at random to illustrate that point. There are three hotels at Willunga and three at Whyalla—two at Goolwa and two at Murray Bridge—nine at Gawler, three at Naracoorte—three at Salisbury and one at Renmark—five at Kapunda, one at Barmera—five at Burra, one at Berri—two at Cowell, one serving the Goodwood—Goodwood Park area—two at Melrose, and one at Hyde Park. The position is ludicrous. Hate and venom should be removed from this discussion and all interests should come together and sensibly endeavour to make a common-sense approach to the problem. I recently visited the South-East and performed a function late on Sunday afternoon and it was necessary for me to return home early the next morning. I always like to enjoy a comfortable sleep—and members of Parliament are as much entitled to that as anyone—but I could not obtain accommodation as the hotels were all legitimately booked out and there were no boarding houses. If we expect tourists, ordinary conveniences must be provided and the provision of accommodation should not be prevented by an outmoded system. This problem should be approached without bias on either side.

The Hon. E. Anthony—Are you contending that there should be an inquiry into the matter?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—No; I have provided the information.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—What is the solution of the problem?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The problem will not be overcome by throwing bricks.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—No bricks have been thrown here over this measure.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I do not suggest there have, but from press reports it is obvious that there is much disagreement between temperance organizations and the liquor interests. If that could be expunged and a sensible approach made to the problem, we might overcome our domestic social differences. The objective of the League of Nations was to create reasonable and sensible approaches to problems and that is what I desire to see in this matter. I am unable to support the Bill in its existing form, but I would plead that after 40 years' bickering some reasonable approach should be made in an endeavour to solve this problem in a way which will not deprive the public of its rightful franchise. Their opinions must be considered and if we are to decide the matter by local option it should be done by the vote of the people concerned and not by the prejudiced vote of outside interests.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—At the outset I express my appreciation to both speakers who have preceded me for the comprehensive and able manner in which they have dealt with this vexed subject. They both stated their cases remarkably well. It has been an accepted and desirable principle that there should be control of the sale of liquor and I do not think we desire to get away from that principle. On the other hand, the granting of licences places a responsibility on people to see that their businesses are carried out in a manner acceptable to the public. Although I have not heard of any organized demand for a Bill on this nature, it is the responsibility of members to examine all aspects of the matter and possible repercussions which may follow, and to fully consider the various points raised to ensure that justice is done to all sections of the community and that the privileges granted to some sections can be available to other sections which desire them. In common with other members I have received numerous letters from social workers and social and temperance organizations requesting that I oppose any alteration to the present law. As a member of Parliament I visit many country towns and also stay in the city and it is frequently necessary for me to reside at hotels. Consequently, I have gained some knowledge of hotel conditions but nothing I have seen persuades me that it is desirable to accept the suggested hours. The people have become accustomed to what is termed the "six o'clock swill," and I do not think that any legislation will overcome it. However, I do believe there

are many other ways in which the Act may be improved. I do not know that the present allocation of hotels accentuates the position and I would scarcely dare to suggest that there should be more hotels. However, there are occasions when people crowd into hotels and overflow on to footpaths and lawns drinking at certain hours. People have been educated to the present closing time and at six o'clock the publican announces that the bar is to be closed and frequently policemen are present to ensure that it is. The very basis of the Act is responsible for that and I can see no way whereby it can be altered. I would oppose any attempt to stagger hours in different districts. I have in mind country dairying districts particularly and Mr. Cudmore has made provision whereby the hours can be varied. Why should we alter hours in country districts where the people want to retain the present afternoon trading hours? People engaged in dairying particularly come into the town in the afternoon and go home about 4.30 p.m. to milk their cows, and it is desirable that they should have the facilities the present hours afford them.

I have tried to gain some decisive lead from statistics with regard to the incidence of drunkenness from the various hours of closing hotel bars within the Commonwealth, but I can find nothing that would point to any advantage in any particular closing time. The greatest number of convictions for drunkenness is in a six o'clock trading State, and the lowest number in a 10 o'clock closing State. On the other hand, the second greatest number is in a 10 o'clock closing State and the second lowest in a six o'clock closing State, so statistics do not give us any guide. However, I believe that it is desirable in the interests of the family life of this country to provide that the breadwinner should continue his way home from work for his evening meal. In a country which has shift workers it is most difficult to lay down that all hotels shall close at the same hour of the day. I have on many occasions had dinner at hotels and I am firmly convinced that it is desirable to provide a better opportunity for people to dine at hotels. The hours of 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. do not afford a full opportunity for those who desire to dine at hotels and partake of liquor during the meal. Consequently I would be prepared to favour a later hour for the serving of liquor with dinner and if nine o'clock, or even a later hour were decided on, I think it would be a move in the right direction and would meet the desires of a great many people.

Mr. Cudmore said that this Bill provides for a reduction of trading hours, but I do not think it would make any difference in the volume of drinking. With our fast growing population we must be prepared to consider provision of further hotels or, at least, a redistribution of those we have. There is perhaps a great difficulty growing up which will have to be met some day if not now, namely, with regard to club licences. At present throughout the country there are organizations of returned soldiers who are determined and anxious to build clubs, and we know that their desire in most cases is to have bars associated with those clubs. Just what their powers are under the Act is difficult to assess, but it is highly desirable that legislation should be enacted that will make their position clear. If licences are to be granted to those organizations who are prepared to establish clubs, of course we have another generation growing up which will be fully entitled in a few years time to similar privileges, and therefore it is the responsibility of Parliament to determine what is desirable and legislate accordingly.

Both Mr. Cudmore and the Chief Secretary have clearly stated the position in regard to local option. It seems to me to be entirely undesirable that a limited number of people who have the facilities offered by half a dozen hotels should be able to preclude others from having at least one hotel in their centre. I cannot suggest an actual remedy, but I would be prepared to leave it to a judge of the court to decide, upon application, whether a hotel was desirable or necessary to serve any particular community, and if so to grant a licence.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—What about those who would lose them? Would you leave that to the court?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—Yes. I know there are areas anxious to have hotels. Perhaps the Minister had in mind a district in the upper South-East which desires one, and I think the people of any district are the best judges of the necessity or otherwise. I would stress the point that no organization or no body of people seems willing to do anything about providing accommodation unless they have an accompanying liquor licence, and people of those districts who are prepared not only to finance but to conduct a hotel as a community effort should receive some encouragement and be granted a licence, subject to the approval of a judge.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—Where is the licence coming from?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—That is in the hands of Parliament. As a country representative I do not want to say that the people of, say, Norwood have too many hotels and that other suburbs have not enough. It is for Parliament to decide whether it will give power for that purpose and to appoint someone to exercise that power, but I believe that either the transfer of licences or the granting of new ones is in some cases highly desirable. In most districts that have been prevented from obtaining the facilities they require it is becoming a practice to obtain liquor by the barrel and that is possibly proving a greater menace than a properly licensed house. From that aspect alone it is desirable not to try to prevent people from having facilities which, when all is said, are so readily available to the great majority. We all accept the fact that over-indulgence in liquor is bad. On the other hand, we want to provide proper facilities for the public generally and not only a section of it. I think that a community hotel, or a hotel conducted by a family, is by far the best for the sale of intoxicating liquor; far better than a string of hotels owned by organizations and leased to licensees. Such hotels give better and more satisfactory accommodation and provide greater competition for the good of the public. Many of our hotels, although quite prepared to supply liquor *ad lib*, are not nearly so ready to take in the normal boarder who desires a meal and a bed. That is an aspect of the law which should be tightened up so that licensees may be compelled to carry out the full provisions of their licence and supply board and lodging. We have had assurances that this will be done, but anyone who continuously finds it necessary to stay at hotels almost invariably finds it difficult to obtain accommodation. I do not say that the answer is in more hotels. I think I have stated pretty plainly what my view is, namely, that we do not want to carry on drinking from 4.30 p.m. to 10 o'clock; that it is desirable to make a break at 6 p.m. as the public has been educated to do; that it is desirable in the interests of those whose habits render it necessary to have an increase in the hours of permits for liquor for dinner and I believe we want to overhaul the methods by which we shall have more hotels or transfers. I would be quite happy to do away with local option polls as now conducted. I feel that we have a very unusual alliance between those who are working for social reform and temperance, and

licensed victuallers, on the other hand, who are working to get a monopoly of the trade they now enjoy. It is an undesirable state of affairs and consequently I feel that it is undesirable to carry on local options, and that it would be better to have a decision by a court. Consequently I would support that or some other form of local option such as, perhaps, the old local Government benches which, I think, would be far more generally acceptable and reasonable than the present House of Assembly districts. Interests are so scattered in Assembly districts, and one town may have ample licences whereas others a few miles away have none; consequently I would be prepared to vote for the second reading and, provided the amendments for which I have expressed my support are carried, vote for the amended Bill.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I wish to make it clear at the outset that I am expressing only my personal opinions. I have been elected to Parliament on a policy I have always followed and I am allowed to use my discretion on social questions. I have not discussed my attitude towards the Bill with my colleagues. In introducing the Bill Mr. Cudmore asked that it should not be treated as a Party question. I support the second reading and, will finally determine my attitude when I see what the measure contains after it leaves Committee. I have an open mind and want to listen to the debate before making my decision.

I have received a number of letters from interested persons, but they are all one-way traffic. They have been respectful and courteous and have expressed their opinions and I have a perfect right to express mine. I shall not make a pledge to any individual on my attitude towards the Bill. I refuse to give anybody, either on this or on any other question, an assurance about my intentions when I do not know what the Bill contains. How do I know what it will contain when it leaves Committee and how do I know that some attempt will not be made to increase the hours to 11 p.m.? How do I know that an attempt will not be made to do away with the alterations suggested? Again, how do I know that attempts will not be made to prevent a returned soldiers' club serving liquor until 11 p.m. or to do away with canteens at Radium Hill, Woomera, and Leigh Creek? Any member who pledges himself on a Bill without knowing its contents is not doing justice to his proposition.



Many Bills cannot be recognized after they pass through Committee. No man in Parliament that I know has introduced more private Bills than I have, and most of them have been slaughtered, but I have always pleaded with members to agree to the second reading so that the Bill can be considered in Committee. Any Bill is worthy of consideration when a member goes to the trouble of introducing it. I compliment Mr. Cudmore on having introduced this measure and the Chief Secretary on the most reasonable way in which he submitted his case. My attitude on this type of legislation has not changed; I have already opposed two referendums on this question and I will oppose a third. The argument has been used that people, by their vote, reached a decision 38 years ago. Only one member who was in Parliament 38 years ago is in Parliament today—the Speaker of the House of Assembly. I and only four other members who were present when the two referendums were taken on this question are left—Sir Walter Duncan, Sir Wallace Sandford, the Chief Secretary, and Mr. Cudmore.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Not at the time of the referendum.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Members opposed the referendum. I opposed it because I am an elected representative of Parliament and it is my responsibility to deal with legislation submitted to it. In agreeing to referendums we are taking away the dignity and lowering the prestige of Parliament. Will members who support a referendum on this matter support one if I give notice of a Bill for electoral reform and will they support a Bill for a referendum for a lottery or agree to a referendum on the question of whether there should be betting shops at Port Pirie? I can recall a South Australian, a member of the Federal Parliament, who refused to accept an increase in his salary unless the matter was referred to the people. He was defeated at the following elections and then applied for retrospective pay, but it was denied because of an amending measure which was introduced in the concluding session of Parliament. Good-meaning and respectable people say that we should not alter a law without a referendum. In 1934, some people denied me the right of carrying a motion for a referendum when Parliament had decided a question by voting in the same way as they decided this one. When the Education Bill providing for bible reading in State schools was introduced into

Parliament in 1934 I moved that when it was read a second time it be an instruction to the Committee that it have power to add a clause providing that the Act should not operate unless a referendum were taken and the result was in favour of the provision, but the motion was defeated. My only supporters were Messrs. Anderson, Oates and Whitford. I was denied the right of a referendum, on that occasion, so I will oppose one on this occasion.

If we are to have a referendum on one matter we should have it on another and give people outside the right to decide how Parliament is to be run. Every three years they have an opportunity of saying who will be members of Parliament. We have a duty to perform, and should express our opinions and have sufficient confidence to say that Parliament is the proper place to decide matters.

Many years ago there were large mining towns in South Australia, but today mining is defunct. There are numbers of hotels in those towns and I am in favour of an authoritative body deciding the question of transferring those licences to places where they are more required. I am opposed to the granting of additional licences. Three hotels were closed in Port Adelaide when the Harbors Board acquired certain land. There are nine hotels on one side of the Port Road, but on the eastern side there is no hotel for a distance of seven miles. Despite some of the letters I have received, obviously written by prohibitionists who have a right to their opinions, there are as many honourable men in the liquor industry as elsewhere who do not want to break the law. They are respectable citizens. There is a demand for better provisions at hotels and lack of such provisions is responsible for many of the scenes which occur today, particularly in industrial areas. There is much in the Bill with which I disagree, but I am prepared to listen to any amendments which may be submitted in Committee. There are many anomalies in the Act. Other speakers have referred to the difficulties of entertaining guests in hotels and consideration should be given to lengthening the hours in that regard. I could invite a hotel licensee to my home on a Sunday afternoon and provide him with any refreshment he wanted, but if I visit him I must explain my reason for being there and I dare not drink because I would be breaking the law. Is that reasonable legislation? A sailor, whose home port is Port Adelaide, returns on his ship which through lack of berthing facilities is delayed at the anchorage until six o'clock. He cannot obtain a drink because

he is not a *bona fide* traveller. A barman is not permitted to have a drink after six o'clock. These anomalies should not exist. In this and other directions, I will give my support to a Bill which will be more reasonable than the present Act. Members listened to two informative speeches this afternoon and a fine one last Wednesday, but as I have previously stated, this is a Committee Bill and one to which we should give close and serious consideration when in Committee. I support the second reading.

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

#### FOOD AND DRUGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, 1908-1950. Read a first time.

#### MENTAL DEFECTIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed

#### SUPPLY BILL (No. 2.).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 25. Page 466.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill provides for a further supply of £6,000,000 to the Public Service for the year ending June 30, 1954. It is similar to Supply Bill (No. 1) and the usual safeguards are provided for any increases in salaries which may be awarded by tribunals or may occur through quarterly adjustments. It is now customary for the State to deal in millions and I support the second reading.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE (Central No. 2)—Members commented on the largeness of the amount when discussing Supply Bill (No. 1). As Parliament is likely to adjourn for the Royal Show it is necessary for the Government to be supplied with finance. The Government is sometimes able to continue from the first Supply Bill until the Budget without a further supply, but as it does not seem possible and Government services must continue, and the usual safeguards are provided, I support the second reading.

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

#### PASTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from House of Assembly and read a first time.

#### PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 25. Page 471.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—Clause 4 authorizes the Treasurer to borrow £25,118,000 and clause 9 provides authority for the Treasurer to borrow additional sums if further Loan money becomes available during the year. The amount asked for at the recent Loan Council was not forthcoming but if by chance—and this sounds like a lottery—the Loan market should yield more the Treasurer is empowered by this Bill to accept the State's shares of the excess. According to the Government's representative:—

The Government has every reason to be pleased with its financial position. It has emerged from a period when loan funds were extremely short without having to dismiss its employees and without having to resort to cancellation of contracts. At the same time it has been able to make considerable progress towards the completion of many of its urgent capital works.

I say, however, that there are fewer employees in the Public Service than there were 12 months ago. It is true that the Government has not dismissed any, but the places of those who have left have not been filled. I also challenge the statement that no contracts have been broken. I know of cases where the Government was called upon to pay exorbitant prices for importations. Some of the contracts I refer to may have been broken by the other party, but I know that it is not correct to say what has been said in this and the other place. Our public debt has increased in 10 years by £88,000,000, but are we getting full value in the form of development from that huge sum? Several items mentioned in the Loan Bill have been there for some years, particularly water schemes. Food production has not been increased. The demand has been met in several respect overseas. I was rather concerned—I will not say amused—about the Treasurer's statement when introducing the measure in another place that "We want more towns with a population of over 10,000 and many more with a population of between 5,000 and 10,000, but we cannot hope to achieve this unless we provide services to those towns." I want to know what industries the Government expects to establish in such towns. Is there to be a repetition of what I have referred to in this Council quite recently where, instead of getting people out to the country, they are coming to the city? I refer to the number of men who

have been put off from a local industry at Balaklava. Is that a sample of the way to increase population in country towns?

The Hon. F. T. Perry—The honourable member could have cited Port Pirie and Whyalla.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—And Port Augusta.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly, but what of Kapunda, Moonta, Wallaroo, and many other towns? I want to know how the Treasurer proposes to increase the population of our country towns. He must have some suggestions and I would like to know what they are, and I therefore accept his statements with considerable reserve. The Chief Secretary said, regarding our industries:—

“The basis of the problem is related to economics; whether the purchasers desire wheat or flour is something which they will decide. Today we are facing a new set of conditions and the sooner we realize it and not try to mislead ourselves that we are able to dictate to other countries, and realize the fundamentals of the problem, the better.”

Behind that statement, and linked with another, the word “production” is hidden. In other words, we have to reduce costs in order to compete in overseas markets. The conciliation commissioner, in making an award affecting the industry to which I have referred, said:—

The gristing cost per ton of flour is small compared with the cost of production in other industries. Depreciation of plant and machinery is low and I would venture to say that cost of production in the industry is less than in any other manufacturing industry.

Therefore, we should encourage this kind of industry and when the Treasurer speaks of towns of 10,000 people I would like to know what was in his mind.

Most of the other matters referred to in the Bill are works which have been in operation for years. Over £5,000,000 is provided in this Bill for water supplies. Included in the list is the Manum to Adelaide main, the South Para Reservoir, the Warren Reservoir, and many other schemes, some of which do not pay axle grease. If we are to continue to build up our Loan account at the rate of £88,000,000 in 10 years without making provision to meet the debt, we will find ourselves in the bankruptcy court.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Is not that covered by the amortization arrangements?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. Our costs are continually mounting. We are giving these facilities to country people—and quite rightly—but what provision are we making to meet the debt? We cannot go on like this.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—There is a sinking fund to meet the debt.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That does not alter the fact that some of our services are not paying.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—I agree with you there.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The sum of £3,000,000 is provided for railways, but what are we getting for that expenditure?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Much more than we are from the tramway system at the moment.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is beside the question. The honourable member will probably have something to say about the £600,000 to be granted to the Tramway Trust, but my point is—and I cannot stress it too often—where is the extra development coming from? Does the Electricity Trust pay enough for its water supply, and other industries likewise. These are things which should be looked into. Consider the question of education. We have seen a good deal in the press about the Ministry of Education being removed to the House of Assembly. I hope it will not be taken from this place because the Minister has done a very good job. We have done much for education in the last four or five years, but still we cannot cope with the demand. We are still compelled to build portable classrooms. Many people object to them, but we cannot spend, with our limited income, any more on education than we are today.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—But they are excellent classrooms.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They are, but they are only temporary structures and it was thought a few years ago that it would be possible to do away with them. However, population has grown so rapidly that this has not been possible. The department is to be congratulated on its progress in building new schools in the last few years.

There are many other items on which one could speak, but it would be a mere repetition of what has been said on previous occasions. We have a Loan Bill before us and it portrays what the Government proposes to do. We can only offer suggestions, and once more I suggest that the Government should examine very closely the position of the water supply department, because, whereas the metropolitan district showed a profit of 10 per cent a few years ago it is scarcely paying expenses today, and we cannot continue in this fashion. The amount set down for the Harbors Board is £950,000, an increase of £50,000 over last year. Anybody who visits Port Adelaide

today must be astounded at the work that has been completed and it is only a matter of time when we will be able to say that Port Adelaide is one of the most modern ports in the Commonwealth. The sum of £115,000 has been spent on the purchase of land to improve Port Adelaide shipping and harbour facilities at a cost of £20,000,000. The money can only be spent in portions. The coal gantries at Osborne, which were designed to handle half a million tons of coal a year, are now handling 872,000 tons and in a short time are expected to handle 1,000,000 tons. It will take the Government at least 10 years to complete works which have been recommended by the Public Works Committee and I am aware that it will be impossible for the necessary money to be found under present circumstances.

The sum of £20,000 has been set aside for the fishing industry, but the Government should consider controlling fish prices. It is not the men who catch the fish who receive a reasonable return for their labour. Fish can be bought for 2s. 3d. a pound on Kangaroo Island, but it costs 11s. a pound in the shops in Adelaide. I would not mind so much if the fishermen, who have to go to sea in all weathers, received a reasonable price. I support the second reading.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD (Central No. 2)—The Public Purposes Loan Bill gives effect to the Loan Estimates which were passed by another place and to that extent can be said to be identical with other Bills dealing with Loan Estimates. As a matter of fact it is only within a week of just a year since this House received the Bill for the 1952-53 period. On this occasion, however, the Bill is not precisely the same as other Loan Bills; last year's Bill contained 12 clauses but this year there are 13. Clause 12 covers two things not previously dealt with in loan appropriations. Now, although South Australia was a signatory for a long period to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, the State did not operate under it but is doing so now, and £4,500,000 will be credited to South Australia this year to be used for the building of houses. The clause deals with the authority to expend the money received from the Commonwealth. It has been held, I understand, that as this money has been voted for expenditure by the State the control of expenditure by the State shall be governed by the State Parliament. The amount the State is obliged to spend, in accordance with the agreement, is subject to State appropriation and has been

included in the Loan Estimates and also in the Bill so that it will be clearly understood that this money is being borrowed by the State and used for this purpose.

Clause 12 also introduces another new matter relating to money made available under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Agreement. Previously this money has been automatically voted to the Highways Fund. To make the position clear the clause sets out that the money voted for housing purposes and the money which becomes available under the Aid Roads Agreement shall be shown in the Appropriation Bill and duly passed. I understand the Treasury has supported this view and approves of it. The Bill has been made retrospective to regularize payments to the Highways Fund.

When the Chief Secretary was delivering his second reading speech yesterday he drew attention to clause 9 relating to the power of the Treasurer to borrow additional sums if further Loan money is available. It is, however, not a new clause in this type of Bill, in fact, the Bill of a year ago—to which I referred earlier—possessed a clause identical with clause 9. In the last few years the Loan Council has frequently voted money in excess of the amount that can be obtained from the market, but, as will be remembered, the last Commonwealth Loan was over-subscribed by £3,000,000, and that amount became available for distribution. Clause 9 enables the State to accept its share of over-subscription. The position now is that the Commonwealth Government has promised to support loans this year up to £200,000,000 and the Loan Estimates of the States and the Commonwealth have been based on that amount.

I pay a warm compliment to the Chief Secretary for the attitude he adopted and maintained at the meeting of the Loan Council during the recent absence of the Premier overseas. South Australia felt that her affairs were in safe hands when championed by Mr. McEwin and at the same time our position and status as members of the Commonwealth were being wisely and in a statesmanlike manner upheld and protected. The Premier and the Chief Secretary have to sit round a table whereas of the six States the other five are in the hands of Governments of opposite political colour to them but South Australia can, with complete confidence, leave the matter in their capable hands.

As all members are aware the States of Australia cannot finance capital works from revenue. They have to go to the Loan Council, which borrows the money from the public, and

as over the last two years or so the public has been disinclined to lend all the money required it has been necessary to curtail the programmes.

Less than 120 years ago, not very long—only about three generations—South Australia's population of whites numbered about 500, but in the intervening period its development and expansion have been phenomenal. Not only has land been cleared, roads, railways, and telephone and telegraph systems established, but towns and cities have come into being and the population of the State is now over 750,000. Only as recently as the outbreak of World War II. the population was just under 600,000 yet last year it had grown to 751,000. In other words our numbers increased during the last 10 years by 20 per cent. The South Australian public debt was £109,000,000 at June 30, 1952, and in 1947 it had increased to £110,000,000. In 1950, it was £133,000,000; 1951, £148,000,000; and last year £173,000,000. Our duty is to see that this Loan money is invested so as to secure a return which will directly, or indirectly, cover the interest, sinking fund, and management costs of the fund involved. It is frequently suggested that there are investments which are losing but it would certainly be better to regard them as being, indirectly, producing. A benefit may be quite as real, if it is a sound indirect benefit, as a direct benefit. That can only be tested through time—not necessarily a long time—by the buoyancy of the revenue and expenditure and the standard of living enjoyed by the people. When we have regard to what has been done in our own State, as well as in other States, in a relatively short space of time compared with the progress of other countries, I do not think we have much of which to be ashamed. In addition to the products consumed, both primary and secondary, and the services rendered to one another by the individuals, our State has developed an overseas export trade of which we may well be proud. In 1950-51 South Australia exported commodities valued in Australian currency at over £107,500,000 and in 1951-52 at over £97,250,000. In 1950-51 more than half the total exports in value were shipped direct to British countries and last year nearly two-thirds of the value went to British countries.

A reminder of the value of Britain as a customer is surely contained in these figures. I think it will be plainly seen that this State, besides producing or selling goods to other parts of Australia, is also in no small measure

supplying overseas markets and doing its share in helping to increase Australian credits in other lands.

Before resuming my seat I think this is the place for reference to be made to the value of the existence and operations of the Loan Council and its aid to the security of the States. During this debate an oblique reference was made to the sinking fund and it is good to remind ourselves that the Loan Council came into being over 25 years ago and there can surely be no doubt as to the value of the service it has given to Australia.

The Hon. E. Anthony—It must be feeling a little shaky now.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—Not a bit, and if the honourable members is interested he will find many reference books in the Parliamentary Library.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Are you championing that financial agreement?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—It was one of the best of the many good things the Bruce-Earle Page Government did.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Didn't it take away the State rights?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—It provided a degree of security which has brought about an ever-increasing high standard of living.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Wasn't it brought about because the States were competing with the Commonwealth overseas?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—I have no doubt that drew attention to it because each State was anxious to get a little more and it has still not outgrown that habit according to the experiences of the Chief Secretary and the Premier at meetings of recent date. With regard to sinking funds, we are apt to forget that there were two systems. All loans that were issued up to 1927 had a sinking fund whereby the State which enjoyed the debt invested 5s. per centum of the debt and the Commonwealth Government a similar percentage to create a redemption fund. There was another fund at a later date where the States paid 5s. per cent and the Commonwealth and other creditors 2s. 6d. per cent. In each case in a little over 50 years this snowballing sinking fund would extinguish the debt. Behind all State and Commonwealth loans stands the National Debt Commission. Sinking funds are continually operating and these are contributed to by the States individually and by the

Commonwealth. I was pleased to note the ring of optimism in the Chief Secretary's voice as he drew towards the conclusion of his second reading speech. I am sure we all approve of the steps being taken to ensure that the expenditure covered by the Bill is wisely and carefully managed. We must receive an adequate return. A few days ago I read a speech made in one of the Eastern States which contained some home truths well worth remembering. It referred particularly to the inflationary tendency that has been developing at an alarming rate.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—And is still developing.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—Yes, but as the person who made this speech said:—

In the past year we have all been relieved to observe the gradual tapering off of rising prices and we hope that the remainder of this year may see further progress towards stability. Now is the time to say something about the growing attitude that once the price level appears to have been reached reasonable stability all will be well and that we will need to think no more of the problems of inflation. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. In essence, inflation occurs when the supply of goods and services is exceeded by the money available to the purchaser. The situation can arise from a variety of causes and the highest degree of technical knowledge, political skill and, in addition, restraint on the part of both Governments and the people are required if equilibrium is to be kept. We have seen quite often how a circumstance most favourable in itself can play a part in causing a rapid rise in prices. I refer to the effect of the purchasing power released in Australia by the very high prices obtained for exports in 1951. There is surely a lesson to be learned from this. One can say, therefore, that any programme even though directed towards the most desirable social end, defeats its own purpose if in its operation it results in a rapidly-rising level of prices. Repeated bouts of rapid inflation mean finally loss and distress to great numbers of people and will defeat or render futile any effort towards such essential objectives as an increasing standard of living, social security and a high level of employment. These matters are only partly problems for Governments. They are also our individual problems and we should all seek an intelligent understanding of them. If we should fail and inflation run riot it will not be only savings which are in danger, but the whole of our democratic institution.

The Bill before us deals with the investment of loan money with a view to continuing the development of the country and we should have, I think, no reason to fear that the progress of the past will not continue. I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—I subscribe wholeheartedly to the sentiments expressed in the latter part of my colleague's statement that supply will overtake demand and thus bring about that equilibrium that everybody desires. When listening to the honourable gentleman stating how prosperous we were I thought that probably at no time in the State's history was it more imperative that our people should be meeting a greater amount of the expenses of government than they are. My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in last year's report by the Auditor-General where he mentions the same thing:—

The steeply-rising burden on the taxpayer of the functions of government . . . have resulted mainly from—

(a) the substantially increased costs of social services which, for 1951-52, cost £12 9s. 11d. per head of the population compared with £6 9s. 7d. in 1947-48.

(b) the policy of the Government of increasing only some of the charges for services rendered by it, and then to an extent insufficient to match the increasing costs of those services.

That comment applies pretty generally to all our departments, but there was never a time in our history when the producers, at any rate, were in a better position to meet the increasing costs of these services. The Auditor-General continues:—

This policy is clearly reflected in the case of public utilities in which the burden on the taxpayer, amount to £4 4s. 1d. per head of the population in 1947-48, had increased to £8 19s. 4d. per head in 1951-52.

I do not wish to cover the ground already traversed by other speakers regarding the rapidly-growing national debt. It has reached the huge sum of, I think, £176,000,000 for a population of a little over 750,000—a very heavy per capita debt.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Would you gauge that on expenditure or on the progressive work that has been carried out?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I know that a great deal of progressive work has been done, but one would need to be very ingenuous to think that anyone could run a business on the same lines as the Government. Private industry would not last a week under the conditions under which the Government has to function.

I have always had, and still have, a very high opinion of the work of the State Bank, which was set up for the purpose of assisting people to build their own homes. It has done an excellent job with the facilities at its disposal and I contend that the State Bank builds solidly-constructed homes of either brick or

stone which compare favourably with the Housing Trust's homes, which are of much lighter material. I am sorry that figures are not available to show the relative costs of the two institutions. I am aware that the State Bank home is not so fully equipped as the trust home, which is turned out ready for occupation by the tenant, whereas the State Bank home purchaser has to supply many things himself. I have always regretted that the agency of the State Bank has not been used to a greater extent for building houses for the people.

I now want to touch on some of the losses of various Government instrumentalities. The Auditor-General's report shows that the accumulated losses on loans for fencing and water piping since the inception of the scheme in 1938 amount to £107,565. Loans for vermin-proof fencing show a total deficit on operations of £222,632.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—You do not suggest mal-administration.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am not suggesting anything, but with ordinary care I should imagine that a loss of that sort might have been avoided. Much could be said about railways. I have held the opinion for a long time that the railways should be brought under the control of an efficient board. I am totally opposed to a single Railways Commissioner managing a huge department of that sort, which is not only a spending department, but revenue-earning as well. A more efficient set-up would be a capable businessman at the head, with two other members to constitute a board.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Would you agree to putting all transport under a transport board?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—That might be a very good thing because it would bring in the question of road transport. Whereas there are very heavy losses on railway operations and the department requires considerable financial boosting every year, private transport operations seem to be able to show handsome profits.

They give good service to the public and the Government might well consider handing some part of the franchise of the Tramways Trust to private enterprise. The public would then get a good service and it would not be such a heavy burden on the taxpayers.

This Loan Bill is one of the biggest we have ever faced and I want to pay a tribute to the Chief Secretary for the stand he took at the Loan Council meeting. We were very proud of his attitude and the fight he put up against the five other Labor-controlled States who were all clamouring for more than the Commonwealth could find. I appreciate the establishment of the Loan Council which has served a most useful purpose in preventing that competition when States go on the Loan market for money. Although semi-governmental concerns are on the market now—

The Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford—They have to get permission from the Loan Council.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—It is the thin edge of the wedge. It is only a few weeks ago that the Electricity Trust of South Australia was on the loan market for money. This entry into the loan market seems to be an attempt to undermine the Loan Council. I am pleased to note an amount has been provided to complete the work of duplicating the Goodwood-Marino line. That work has been in progress for the past three years, but had it been let to a private contractor it would have been finished in three months. About six months' work has been done on the job and much mess created and I am pleased to see that another start is to be made. Residents are hopeful that by next year they will be able to derive some benefit from the work. I support the Bill.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.5 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, August 27, at 2 p.m.