

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, November 4, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—In view of the number of Bills on the Notice Paper in another place—namely, 19—and as I understand a considerable number have still to be brought down will the Government consider the advisability of introducing some of them in this place in order to obviate a rush towards the end of the session?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—The position should improve very rapidly now that the Budget has been dealt with, and I think Bills will be coming forward. I can think of a couple which could be appropriately introduced here and that will be considered when dealing with the limited amount of legislation still to be brought forward.

GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—It has been reported to me that there is an infestation of grasshoppers on Eyre Peninsula between Port Augusta and Whyalla. Will the Attorney-General ascertain if that report is correct and, if so, state what steps are being taken to combat the menace?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—I will bring the question under the notice of the Minister of Agriculture and obtain a report.

RECONSIDERATION OF BILLS IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—In view of the decision you gave yesterday, Mr. President, concerning the reconsideration of Bills, I would like to know for future guidance whether it is within the right of members to move for a clause to be reconsidered without the Chairman leaving the Chair.

The PRESIDENT—I think my decision yesterday was correct. The clause had not been amended while the Bill was going through Committee and therefore could be reconsidered.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not questioning your ruling, Sir, but as this appears to be a departure from practice I would like the matter cleared up for the future guidance of all members.

The PRESIDENT—I refer the honourable member to Standing Order No. 303 which, I think, makes it clear. Standing Order 303 provides:—

When a Bill has been gone through, its re-consideration, in whole or in part, may be moved for the purpose of making amendment or further amendment thereto; but upon such reconsideration no amendment, not being a merely consequent amendment, shall be entertained in respect of words which have been the subject either of a previous amendment or of a proposed amendment unless the latter was withdrawn.

The effect of that is that if a Bill has been amended while going through Committee that amendment or any proposed amendment not withdrawn cannot be amended on reconsideration, but the Committee can reconsider anything else that has not been amended.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Or not discussed by the Committee?

The PRESIDENT—Yes. In support of that I might add that consideration of certain clauses is frequently postponed until after the consideration of other clauses, which is really doing the same thing but without waiting until the end of the Bill.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The clause in question was passed without comment. Am I to understand that if, for example, we are considering a Local Government Bill with, perhaps, a thousand clauses, a member would have the right, without the carrying of a motion to have the whole of those clauses considered again?

The PRESIDENT—No.

INFLAMMABLE OILS ACT.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Some time ago I directed a question to the Chief Secretary in regard to an amendment of the Inflammable Oils Act and he replied that the matter would be considered. Has the Government yet given further consideration to the introduction of amending legislation to remove anomalies in Parts I. and II. of the Act?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—Some consideration has been given the matter and I will bring down a report.

GRANTS TO PRIVATE SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—On September 29 I asked the Minister of Education whether provision would be included in the Budget for grants to private school committees on a pound for pound basis, but his reply was

that I would have to wait until the Budget was introduced. However, there is no line in the Estimates for grants to private schools. Can the Minister say whether there is a fund out of which subsidies could be paid?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—As far as I am aware, no.

PUBLICATIONS DETRIMENTAL TO CHILDREN.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I move—

That in the opinion of this Council it is desirable that the Government should take immediate action to prevent the printing, publication and sale of comic papers, comic strips and other like matter detrimental to the morals of children, and for this purpose, this Council recommends the establishment of an advisory committee to advise the Government from time to time on this matter.

I believe I have the support of every member in submitting this motion, the effects of which transcend Party politics and apply not only to children of the people Opposition members represent, but to children of people represented by Government members. This problem should be discussed in a co-operative atmosphere and a solution should be evolved whereby the printing, publication and distribution of this type of literature may be abolished. I only propose dealing with certain major aspects—the radius covered by the distribution; the effects both moral and intellectual; the location of responsibility and the legal and sales approach to the solution of the problem. Not only have private school committees raised this problem but State school committees have carried resolutions requesting that the State and the Commonwealth Governments take immediate action. Whilst I have heard it said that the responsibility lies principally with the Commonwealth Government, the fact remains that the Commonwealth has not the power, other than through the Customs, to prevent the printing and publication of this insidious literature. Recently the Prime Minister, in reply to a question by Mr. Galvin, M.H.R., said that the responsibility rested with State Governments. I think members will agree that that is so, because in many instances State Governments enjoy greater powers than the Commonwealth in controlling such matters.

This problem has been discussed at Premiers' conferences. Representatives from South Australia recently raised the issue at a Premiers' conference and it was decided that the respective Governments should introduce appropriate legislation or amend existing legislation to

deal with the problem. It has been proved that much of this type of literature, which is to the detriment of Australian children, is coming to Australia through the post. Members would not agree that there should be a censorship of every letter coming to Australia but there is a scheme afoot—whether it be a matrix of an overseas comic or whether a letterpress—to introduce the comics by way of letter post. The Customs Department is impotent to deal with that aspect.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—It would not come in as ordinary mail, surely?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I believe much of it comes through the post at ordinary letter rates. After it has reached its destination it is within the province of the State Government control. This problem has reached such a stage that Larry Cleland Pty. Ltd., the Australian representatives for Fawcett Publications, thought it necessary to publish an advertisement indicating that this salacious literature did not include its comics or children's books. That company agreed that some of the literature coming to Australia was inimical to the best interests of the rising Australian generation. In the *Advertiser* of August 28, 1952, under the heading "Big Increase in South Australian Juvenile Crime. Magistrate's Warning on Operation of Gangs," the following appears:—

Crimes committed by gangs of children in South Australia are a "disquieting feature" of the sharp increase in juvenile crime for the year ended June 30, 1952, says the annual report of the Juvenile Court Magistrate (Mr. W. A. Scales) released by the Attorney-General (Mr. Rudall) yesterday. Broken homes, the lack of home discipline, the attraction of employment outside the home for mothers, and the bad effects of "so-called comics" are blamed for the crime increase. The report calls for "strong efforts to halt the present rise in crime and to break up the gangs which so far have not become violent." This increase is almost entirely attributable to the following offences:—Breaking and entering—a rise of 88 (119 per cent on last year); unlawful use of motor vehicles—a rise of 91 (142 per cent on last year); larceny—an increase of 70 (52 per cent on last year).

Strong efforts are being made in influential quarters to combat the pernicious effects of so-called comics which have a criminal or sexual appeal to children. In nearly every case before the court these periodicals figure as the only type of literature read by the offenders. Attention might also be drawn to the number of films and radio plays dealing with these subjects.

I mention this in support of my contention because it is a report by a person who is constantly dealing with child delinquency in the

courts. This report received prominence on the front page of the *Advertiser* of August 28, 1952, and following that article this leader appeared in the *News*:—

The alarming increase in South Australia's juvenile crime calls for strong counter-measures. Crimes committed by gangs of children helped to lift the number of prosecutions from 506 in 1950-51 to 750 in the year ended June 30. Officials have blamed broken homes, lack of parental discipline, and the bad effects of so-called comics. This newspaper long has advocated the need for swift action to wipe out the pernicious influence of comics glorifying violence and sex.

This matter has been taken up by the two major newspapers in this State, both of which wield an enormous influence. The views expressed in those newspapers are in strict conformity with my proposal. I have young children myself and attempt, and I hope succeed, in regulating the class of literature they read. Two children's publications which are quite satisfactory come readily to mind. One of them is the *Eagle*, which does not glorify crime but provides for young boys an atmosphere of adventure, and indicates to young minds some of the feats of the pioneers of Australia and other parts of the world in developing what we now know as the British Commonwealth of Nations. This publication provides material on which the minds of children can be moulded.

A recent survey made of 800 people in this State between the ages of 14 and 25 revealed that between 90 and 95 per cent were readers of magazines and comics of an undesirable character. Young minds are being moulded in the wrong channel, and after reaching the age of 14, there is still further literature available for them to continue with the pernicious system shaped in the comics. A large number of the people amongst whom the survey was made were regular readers of magazines, others were semi-regular and the rest read intermittently. Honourable members will agree that the effects of such reading can be catalogued into two groups—moral and intellectual. In the moral order such reading has produced an attitude in which the purpose of marriage is sabotaged, and the possibility of reducing divorce figures and of having happy and fruitful marriages and a healthy family life is seriously endangered.

Another serious moral challenge revealed in the publications arose from over-emphasis on crime, especially crimes of violence, and the portrayal of matters of horror and gross cruelty. The glorification of crime has led, or

is leading, to the evolution of an attitude of defiance and disobedience to authority. The logical termination is anarchy and the destruction of the fabric of civilized community life. Under its influence the laws of citizenship, in both their moral and civic reference, are liable to be disregarded by a generation whose minds and ideals have been saturated by crime literature. It has been found that the most prominent result from publications dealing with matters of horror and cruelty has been the successful development of a sadistic outlook on life, reviving the unchristian philosophy that "the weakest must go to the wall." It has also been noticed that this kind of literature produces an abnormal and distorted cynicism, an unsympathetic attitude to human needs, and the exiling of kindness from character. All members realize the cynical views held by some members of the public about members of Parliament and Parliamentary institutions.

In general, all these publications contain, from a moral viewpoint, a dynamic potential of evil and are charged with power to endanger in a serious way the eternal salvation of all who read them regularly, especially youth. Every member in this Chamber has always supported increased grants to State schools and the University, and have made it possible to grant scholarships to various pupils, because we all believe in the necessity for education. I am not suggesting that we should cut the amount down, but we should protect those receiving education by reason of that expenditure from this pernicious literature. In the intellectual order, it has been observed that the habitual reading of such publications is, without doubt, preventing the formation of sound reading habits among the rising generation of Australians. The constant reading of such literature renders it extremely improbable that our youth will develop sensible attitudes to reading, for once caught by the spell of such publications it is unlikely they will turn to a decent book of fiction, or non-fiction. Hence there is a real and sad danger they will grow up largely uncultured, sadly superficial, and intellectually bankrupt.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Does not education counter that sort of reading?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It is supposed to do so, but there is grave danger of its not doing so because this pernicious literature is placed in the hands of children and they seize upon it.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Instinct!

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Would it not be helpful if parents did not give them the money to buy it?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I know that some members will say, perhaps justifiably, that the responsibility rests with the parents, but all that parents can do is to impose some form of censorship in the home. However it is not possible to exercise constant vigilance on the literature that may come into the home or into the hands of children from other children at school. I will probably be asked to locate the responsibility for this literature and my answer will be that in seeking to determine the responsibility for the widespread propagation and reading of such literature the following conclusions should be studied. Firstly, publishers and distributors have a definite responsibility and, secondly, the whole community, from parents to Parliamentarians, must also carry a responsibility in this matter. The condition of affairs uncovered by the recent surveys point unwaveringly to the fact that the moral consciousness of the community regarding the dangers of such publications has been asleep.

The solution is not simple, nor can it be brought about immediately, but I suggest that the following lines of approach offer the most satisfactory hope of success; firstly, the legal approach and, secondly, the sales approach. Perhaps I may be pardoned for expressing a layman's view of the legal aspects of our legislation, but I believe that there are two Acts upon our Statute Book under which some action could be taken, namely, the Children's Protection Act and the Police Act. I understand that in another place an amendment is to be moved in the Police Offences Bill which will give wider powers for dealing with this subject. As regards the legal approach, efforts must be made to so change the present jurisdiction of the relevant Acts as to make it impossible for such literature to be sold. To achieve such legislation, the co-operation of the State and Federal Parliaments is required. It is sincerely hoped that members will see and do their duty in this matter, which transcends party politics and has reference only to the common good. From time to time we have passed legislation making it easier to bring offenders to book and in a like manner the statutes I have mentioned could be amended. However, it cannot be done without the co-operation of State and Federal Parliaments. I said earlier that the Commonwealth Parliament or Govern-

ment was impotent to deal with the correspondence coming in from abroad which contains this copy.

The Hon. E. Anthony—Could not the Postmaster-General's Department do something about it?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I do not think the honourable member would agree to every letter being censored, for that would set up a police State, which I am sure neither he nor I would support, but when laws exist to govern the situation they should be amended and brought into full operation to prevent the sale of these publications.

The Hon. C. D. Rowe—Little would come in by means of letters because it would not be paid for.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The Prime Minister recently, in reply to Mr. Galvin who asked whether the Customs Department could not exercise its powers to deal with this matter, said that it was coming in by way of correspondence.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Was he not referring to its coming in in bulk to news agents?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—A lot of this matter comes in by way of a matrix, at letter rates; from that matrix the printers make up blocks.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—That is what I said; it is sent to news agents.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—No, it is not. It is printed here. The other approach to the problem is through sales. It is realized that an Act of Parliament is not of itself sufficient to solve the problem. An approach of a wider and more fundamental nature is required. This is where the community, irrespective of creed or politics, may be effective. The community must be educated to and made conscious of the grave danger of this undesirable literature. In this alliance of the law and community is a pincer movement capable of overcoming the insidious menace of unhealthy and undesirable literature. I believe that something can be done whereby the large amount we are spending on education can be productive of its purpose, namely, the establishment in Australia of a healthy, self-reliant community of Australian citizens and accordingly I commend the motion to the serious consideration of members.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1246.)

Clause 4 "Exemptions from Act", which the Honourable Sir Wallace Sandford had moved to amend by striking out "three" in new subsection (2)(c) and inserting "two"—reconsidered.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—Among other exemptions, clause 4 provides that if the lessor and lessee of a dwelling-house enter into a lease in writing for a term of three years or more, the Act is not to apply to the lease and, accordingly, it will not be subject to rent control or the provisions restricting the right of the lessor to recover possession. The amendment proposes that the maximum term of the lease to create this exemption should be two years instead of three. The provisions of the clause apply to dwelling-houses which are now subject to tenancy. Other provisions of the clause exempt new houses and houses which have not been let since September 1, 1939. Thus, the particular provision in question contemplates that there is a house in which there is a tenant and the clause then provides, in effect, that the landlord and the tenant can come together and make their own agreement as to what the rent of the house should be. It may be expected that, in the usual case to which this provision will apply, the landlord will want the tenant to agree to pay a greater rent than he is now paying. If the parties agree to a lease of the house for a term the tenant will, of course, by so doing give up the statutory protection he now has relating to the control of rent and the restriction of the right of the landlord to evict him from the premises. For the tenant to give up the protection now given him by the Act, he will require security of tenure for a reasonable period and the intention of the provision is that, by requiring a lease of three years or more, reasonable security is given to the tenant in exchange for the right of the landlord to require agreement to a rent free from control and freedom from the restriction on eviction. It is suggested that, under existing circumstances, to require a three years' lease to secure the proposed exemption is reasonable and that a two-year lease is not sufficient to justify the exemption. It is also quite likely that, by reducing the maximum period of the lease to two years, the effect will run against the landlord.

It should be remembered that, in almost all cases, this provision will operate with regard to a lease agreed upon by an existing landlord and an existing tenant. If the landlord makes a proposal for a lease to a tenant and the tenant considers that he is not offered enough, he will probably decline the offer of the lease in which event he will continue in occupation of the house with his rent subject to control and with protection against eviction. There is much less likelihood of a tenant foregoing the protection given by the Act and possibly agreeing to an enhanced rent, if he is only offered a two years' lease instead of the three years' lease now proposed by the clause. I therefore suggest that the amendment be opposed.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Bill reported with amendments and Committee's report adopted.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides for the continuance of price control until the end of next year. The policy of the Government in connection with this matter has not changed. As the Government previously announced, it believes that freedom from control is in the public interest and leads to lower prices, provided that there are adequate supplies of goods and there is reasonable competition between sellers. Where these conditions exist control is not necessary and, in fact, quite a number of commodities have been freed from control. However, there are still shortages and it is not yet desirable in the public interest to allow the legislation to go out of operation. The Government therefore proposes to extend the principal Act so that it will apply to all transactions taking place before January 1, 1955.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—How many items are still under price control?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I cannot say off-hand. Controls exist mainly on items which affect the C series index.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—That is not so important now, is it?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I think it is more important than ever. If the recent decision is to be practicable every effort must be taken to prevent any possible exploitation. I have acted, at times, as Prices Minister and am aware of what does happen.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—So far no justification has been shown for the continuance of this legislation.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—There is a great deal of secrecy associated with price control and before giving details it would be necessary to undertake some careful preparation. I will not divulge information which came to my knowledge during the time I exercised responsibility over price control but I think members know sufficient to enable them to realize whether this legislation is being unwisely administered or is serving a useful function. If the honourable member can suggest in what respect it is unfair—

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—I think the onus of proof is on the Government in this case.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—It may be so far as the honourable member is concerned, but that will be discovered as the debate continues. At present I am confining my remarks to a formal moving of the second reading. If any honourable member desires information I will place myself at his disposal and make available the maximum possible amount of information. I have no desire to withhold information from the House.

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

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1247.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—The purpose of this Bill is to continue the provisions enabling persons over the statutory retiring age to be temporarily employed in the Public Service. Twelve years ago we passed legislation relating to the re-employment of officers in the Education Department, but since then it has been broadened and today there are many temporary employees in the Public Service who are over the age of 65. My only objection to this measure is that it should be limited to 12 months' operation, instead of an indefinite period. We frequently pass Bills extending legislation for 12 months and review others annually. I cannot see any reason why this Bill should operate for a definite period. It has not been difficult for some time, and particularly during the last six months, to obtain unskilled labour, but there was a time when all Government departments were hampered because of lack of staff.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—There aren't many people out of work today.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—There are a few in the milling trade and some other trades are finding it difficult to obtain semi-skilled labour. If certain officers in the Public Service are required to resign at 65 the Government will find it difficult to replace them. It could ill-afford to lose the services of Dr. Birch, for instance, and this legislation will enable that problem to be overcome, but it will not interfere with the possible promotion of younger men. Some time ago a public servant who was due to retire at the age of 60 had his service extended for five years by Act of Parliament, passed four years before he was due to retire. If it is desired to extend the period of a man's service, the time to do so is on the eve of his retirement, and not four years before. Under this measure a man can only be re-employed temporarily, which will be a protection for younger members of the Public Service in obtaining promotion. It has been said that one reason why this Bill should become law is that certain contracts have been entered into with people from overseas. I take it that it is expected that when these contracts are fulfilled these people may leave the Government service, and it may be necessary to temporarily extend the employment of people of 65 years of age. Although I support the second reading, I see no reason why we should depart from a practice, adopted on many occasions, of introducing legislation for only 12 months, because if that is done it is possible to review the Act at the end of that time if an extension is desired.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—When this Bill was introduced some years ago, the Public Service was very much smaller than it is today, and the Public Service Association feared that, if men were kept too long in the service, that would probably block the promotion of younger men. For that reason the legislation was introduced, and it has been in the Statute Book for a long time. Owing to the increase in the size of many public departments, and the paucity of labour, it has become very difficult in many cases to properly fill certain positions. The Education Department found it obligatory to bring back into service well-tried teachers, and they are rendering excellent service today; I doubt whether a number of schools would be able to function without them. This legislation extends indefinitely the period of service of superannuated officers. Although I do not like indefinite legislation, because I feel all Bills

of this type should expire at a given time, I do not think there is a great deal in the honourable member's fears. The Bill relates to not only professional and clerical employees, but also mechanics and labourers. A number of new Australians are employed in the Railways Department where they have been and still are rendering good service, and I think it is safe to say that but for them the work of this huge department could not have been carried on; however, that has nothing to do with extending the age limit. The Bill is for the purpose of re-employing men, after reaching the retiring age, if desired. Many temporary officers never become permanent, and a large number of them have rendered good service to the State.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Is the honourable member referring to over-age temporary officers?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No, I just mentioned them as an aside. Some officers have been employed in a temporary capacity for 20 years, and it is grossly unfair to allow this position to remain. The Government should consider placing them on a permanent basis. I support the Bill.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY (Central No. 2)—The Bill provides for the extension of service of a certain number of selected employees of the Government who have reached the age of 65, and this House can reasonably support it, although the question of the age at which a man should cease work must be reconsidered in the near future. When this Act was passed 30 or 40 years ago, 65 was the generally accepted retiring age, but since then the expectancy of life for a man has increased by about 11 years. Consequently there is a period from 65 upwards when many men have to seek some form of activity by which they can render some service to themselves and the community. Although the Government, except for the provisions of this Bill, follows this rule strictly, in industry and commerce many men over the age of 65 are still employed. I know of many men forced to retire from the Government service at that age who are now engaged, and have been engaged for a number of years, in active work in private enterprise.

This alteration of Government policy is brought about by scarcity of labour, and the principle of using these men for a longer period has not been considered. Once I thought the retiring age would have to be reduced because of unemployment, but, now that labour is hard to obtain, I cannot see any reason why

the Government should not continue the employment of these men so long as it does not interfere with promotions to the top jobs, because I feel that these positions should be made available to those who are entitled to expect them in the ordinary course of events. This Bill, however, does not seek to extend the period in which top executives can hold their positions, but rather that others can obtain employment in other spheres as temporary employees. I see no objection to that, because it is common practice in many outside businesses, but the time must come when this matter will have to be considered from the viewpoint of principle rather than expediency. There are many men who have reached the retiring age who could give very active service to the community, and although I would not like to see them performing arduous jobs, there are certainly opportunities for employing them. I support the Government in its attempt to give them such an opportunity.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE secured the adjournment of the debate.

PORT BROUGHTON RAILWAY (DISCONTINUANCE) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1248.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—This is one of the most simple Bills that has been introduced into Parliament for a number of years, but although it was introduced about two months ago in another place, it has only now reached this Chamber. This causes me to suggest that more Bills should be introduced here to relieve the congestion that will occur at the end of the session. On the Notice Paper in another place there are 19 Bills, and the second readings of some of them have not yet been given. I understand that quite a number of Bills are yet to be introduced and I think they should be distributed more evenly between the two Chambers in order that more time should be available to give them reasonable consideration.

The railway line under consideration was built 80 years ago and in its day served a good purpose. I can remember when overseas ships were loaded at Port Broughton. However, with the building of the broad gauge line from Redhill to Port Pirie and the development of new forms of transport this line became obsolete. The Transport Control Board has the power to recommend the closing of railway lines. Previously, this was the prerogative of

the Public Works Standing Committee. Some years ago when the question of the broadening of the Wolseley-Mount Gambier line was before the Public Works Standing Committee it was recommended that the Wandillo-Glencoe spur line should be closed. However, the rails were never removed, and if the Railways Department desires to secure a little money from the sale of materials it may be able to do so there. Section 10 of the Road and Railways Transport Act of 1935 conferred on the Transport Control Board the right to close or reopen a railway line, subject to concurrence by the Public Works Standing Committee. Railways in South Australia are a sad story. Some have been closed and I think there are others in important parts of the State where there is a service only once or twice a week because other means of transport have been developed. Recently, some people wanted a connection between Morgan and Barmera, but I do not think that this is the time to build new lines, for Parliament ought to consider seriously the millions of pounds which the railways have lost in recent years. If we want to protect our railways—I do not think we can ever make them pay—we must give them better support. We cannot have good roads and railways parallel.

The Hon. E. Anthony—We cannot stop progress.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—If the people want everything they must pay for it. However, we will have an opportunity in the debate on the Appropriation Bill to deal further with losses on railways and water supplies. I remember two other lines being closed which gave rise to a great deal of controversy, namely, the Gawler and Moonta tramways. After very careful consideration the Public Works Standing Committee recommended that owing to the losses sustained the lines should be closed.

The Hon. E. Anthony—Does the honourable member think we should run a tramway and a railway to Henley Beach?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Railways Department wants to duplicate the Henley Beach line, and if the people want two means of transport they must be prepared to pay for them. When it was proposed to close the two tramway lines I have mentioned the councils concerned objected on the grounds that they would be involved in increased cost. While the Government conducted the lines it was responsible for the maintenance of the roads, but with their closure they became the respons-

ibility of the councils, and they claimed compensation. This was given them, but no compensation is contemplated under this Bill. It is not one that can be opposed, but I thought I would take the opportunity of giving a little history for the information of members, and having done so I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—This Bill has one or two somewhat unusual features. Legislation is usually of a constructive nature, but this provides for the demolition of an existing public utility. The authorizing Act is unique also in that it appears to be one, if not the only Railway Act, that has not contained authority for the Railways Commissioner to dispose of any material that may have been discarded. It is of interest to note that in 1910 a Bill was passed authorizing the construction of a railway line from Brinkworth to Mundoora, which was the inland terminal of the line under discussion. Why that was never gone on with I do not know. The Port Broughton tramline was constructed, as Mr. Condon said, 80 years ago, and on turning up the legislation I find that assent was given by Governor Musgrave. It served a useful purpose in the carriage of heavy goods, particularly wheat and superphosphate, required by the farmers, but steam traction was never employed. As far as I can ascertain there is no local objection to the Bill. The line has outlived its usefulness, and because of more modern means of transport it has not been used for many years. I therefore, in the interests of all concerned, support the Bill.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

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

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill authorizes the expenditure of £40,736,402, which, together with an amount already appropriated by special legislation amounting to £10,608,598, makes up the total of £51,345,000 which the Treasurer has estimated as the total expenditure for the year 1953-54. Revenue for the year is estimated at £51,355,000, so that the prospective surplus for 1953-54 is £10,000. In accordance with the usual procedure, I now propose to give members some information regarding the State's accounts for the year ended June 30, 1953, and some explanations of the Bill.

Last year the State had a surplus of £24,949. This was achieved after bringing to account an amount of £1,175,500, the expenditure of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act (No. 1) of 1953. The total expenditure for 1952-53, inclusive of the amount authorized by that Act was £49,076,490, whilst revenue received totalled £49,101,439. The expenditure, for which authority was given in the supplementary Appropriation Act last year, was for urgent and necessary works and purposes. Revenue for 1952-53 was £6,463,000 greater than for 1951-52. This was due to increased grants received from the Commonwealth, both as a result of recommendations made by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, and grants made pursuant to the uniform taxation legislation. These grants increased by £3,182,000. The balance of the increase in revenue last year was principally due to increased earnings of public utilities, and, in particular, earnings by the Railways Department, which, excluding Treasury transfers, increased by £2,198,000 over receipts of the preceding year. This was due in part to more traffic and the higher schedule of freights and fares which operated from July 1, 1952. Expenditure last year was £6,527,000 greater than in 1951-52. The main lines showing increases, and the amount of such increases, were as follows:—

	£
Police Department	183,000
Hospitals Department	284,000
Chief Secretary—Miscellaneous	260,000
Treasurer—Miscellaneous	527,000
Engineering and Water Supply Department	135,000
Public Works	227,000
Education Department	671,000
Minister of Education—Miscel- laneous	249,000
Harbors Board Department	116,000
Railways Department	1,862,000
Minister of Local Government— Miscellaneous	818,000

These increases were mainly due to higher costs and in some cases to expansion of departments.

THE PUBLIC DEBT.

During 1952-53 borrowings were made pursuant to the Financial Agreement totalling £22,965,000. During the year the National Debt Commission arranged the redemption, on behalf of this State, of securities of the face value of £1,548,000. At June 30, 1953, the total public debt amounted to £194,853,000, a net increase of £21,417,000 over the preceding year. The new borrowings included £349,000 from the Ministry of Supply, United

Kingdom, and £755,000 from the Export-Import Bank, Washington, U.S.A., both of which were made in accordance with the arrangement for financing the Radium Hill project.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1953-54.

The total revenue for 1953-54 is estimated at £51,355,000, which is £2,254,000 greater than actual collections in 1952-53. Revenue from State taxation collections is estimated at £5,901,000, which is nearly £1,000,000 greater than collections last year. The principal factor contributing to this increase is the proposed alterations to motor vehicles taxation, drivers' licences, and other sundry fees payable under the Road Traffic Act. The rates for motor vehicle registration and drivers' licences are the same now as they were in pre-war days. The progressive increases which have taken place annually in the amounts received from motor taxation and drivers' licences have arisen from the increased number of vehicles being registered and the increased number of persons applying for licences to drive vehicles. The larger number of vehicles using the roads, in particular the heavy commercial vehicles, has placed a very heavy demand upon available funds for improving and maintaining the road system, with the result that the moneys available for road maintenance and construction have by no means matched the heavy demands made upon the Highways Fund for road purposes. The Government also proposes to revise certain charges made by the Harbors Board. There have been no major upward adjustments in these charges for over 20 years, in addition to which many concessional rates, made with full justification in pre-war years, still remain. The Government now proposes to withdraw some of these concessions and at the same time to make increases in wharfage rates and in some charges made for services provided by the board. It is expected that the higher charges will contribute £155,000 to revenue this year. The foregoing represent the only changes which the Government proposes to make this financial year in its scales of charges. Other main increases in estimated revenue for 1953-54, as compared with 1952-53, arise from fees, earnings and recoups in respect of the Hospitals and Education Departments of £114,000, railway revenues £984,000, water supply and sewerage charges £105,000, recoveries of interest and sinking fund £438,000. This year the State will receive £12,188,000 under the Tax Reimbursement Agreement, as compared with £11,597,000 received last year.

A grant of £6,100,000 will be paid to the State arising from the recommendations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. This is £243,000 less than the grant received last year.

Turning now to the Bill, the total expenditure provided for therein is £40,736,402. The main items, and the increases over last year's expenditures, are as follows:—

POLICE DEPARTMENT, £1,359,000, an increase of £111,308. The sum of £990,000 will be required to meet salaries and wages, whilst the balance of the provision is required for various expenditure for equipment and maintenance of the Police Service generally, including the replacement of motor vehicles, purchase of motor launch, fire fighting and workshop equipment.

HOSPITALS DEPARTMENT, £3,122,877, an increase of £378,623. In addition to the provision required to meet additional salaries and wages payable to hospital staffs, and to meet the increased costs of food, drugs, medicines and equipment required for the operation of Government hospitals, provision has been made in the amount provided in this Bill for the initial staffing and operating of the new Western Districts Hospital, which it is proposed to bring into commission during this financial year. Provision is also made for the purchase of an electro-encephalograph and of additional X-ray equipment for the Royal Adelaide Hospital, a short-wave diathermy machine for use at the Mount Gambier Hospital, an electro-cardiograph and projection unit for the Port Pirie Hospital, and other minor items of equipment for the various Government hospitals.

CHILDREN'S WELFARE AND PUBLIC RELIEF DEPARTMENT, £480,431. The increase of £30,031, is due mainly to rises in salaries and wages, increased cost of foodstuffs, clothing, etc., and purchase of more livestock for the Struan Farm School. In addition, there has been an adjustment in the amount of subsidy payable for State wards attending secondary schools.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, £117,719, an increase of £33,289. A substantial amount of the expenditure of this department is recouped by the Commonwealth under the tuberculosis arrangement. In addition to the provision made for extra staff to be engaged on X-ray surveys, an amount of £18,000 has been provided for the purchase of a mobile X-ray plant.

CHIEF SECRETARY (MISCELLANEOUS), £1,159,059, an increase over last year's expenditure of £206,495. This provision is required to

meet grants and subsidies to various subsidized hospitals, health organizations, and other sundry institutions. The principal payments to be made under this appropriation are as follows:—

	£
Adelaide Childrens Hospital	259,000
Anti-Cancer Campaign Committee	21,000
Blackwood and District Community Hospital	6,000
Home for Incurables	45,000
Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science	90,000
Keith Hospital	10,000
Mothers' and Babies' Health Association	48,000
Penola Hospital	13,000
Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital	75,000
Tanunda War Memorial Hospital	21,000
District and Bush Nursing Society	12,000
Kalyra Sanatorium	58,000
Minda Home	5,000
Northcote Home Preventorium	6,000

Conditional subsidies to hospitals will this year total £109,000, as compared with £98,000, last year. Special subsidies to hospitals are this year estimated to cost £105,000, compared with actual expenditure on this account last year of £22,000. The principal hospitals which will receive special subsidies are as follows:—

	£
Bordertown Hospital	3,000
Burra Hospital	14,000
Cleve Hospital	3,000
Gawler Hospital	10,000
Kangaroo Island General Hospital	2,000
Millicent Hospital	7,000
Mount Barker Hospital	5,000
Naracoorte Hospital (£7,000 towards new maternity block)	9,000
Pinnaroo Hospital	2,000
Renmark Hospital	3,000
Riverton Hospital	4,000
Streaky Bay Hospital	2,000
Waikerie Hospital	12,000
Wudinna Hospital	2,000
Yorke town Hospital	8,000

Other items for which provision has been made are:—

For Ambulance Services	15,000
Poliomyelitis Research, Ambulance Fees, Rail Fares, etc.	5,000
S.A. Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb	10,000
Royal Institution of the Blind	7,000
Rail fares of blind persons	4,000
Grant to National Theatre	2,000
Grant to S.A. Oral School	1,000
Grant to S.A. Symphony Orchestra	12,000
Rail fares of blind and incapacitated soldiers	35,000
Contribution towards cost of National War Memorial (World War II.)	9,000
Coronation celebrations and representation (balance of expenditure)	6,000
Royal Visit—provision for expenses in connection with	50,000

S.A. Fire Brigades Board (this amount is in addition to £12,000 payable to the board pursuant to the provisions of the Fire Brigades Act) 35,000

PRICES CONTROL, £70,000; BUILDING MATERIALS OFFICE, £100. These amounts are £8,948 and £7,695 respectively less than the amount spent last year. With the progressive de-control of certain items it is expected that administrative costs of price control will progressively diminish. This cost is now borne by the State Government, the Commonwealth having now ceased to contribute to the States for administration of price control. The Government lifted all building controls except those dealing with the demolition of houses during the last financial year, and provision is made in this Bill for nominal expenses only.

TREASURER (MISCELLANEOUS), £5,023,012, a decrease of £807,051 as compared with 1952-53. The principal item contributing to this decrease is a reduction in the amount of Treasury transfers to railways. As a result of progressive increases in the schedule of freights and fares, allied with increased traffic and more efficient working by the railways, it has been possible to reduce progressively the amount of assistance given to the railways through the medium of Treasury transfers during the last three years, and this year the amount to be transferred is £4,000,000, which is £850,000 less than the amount transferred last year, and £1,050,000 less than the amount transferred in 1951-52. It will again be necessary for the Government to contribute towards the working expenses of the Municipal Tramways Trust in 1953-54. Last year a grant of £700,000 was made for this purpose, the actual loss of the trust for the 12 months ended June 30, 1953, being £763,800. This year it is proposed to provide £600,000 for the trust, and this amount is included under "Treasurer—Miscellaneous." Provision has also been made under this heading to enable the State to make payments on account of principal and interest to the Commonwealth under both the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the Railways Standardization Agreement of £103,000 and £36,000 respectively. In addition, £20,000 has been provided for grants to the Electricity Trust to subsidize expenditure by the trust in generating and distributing electricity to consumers in sparsely settled areas.

LANDS DEPARTMENT, £501,459, an increase of £56,702. An amount of £21,000 has been provided for increased wages and salaries, and in

addition £25,000 has been included as this State's estimated contribution towards excess costs of placing settlers on irrigation lands in accordance with the War Service Land Settlement Agreement.

ENGINEERING AND WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT, £1,711,824, an increase of £140,085. The cost of operating this department grows with increases in the number of water and sewerage connections which are made each year. In addition, provision has been made for pumping from bores in the Adelaide Water District to supplement the supply from metropolitan reservoirs during the summer months.

ARCHITECT-IN-CHIEF'S DEPARTMENT, £189,170. An estimated additional expenditure of £23,536 is mainly due to salaries of officers necessary to enable the department to cope with the larger works programme to provide schools, hospitals and other Government buildings and the much greater maintenance programme occasioned by the use of prefabricated buildings.

PUBLIC WORKS, £1,019,890, an increase of £171,933. Under this line provision is made for the maintenance of all Government buildings and for the provision of furniture and equipment for various Government departments. Furniture and equipment which will be necessary for the opening of the new Western Districts Hospital has also been provided for. I have already pointed out that the policy of providing prefabricated and wooden buildings, especially for school purposes, has admirably met the urgency of the situation during the past few years, but has attracted maintenance costs which are considerably higher than with buildings of brick construction, and from now on we may expect that our annual maintenance costs for painting and other renovations will almost certainly increase.

EDUCATION, £4,672,461, an increase of £372,234. The sum of £3,758,000 is provided for this department for salaries and wages of teachers and staff, an increase of £286,000 on last year's expenditure. In addition, provision is made for an additional expenditure of £58,000 on the maintenance, cleaning, etc., of the various schools under the control of this department. £240,000 is provided for the conveyance of pupils by buses, £18,000 for new buses, £32,000 for scholarships, and £30,600 for conveyance, boarding and book allowance for students attending private schools. Provision under "Minister of Education (Miscellaneous)" amounts to £690,062, a decrease of £14,674. This arises from the fact that £40,000 was included in the Appropriation Bill

presented to Parliament towards the close of last financial year as an additional general purpose grant to the University, and, as pointed out then the payment of the grant to the University under Appropriation Act (No. 1) of 1953 would reduce the amount to be provided for similar grants under this Bill. Grants provided under this section include £433,000 for the University, £135,000 for the School of Mines, and £80,000 for the Kindergarten Union. An amount of £15,000 has been provided to meet the costs of organizing and staging the children's demonstration during the Royal visit.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, £514,707, an increase of £47,943. This department is one which has been expanded during recent years in consequence of the Government's policy to extend every facility to primary producers to enable them to improve agricultural, dairying, pastoral and horticultural techniques. Provision of £84,510 has been made under "Minister of Agriculture (Miscellaneous)," the main item being a grant to the Waite Agricultural Research Institute of £70,000.

IRRIGATION, £459,078, an increase of £41,564. As a result of surveys made it has been found that the embankments on certain reclaimed areas were below a desirable level and provision has been made to commence the work of restoring the banks to more desirable heights.

MINES DEPARTMENT, £611,000, an increase of £118,407. The amount provided will permit the intensification of the search for new deposits of uranium. In an endeavour to assess the mineral resources of the State two regional geological surveys are being made at present, one in the north-west portion of the State and the other in the Peake Dennison Ranges in the vicinity of Oodnadatta. This will be the first full year that the Laboratories Branch of the Department has operated with a complete staff, having taken over the School of Mines analytical and assay staff last financial year.

HARBORS BOARD, £1,393,372, an increase of £303,812. This increase is necessitated by the higher working expenses of the board and by the large amount of maintenance work which must be carried out in order that harbour facilities may be kept in proper order and condition.

RAILWAYS, £14,765,027. This provision is only £8,987 greater than actual expenditure last year, notwithstanding an estimated increase in railway traffic. The higher costs of railway operation arising from the estimated greater

traffic are due to wages and salaries increases, and increases in the costs of materials, as compared with last year. These higher costs will be very largely offset by savings in estimated expenditure on fuel oil for locomotives. Because of the larger anticipated use of fuel oil and reductions in the price of fuel oil, the saving on fuel expenditure alone during 1953-54 is estimated to be about £236,000 as compared with last year's expenditure on this item. As a result of the completion of the 5ft. 3in. gauge to Mount Gambier it is expected that there will be a saving in transfer handling costs of approximately £30,000, and the discontinuance of the Mount Gambier-Naracoorte bus service resultant on the completion of the standard gauge line, will save the department another £28,000.

MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS), £51,509, a decrease of £792,626. The Appropriation Bill presented to this House towards the end of June of this year included an amount of £120,000 to be transferred to the Highways Fund to provide for roads of access to War Service land settlement areas, and £500,000 for developmental roads. The sum of £200,000 was also provided for grants to local authorities to reinstate storm damage to public foreshore properties. This expenditure will not recur during 1953-54, although a further £15,000 has been included in the amount now submitted for further grants to local authorities in respect of storm damage to public foreshore property. This additional amount has been provided after consideration of the extent of the damage by the Storm Damage Advisory Committee, which has made a number of recommendations to the Minister of Local Government as a result of which about £97,000 has been approved for distribution to various country and metropolitan local authorities.

I have commented on the main items of revenue and expenditure, and in regard to the latter it is gratifying to report that the estimated expenditure for 1953-54, excluding Treasury transfers, is only about 7 per cent higher than the actual expenditure for 1952-53. Similar increases during the last four or five years have been about 20 per cent in each case, and the reduction in this percentage increase for 1953-54, after allowing for the fact that some small expansion has taken place in Government services, is an indication, I think, that the inflationary trends have been substantially checked and that we may look forward to a considerably more stable price structure than has been the experience during recent years.

Turning to the various clauses of the Bill, clause 2 provides for the further issue of £28,736,402. The remainder of the amount required to finance the various purposes set out in the Bill is £12,000,000, which has been appropriated by Parliament under the authority of Supply Acts Nos. 1 and 2.

Clause 3 (1) provides for the appropriation of £40,736,402, and sets out the various departments and purposes upon which that amount is estimated to be expended. Subclause (2) provides that, if increases in salaries and wages which are not provided for in the Estimates are authorized by the appropriate wage fixing authority, the Governor may appropriate the amount necessary to pay such increases from the general revenue of the State. The amount of money required to pay these increases will be added to the total available from the Governor's Appropriation Fund under the provisions of the Public Finance Act.

Clause 5 authorizes the Treasurer to issue money from the Loan Fund, or from other public moneys in his hands, to make good any revenue deficit which may occur during the

year. Clause 6 provides for payment out of the appropriations made in this Bill in respect of a period prior to July 1, 1953, or at a rate in excess of that set down by the Public Service Board or the Railways Commissioner. Clause 7 provides for the payments appropriated by this Bill to be in addition to any amounts which may have been appropriated by other legislation.

In order that members may have information on the Government's proposals for this year I have commented on what I consider to be the more important items for which provision has been made in this Bill. If there are any other matters upon which members require further information I shall be happy to supply that information at an appropriate time. I commend the Bill for favourable consideration of members.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.2 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, November 5, at 2 p.m.