

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, November 11, 1953.

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

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition—I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to appoint a permanent public accounts committee to—

- (a) examine the loan and revenue accounts of the State and all statements and reports required by law to be submitted by the Auditor-General to Parliament;
- (b) report to Parliament, with such comment as it thinks fit, any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports any circumstances connected therewith, to which the committee is of the opinion the attention of Parliament should be directed; and
- (c) report to Parliament any alteration which the committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the mode of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys.

I do not intend to labour this question because I believe most members appreciate its importance. This is not the first occasion on which a similar motion has been submitted to this Chamber. I am fortified in my action because Sir David Gordon in 1931, when Leader of the Liberal Party in this Chamber, successfully carried a motion for the establishment of a public accounts committee; that was during the term of office of a Labor Party and before the marriage of the Liberal Party to the Country Party. If it were reasonable to pass such a motion in 1931 then it is far more reasonable to do so today. In 1931 the State revenue was about £10,500,000 and expenditure £12,500,000, but in 1953 estimated revenue is £49,000,000 and expenditure slightly less. In 1931 our Loan Estimates were £1,659,000 but now they are £27,618,000. I do not think it will be necessary for me to speak at length because I do not expect any opposition. If there is and the motion relies on a casting vote I feel sure it will be carried. On November 11, 1931, Sir David Gordon moved—

That, in the opinion of this Council, it is essential, in the interests of sound public finance, that a permanent public accounts committee should be created by Act of Parliament.

That motion was identical with one submitted by him in September, 1926, which was also carried.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Was a committee subsequently set up?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. The Labor Party was in power in 1931 but as members know there was then a Premiers' plan. That does not alter the position that if it were considered necessary to agree to the motion then—even though it was not put into effect—it is necessary now and perhaps members will support this third attempt. I do not think that the source from which the motion emanates should be a consideration because it was the Opposition which submitted the motions that were carried in 1926 and 1931, and consequently we are more justified, owing to the increased expenditure and revenue, in carrying the motion today than was the case then.

In 1926 every member who spoke on Sir David Gordon's motion referred to the splendid work being done by the Railways Standing Committee which later became the Public Works Committee, and I remind members that no fewer than three gentlemen who had been or were Chief Secretaries spoke in favour of it, namely, Sir George Ritchie, Mr. Tassie, and Mr. Whitford and therefore I feel justified in asking for favourable consideration today. A similar committee is already in operation in New South Wales and in Canberra. Why do I ask for the appointment of this committee? The present procedure is that the Government refers a subject to the Public Works Committee which has estimates placed before it which it examines. In due course a recommendation is made—perhaps within a few days or perhaps not for 12 months or two years—but before the work is started costs may have increased by 50 per cent or 70 per cent; I know of recommendations which have never been put into effect. We should have a committee to see that the expenditure authorized by Parliament after an inquiry by the Public Works Committee is spent in a proper manner. At present we do not now how money is spent. In today's Appropriation Bill there may be six or seven items which may never be gone on with, but the amount voted by Parliament may be switched to some other project. We have no control over that, and I want to give it back into the hands of Parliament. The establishment of semi-Government activities is a means of avoiding inquiry by the Public Works Committee and by this method we have given away Parliament's powers. We gave away control to the Electricity Trust, the Housing Trust, and the Railways. I remember when the first amount—a sum of £200,000

—was placed on the Estimates for development of the Leigh Creek coalfield. Strong objection was taken to that in this Chamber. In the past we had control of these things, but we have given our power away. If it was considered fair by the Parliament of the time to recommend appointment of a public accounts committee, when revenue and expenditure was five times less than it is today, why should it not be justifiable today? We give the Electricity Trust, the Housing Trust, and the Railways colossal sums, but do we ever hear any more about the matter?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Only through the Auditor-General's report.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Auditor-General submits a very valuable report to Parliament every year, but he can do nothing more; he has no control over the actual expenditure. The establishment of a committee might be taken to express the wish of Parliament to secure some further control over the expenditure of public funds. Is anything wrong with that? Parliament should exert its authority more than it does. In 1930 a Finance Committee which was considered to be an advisory committee was appointed. The precedent established by the British Parliament, where a Public Accounts Committee was created many years ago, has been followed in many countries where the basic principle of popular Government—"That finance is Government and Government finance"—is recognized. Such a committee would have an influence on Parliament and enable it to keep in touch with the administration. The Commonwealth Government had a public accounts committee prior to 1932. The Commonwealth Joint Committee of Public Accounts was appointed on September 25, 1950. The first thing it did was to find out where similar committees existed in other parts of the Empire. The committee arranged for the Auditor-General or his representative and the Secretary to the Treasury or his representative to be present at public sittings to assist the committee as required, and for a representative of the Public Service to attend when directed by the committee. In its first report made in March last the committee said:—

Your committee devoted much time discussing procedural problems; it had before it information relating to the manner in which similar committees work in other parts of the British Empire.

In its fourth report made last August the committee stated:—

There are three main instrumentalities concerned with the administration of public

finance. First, there is the Treasury, which has to safeguard the volume of expenditure to which the departments wish to commit the Government. Then there is the Auditor-General, who is concerned with the honest expenditure of public funds and, particularly in recent years, with ensuring that funds are used for the purpose for which they are voted and for no other purpose. The third instrumentality is the Public Service Board, which is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the various Government departments shall be so efficiently organized that the funds voted by the Parliament may be economically expended and full value obtained in return.

New South Wales has had a public accounts committee since 1902. Their Act provides:—

A public Accounts Committee shall be appointed as hereinafter provided and such committee shall—

- (a) Inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly upon any question which may have arisen in connection with the public accounts and which may have been referred to the committee either by a Minister of the Crown or by the Auditor-General or by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly.
- (b) Inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly upon all expenditure by a Minister of the Crown made without Parliamentary sanction or appropriation.

This was passed in 1902. The Act was amended in 1918. In 1925 the Act was further amended to provide for the nomination, election, and appointment of the public accounts committee. In 1929 the Act was again amended to make further provision with regard to the tenure of the office and the salary of the Auditor-General and to amend the Constitution Act of 1902 and the Audit Act of 1902 and certain other Acts and for purposes connected therewith. This was assented to on April 8, 1929.

There is a book by Professor Bland on Budget control. It contains an introduction to the financial system of New South Wales. It deals with Parliamentary control and states:—

In so far as the Audit Act prescribes the types and forms of the accounts referred to in schedules to the Audit Act, Parliament may be said to have created the system of public accounting in use in this State, but the system has been brought into being and is operated by public officials. To enforce executive accountability for the use of appropriations and to satisfy itself that the directions have been observed Parliament requires the Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee to furnish it with regular reports.

The existing New South Wales Public Accounts Committee which, by section 16 of the Audit Act, already has power

to investigate all expenditure not authorized by Parliament as well as any question connected with the public accounts referred to it either by a Minister, the Auditor-General or the Legislative Assembly itself. In general it confines itself to unauthorized expenditure and to matters referred to it by the Auditor-General. Over the years many members have favoured the introduction of a public accounts committee; it has been discussed in Parliament many times and has become more pronounced recently owing to the huge expenditure with which Parliament is called upon to deal every year. In 1931 the Budget amounted to about £10,000,000, and some members can remember when it was about half that amount. This State has grown very quickly and many new industries have been established, so it is about time that an alteration was made. Every member of Parliament, irrespective of his views and opinions, has a responsibility to the people, and should favourably consider my motion, because it would cost very little. They should realize that all committees set up by Parliament over a period of years have cost very little, but have saved the State a considerable amount. A few years ago, if a department wanted any work done, its requirements were submitted to Parliament, often without an inquiry or estimate being made; it was never queried by anybody, and Parliament seldom altered it. No investigation was made.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Such a committee is a vital part of British administration.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, and the British Government realized that many years ago. Two Governments in Australia, the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments, have appointed similar committees. There have been occasions when the Public Works Committee has had to consider projects which would cost the State huge sums and had there been no investigation the State would have been committed to unnecessary expenditure of millions of pounds. It is hard to calculate just how much has been saved as a result of that committee's activities. What the Public Works Committee can do, a public accounts committee can do. Under the present system a work costing £100,000 may be recommended by the Public Works Committee, but by the time it is proposed to commence the work the costs may have increased to £200,000. No further investigation is required and that work can proceed. About 12 years ago the Public Works Committee recommended a proposal for Government offices in Victoria

Square. That work has not started, but I assume that recommendation would remain effective and under the present law there is no necessity for a further investigation although current costs are colossal. The setting up of a public accounts committee would safeguard the expenditure of public money and I ask members to support this motion which I believe is in the best interests of the State.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLICATIONS DETRIMENTAL TO CHILDREN.

Adjourned debate on the motion of the Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—

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.

(Continued from November 4. Page 1290.)

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—This motion relates to the distribution and sale of comic strips and other publications. Properly controlled comic strips can have an educational value, but most comics present situations completely unreal and fantastic. The central character in the comic "What a Man" murmurs to himself "Up, up and away," whilst the "Lone Avenger" and "Phantom Ranger" comics are materialistic. "I Hate Crime" and "Dick Tracy" place more emphasis on crime than on its prevention and tend to encourage young minds to admire criminals rather than members of the police force. Actually only those in authority can punish criminals, but in these comics individuals take the law into their own hands. The young mind is so impressed by these publications that children tend to put into practice what they have read, often to the detriment of their playmates. These publications promote delinquency among some children and on occasions opinions have been expressed in this regard by persons in authority. Mr. Scales, the Juvenile Court magistrate, encounters many of these cases and on November 4, when addressing a meeting of the Rotary Club, said in the course of his remarks:—

The chief reasons for the upsurge of delinquency are the war, increased population, sudden changes from either poverty or wealth, crowded homes, dead-end jobs, bad films, and comics. The aim of the Juvenile Court is to reform rather than punish. Punishment as a

prevention to delinquency is very limited as it pre-supposes the offender weighing the pleasures of law-breaking against the punishment he might expect to receive.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—He pointed out that although there was an increase in crime it was caused by the increase in population.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—He did say that the increase in population had brought about an increase in the number of delinquency cases before the court. Fortunately we have not yet received reports about gang warfare here. Recently reports have been published in Victoria and other eastern States concerning gang warfare.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—We have it here.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—But not to the extent obtaining in other States. Let us consider the effects of such publications on the teen-ager. His mind has already been impressed by these so-called comics but he can also obtain publications dealing with love and sex. There are numerous such publications displayed at bookstalls and in newspaper shops and they are available to young people. It is estimated that over £3,000,000 is spent annually on these comics and other undesirable publications. It may be said that it is the parents' responsibility to see that their sons and daughters do not obtain possession of such publications, but let us develop this suggestion. Some of these magazines have a sex appeal cover but others appear quite harmless. Parents would have to read them first and become censors. That would be an impossible task. Then again, how are they to control the reading matter of their children outside the confines of their homes? It may be argued that there is already legislation to protect children and young people from publications likely to corrupt or contaminate their minds, but how effective has it been or is it likely to be? If the present legislation is effective why are so many of these articles published and displayed for sale? Something more effective must be done and this motion would prevent the publication of offensive matter which would then disappear from the market. At a recent meeting of the Victorian News Agents' Association the following motion was unanimously passed:—

This association expresses its profound disgust and deep concern at the volume of magazine reading matter which portrays and emphasizes sex in both literary and pictorial form in an unsavoury fashion and further deplores the standard of contents of certain magazines,

some of which depict lurid scenes while others are wholly devoted to exploiting love and sexual passion.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Don't most of these comics come from other States?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I believe most of these publications originate overseas and are sent to Australia through letter post and are reproduced here and placed upon our markets for sale and distribution. It may be wondered why newsagents do not take action to prevent their distribution but I have spoken to some proprietors and have been given to understand that they have been told by the publishing houses that if they refuse to sell them they will not be supplied with better class publications. I am unable to disclose the names of my informants because of possible repercussions. As a further illustration of the ineffectiveness of our present laws I quote the following opinion of the South Australian Public School Committees' Association:—

For several years the S.A. Public Schools Committees' Association, and similar school parent organizations throughout the Commonwealth, have endeavoured to have effective steps taken to prevent the publication and dissemination of pernicious literature in Australia. This matter has been discussed by the Australian Council of School Organizations, and representations in the matter have been made to the Commonwealth Government. The Prime Minister advised that whilst it may be true that some comic strips are not in the best interests of children, control of their publication or importation involved complex problems which might in some respects lead to serious conflict of opinion in a country where the freedom of the press is highly valued. He assured the Australian Council of School Organizations that its views were fully appreciated, but he had some doubt as to the practicability of proposed action. He went on to say that the States should act independently. As there is an appropriate Statute in South Australia, viz.: Childrens Protection Act 1936, the S.A. Public Schools Committees' Association asked the Minister of Education to invoke the provisions of that Act, particularly section 11, as follows:—

(11) Any person who—

- (a) sells, lends, or gives, or offers to sell, lend, or give to any child; or
- (b) in any manner employs or hires any child to exhibit, sell, give away, or in any manner distribute;
- (c) having the custody or control of any child, permits him or her to exhibit, sell, give away, or in any manner distribute

an obscene publication, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act and liable to imprisonment for any period not exceeding six months, and to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds. So far nothing appears to have been done in this matter and the distribution of undesirable literature continues.

All members will agree that this literature is on the market in considerable volume. We see it openly displayed alongside school books in close proximity to public schools and I feel that our existing laws are ineffective in suppressing these publications. The police or the magistrates should not have the responsibility of determining what is an obnoxious publication. An individual can institute proceedings under the Act and it is left to the magistrate to decide whether a publication is pernicious or offensive and likely to corrupt the mind of a child.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—It is very difficult to decide.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Opinions differ and because of that there is every justification for carrying the motion.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—It proposes an advisory committee only.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Exactly, but would it not be far better to have such a body to examine this literature and advise the Government?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Then somebody has to make a decision.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I assume that the committee's reports would be tabled and surely Parliament would be big enough to make a decision. It is our function to suppress this kind of literature, which is becoming more pronounced every day. It is our duty to protect our children and if this literature were suppressed they would not have the opportunity to read it. We all know of publications like *Man* and *Man Junior*, and others openly displayed which tend to corrupt the young people, too many of whom unfortunately finally appear before a magistrate on a charge of some description, simply because their minds have been influenced by illustrations and captions they have seen and which they have attempted to emulate in a spirit of adventure more than anything else. I sincerely trust that the motion will be carried.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL secured the adjournment of the debate.

DA COSTA SAMARITAN FUND (INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEES) BILL.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Attorney-General), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to incorporate the trustees of the Da Costa Samaritan Fund and for other purposes.

Read a first time.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of this Bill is to incorporate the trustees of the Da Costa Samaritan Fund. The fund was established in 1898 under the will of Louisa Da Costa as a trust for the benefit of convalescent patients of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The trust has considerable assets which amounted at the end of last year to about £75,000. Most of the assets consist of city properties, but the trust also holds Commonwealth stocks and shares in the Adelaide Steamship Company Ltd. The relief granted by the trust to convalescent patients of the Royal Adelaide Hospital has been in the nature of surgical appliances, spectacles and maintenance during periods of convalescence at convalescent and seaside homes.

The trustees of the fund have asked the Government that the trust should be incorporated. Their main reason for so doing is that they wish to avoid the possibility of a heavy liability falling on individual trustees through the administration of the trusts. Incorporation will free them from liability for any act done by the corporation. A further reason was that incorporation would facilitate the management of the trust, especially by enabling the trustees to hold land in their corporate name. The Government has acceded to the request of the trustees subject to the condition that the accounts of the trust should be audited annually by an auditor licensed under the Companies Act and approved by the Government.

Incorporation will mean in general that in the event of a breach of trust the only recourse would be against the incorporated trust, and the only funds available to meet the breach of trust would be the funds of the corporation. The Government feels that this would be an unsatisfactory state of affairs unless there was some method of watching over the administration of the trust, and accordingly has stipulated that the accounts of the trust should be audited in this way. Apart from the points I have mentioned the Bill makes no material alteration in the powers and obligations of the trustees.

The details of the Bill are as follows:— Clause 2 contains definitions of various terms. Clause 3 establishes a corporate body to be known as the Da Costa Samaritan Fund Trust. Clause 4 appoints the present trustees of the trust as the first trustees of the incorporated trust and provides that there shall be not less than three trustees. Clause 5 provides that in various circumstances the office of a trustee shall be vacant. The Governor is given power

by the section to remove a trustee from office. The Government believes that this provision will provide additional safeguards for the proper management of the affairs of the trust.

Clause 6 provides for the filling of vacancies by surviving or continuing trustees. The approval of the Governor is required for any appointment of a new trustee, as under the original trust deed. Under clause 4 the approval of the Governor is required in the same way for the appointment of an additional trustee. Clause 6 gives the Governor power to appoint a trustee if a vacancy is not filled within three months. Clause 7 provides for a quorum of two trustees, for the making of decisions by a majority vote and for the postponement of a matter where there are only two trustees present at a meeting and they fail to agree. Clause 8 provides for the election of a chairman. Clause 9 provides for the convening of meetings of the trust. Clause 10 requires the trust to keep minutes of its meetings. Clause 11 deals with the procedure at meetings. Clause 12 provides for the trustees to receive a remuneration of £60 per annum out of the trust property or such other sum as is allowed to them by the Supreme Court. Since July, 1950, the trustees have been entitled to £60 a year as remuneration pursuant to an order made by the Supreme Court, so that this Bill does not increase their remuneration. Clause 13 requires the trust to keep proper accounts. Clause 14 provides for the accounts of the trust to be audited by an auditor licensed under the Companies Act and approved by the Chief Secretary. Clause 15 prevents the validity of the proceedings of the trust from being impugned on various technical grounds. Clause 16 empowers the trust to appoint a secretary and any other employees required. Clause 17 gives the trust power to enter into contracts not under seal through a person acting on behalf of the trust. At law a corporation can only contract under seal.

Clause 18 provides for vesting the property of the present trustees in the new corporation and clause 19 specifies that the income of the trust property is to be applied to the purpose mentioned in the clause, which is the same as is now binding on the trustees. Clause 20 deals with the banking of income and clause 21 gives the trust the same powers of management and letting of land as the trustees of the present trust have. Clause 22 empowers the trust to vary its investments and securities. In the exercise of this power it will, of course, be bound by the general rule governing trustee investments. Clause 23 enables the trust to

invest any income not immediately required for the purposes of the trust. This power is contained in the original trust deed. Clause 23 also enables such investments to be realised at any time and the proceeds spent as income. Clause 24 enables the trust to accept gifts. Clause 25 enables the trust or any two trustees to apply to the Supreme Court for advice or directions. Clause 26 enables the trust to make rules dealing with the management of the trust and also (*inter alia*) regulating the summoning of meetings and the procedure at meetings. Rules made under this clause are made subject to the Acts Interpretation Act so that they will come into force, and be subject to disallowance by Parliament, in the same way as regulations made under an Act of Parliament. Members will know of the difficulties associated with the appointment of trustees, and their liabilities. It is felt that the wish of the trustees to be incorporated should be met and this can be done only by Parliament. This is a hybrid measure and if the second reading is carried it will have to be referred to a Select Committee.

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

COLLECTIONS FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES ACT.

The House of Assembly intimated that it had agreed to the Legislative Council's resolution.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GOVERNOR'S ALLOWANCE).

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

SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the House of Assembly without amendment.

MAINTENANCE ORDERS (FACILITIES FOR ENFORCEMENT) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the House of Assembly without amendment.

BUILDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL. Second reading.

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN (Chief Secretary)

—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Building Act, which applies within most of the urban areas, provides for a general control by municipal and district councils over building operations carried out in their areas. The building code, which lays down the rules which are to be followed by building owners when buildings are constructed, are contained in regulations included in the schedules to the Act. These regulations cover a wide range of technical matters and, in accordance with section 83 of the Act, any alterations necessary to be made to the schedules are effected by regulations made by the Governor. The law enacted in the sections contained in the body of the Act deal with procedural and administrative matters and are not concerned with the technical rules applicable to building operations.

The Bill proposes to make a number of administrative amendments to various sections of the Act but does not deal with the technical matters provided for by the regulations in the schedules. The amendments have been recommended by the Building Act Advisory Committee. This committee is constituted pursuant to section 98a of the Act and it is its duty, among other things, to report to the Minister on proposals for amendment of the Act. This committee, which includes persons of high technical qualifications, meets at frequent intervals for the purpose of considering the building code contained in the schedules, and from time to time makes recommendations to the Minister for such alterations to the regulations as appear to be desirable to meet any changes in building methods or forms of construction.

The amendments proposed are as follows:—Section 8 of the Act provides that, before a person commences building operations, he must lodge the requisite plans and specifications with the council for its consideration and approval. Among the matters required by section 8 to be submitted to the council are particulars of the proposed mode of drainage of the building. This phrase is somewhat indefinite and causes difficulties in interpretation. Clause 2 therefore provides that the building owner shall, where he proposes to erect or add to a building, supply particulars of the roof drainage and the mode of disposal of nightsoil and sullage and waste water from the building. The method of dealing with these problems is a matter of public health and thus a proper topic for consideration by the council as the local health authority. The clause also provides that the approval of the council to what is proposed is to be obtained before building is commenced.

Clause 3 also provides that where plans for a building are approved a copy is to be kept on the job and available for inspection by the building surveyor. Plans are approved in duplicate and it is the usual practice to keep a copy on the job but it is obvious that, when the building surveyor inspects the work, it is essential that a copy of the plans should be available. In addition, it requires a copy of the approval of the council of the plans to be kept on the job. Sometimes, the council, in its approval, authorizes a deviation from the plans and the approval is therefore necessary to be considered with the plans. As a corollary to this provision the clause provides that, when the council gives its approval to plans, it must be given in duplicate. Clauses 4, 5, 6 and 11 deal with much the same matters.

Sections 135 to 138 of the Police Act contain a number of provisions requiring owners and occupiers of buildings to safeguard the public against damages caused by such as cellar openings, coal holes and other openings to basements which are in or near the footway. Common examples of this sort of thing are the openings to cellars of hotels through which beer casks are lowered from the street and areas in footpaths covered with gratings through which light and air passes to windows of basement rooms. These sections are old law and it is rather surprising to find them in the Police Act. To some extent, provisions dealing with the same matters are also contained in the Building Act or the Local Government Act and it is considered that, so far as the matters dealt with in the sections of the Police Act are not so covered, the law on these topics would be more appropriately enacted in the Building Act. Section 20 of the Building Act already deals with structures in or over streets and provides for control of these matters by the council. Clause 4 extends the section to include the construction of cellars, openings, doors and windows in or beneath the surface of any street. Section 27 now requires precautions to be taken where certain excavations are carried out within 10ft. of a street alignment. This is by clause 5 extended to include excavations for the purpose of a vault or area. Clause 6 places an obligation on owners and occupiers of buildings to safeguard openings to buildings below the level of the street and requires them to keep such things as cellar flaps, doors, etc., in proper repair. As has already been pointed out, what is proposed by clauses 4 to 6 is already provided for by sections 135 to

138 of the Police Act and clause 12 therefore proposes that these sections are to be repealed.

Section 58 of the Building Act provides that a council, to the area of which the Act applies, is to appoint a fit person as its building surveyor. The Act imposes important duties on the surveyor. When plans and specifications for a building are submitted for the approval of the council, the surveyor, under section 9, is required to examine them and to report to the council whether they comply with the Act. In the case of big buildings, the examination of the plans involves computations and a close examination of the design and this task can only be performed properly by a person with considerable technical qualifications. In addition, the Act gives to the surveyor powers dealing with a variety of matters such as seeing to the protection of excavations near streets and the steps necessary to protect the public from dangerous structures. Thus, it is necessary that the building surveyor should have professional qualifications and, by regulations made in 1946, it is provided that, apart from persons holding the office of surveyor at that time, all building surveyors should hold certificates of competency which are granted after examination in a number of technical subjects or to persons possessing equivalent academic qualifications.

The Act does not require a council to have a full time building surveyor and the practice is for the smaller councils to retain the services of a properly qualified building surveyor and to refer to him the plans, etc., lodged with the council and any other matters which, under the Act, are required to be dealt with by the surveyor. Whilst it is essential, in the interests of the safety of the public, that plans of big buildings should be scrutinized by a building surveyor with the proper professional qualifications, there are many buildings for which plans are lodged which do not require the same scrutiny. The necessity for the council to refer all matters to the consultant building surveyor causes some difficulties in administration, and the Building Act Advisory Committee has suggested that in some cases the council should have power to refer plans to a building inspector of the council and to delegate the duties of the surveyor to the inspector. Clause 7 therefore provides that, where the council does not employ a full time building surveyor, it may by resolution delegate to an inspecting officer, that is, a building inspector, the power of the surveyor with respect to any single story building of ordinary construction the design of which does not involve any computations.

A building of ordinary construction is, under the Act, a building in which the load is carried by the walls, such as the ordinary dwelling-house. A single storey building may, however, be very extensive, for example, a factory, but in such a case it will invariably be found that the construction involves the use of columns or piers and either beams or trusses which involve detailed computations of the stresses involved. The effect of clause 7, therefore, will be that plans for ordinary single storey houses, shops, garages, and similar premises can be dealt with by the building inspector. Where the building is two or more storeys in height or where, in the case of a single storey building, steel or concrete frame construction is used for piers or columns are used involving computations, the plans must still be referred to the building surveyor.

In addition, the clause authorizes the council to delegate to a building inspector the powers of the surveyor under section 17 (which enables directions to be given to secure the safety of public where a building is demolished) under section 27 (which provides for the guarding of excavations near footways) and under Part VI. (which deals with the control of dangerous or neglected structures). The clause will thus provide a compromise method of administering the Act and, whilst it will enable the building inspector to exercise functions with respect to the type of building where technical problems do not generally arise, it will still require the council to consult its building surveyor in cases where plans require the scrutiny of a person of a high professional standard.

Clause 8 deals with the fees payable to the referees. The scheme of the Act is that, on a variety of matters, a building owner can appeal to the building referees from a decision of the council whilst in other cases there can, in effect, be a joint reference to the referees by the council and the building owner as to the correct solution to a technical problem. This referee system has been in force for a long time and is generally acceptable to all parties. There are two referees for every council area, one appointed by the Minister and one by the council and they are invariably persons with considerable technical qualifications and of high standing. Section 79 provides that a referee is to be paid a fee of £2 2s. for any reference heard by him. This fee was fixed in 1923. When it is considered that any reference involves a hearing and the making of an award and that, in instances, the hearing lasts two or more days, it is obvious that the fee is inadequate. Clause 8 proposes to increase the

fee to £3 3s. Section 79 provides that the referees' fees are payable in the first instance by the person requiring the reference.

Section 82 authorizes a council to make by-laws for a variety of purposes. Clause 9 extends this provision to include power to make by-laws regulating controlling or prohibiting the erection or use for habitation purposes of buildings, tents and other structures not conforming with the requirements of the second schedule, that is, the building code applicable to buildings. The purpose of this is to enable a council to control the erection of temporary structures for use as dwellings. Part IV. of the Act gives to councils certain powers over temporary structures but it is considered that, if a council makes by-laws on the matter its policy will then be defined and can be ascertained by the persons concerned. Section 84 provides that any act or default contrary to any provisions of the Act is to constitute an offence. Clause 10 extends this to include any failure to comply with any provision of the Act. The existing section deals adequately with acts of commission; the amendment extends the section to acts of omission which should be subject to the same penalties as the former.

Section 85 provides that when any building is erected contrary to the Act, the surveyor may give notice to the owner requiring him to remedy the matter. On default by the owner, the council can enter upon the land and do any work necessary to make the building conform to the Act, including, where necessary, the pulling down of the building. The cost to the council may then be recovered by action against the owner. Thus, a council can move in the matter without it being brought before a court.

Clause 11 proposes a different procedure. It provides that where notice is given by the surveyor and is not observed by the owner, he may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to comply with the notice. If the court is satisfied that an offence has been committed, the court may, in addition to imposing a penalty, authorize the council to do such work as is necessary to make the building conform with the Act. In cases where the owner cannot be found, the council is given power to carry out this work without an order of the court. However, the effect of the clause is to provide that, except where the owner cannot be found the council must, in effect, obtain the order of the court before entering upon the land and carrying out work on the building. As is now provided in the section, the

clause provides that any costs of the council incurred in work on the building are to be recoverable from the owner.

Clause 12 provides that a complaint for an offence under the Act may be laid within 12 months of the time when the matter of complaint arose. The ordinary rule of law is that laid down in section 52 of the Justices Act which requires complaints for offences to be made within six months. It has been suggested to the Government that the six months' limitation is not appropriate to cases arising under the Building Act. If a person commits an ordinary simple offence such as, say, a traffic offence, the act creating the offence is over and done with and, if the offence is detected it is almost invariably detected more or less contemporaneously with its commission. However, if a person carries out building work contrary to the Building Act, the contravention of the Act has lasting effect and the building is a continuing fact. It has been pointed out that, with the present six months' limit, some offences against the Building Act escape prosecution. It is, in most local government areas, impracticable to make continual inspections of the area and, in instances, breaches of the Act are not detected until after the lapse of six months from their commission. To meet this position, therefore, it is proposed by clause 12 to provide that complaints for offences under the Act may be laid within 12 months of their commission. A somewhat similar state of affairs applied to offences under the Building Operations Act and it will be remembered that section 24 of that Act provided for a period of 12 months in which a complaint under that Act could be laid.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 10. Page 1360).

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Southern)—The most gratifying feature of this year's financial statement is quite obviously the continuation of the reduction of the percentage increase in actual expenditure. The figures reveal a steady progress towards stability which, above all things, not only members of Parliament but people generally require. It may be contended that during this period of prosperity it should not be necessary to increase taxation. That is platitudinous and far from realistic. While the ever-growing

tendency remains to ask Governments—no matter what colour or calibre—to continually hand out subsidies, make rebates, and provide bigger and better social services, cheaper travelling, cheaper freights and cheaper water, which in this State is probably more expensive to procure than in other States, then we, as representatives of the people, must realize that someone must pay the piper.

I was very interested in some of the criticisms and suggestions made regarding our water charges and I congratulate members who have spoken in that vein on the consideration they have given the matter, but it was reported this week in a leading Melbourne newspaper that the Victorian Government has informed people that it has no possibility of providing a water supply to houses that have been built in the metropolitan area for at least three years. South Australia, with its amazing mileage of water reticulation, can be considered fortunate. I deplore the attitude of so many critics—not members—who tend to blame the Government for the lack of water pressure in the metropolitan area. As a country member I do not know that it is my particular province to comment but when I read of such unjust criticism I feel I should register my protest. Everyone knows that the exigencies of war demanded the use of water piping and other materials for more urgent requirements and it was impossible to continue the ordinary replacement work in the metropolitan area. However, I am amazed at the amount of work that has been carried out in spite of these problems and it is most unfair that the Government should be criticized and blamed, particularly when one considers the amount of water reticulation that has been done.

Speaking generally of the financial position I would prefer to think that the sixteenth consecutive Budget of the Premier reflects not only the confidence of the people generally in the financial policy that has been adopted but also the ability of the Treasury to carry it out effectively. No honourable member would deny that he is proud to be associated with a Parliament respected for its integrity and the financial accounts of which have continually evoked the most favourable comments elsewhere and have earned the practical support of the Grants Commission on the widest possible scale. I do not think it unreasonable to impose a further tax on vehicles as a direct contribution to roads and while I admit it is tied to the inevitable argument about petrol tax, there can be very few other avenues that have not

already been exploited. When we consider the present position of fees as compared with 15 years ago I think the Government has probably chosen one of the more reasonable avenues from which to obtain a comparatively small amount of additional revenue. There will be the usual anomalies but I remind members that we will shortly be considering two Road Traffic Bills and we might then remove some of them.

As the main departure from the *status quo* in this Bill refers to taxes for the purpose of maintaining roads I think I should present a few relevant comments for consideration. I have repeatedly suggested that we must plan ahead for our small country townships while it is possible to do so at a low cost. I have been a member of this Chamber for some years, but I believe that comparatively little, and in some instances nothing, has been done in this regard. The State Traffic Committee investigates and considers many matters, but it is not in a position to inquire into all problems associated with districts throughout the entire State. I suggest with all sincerity that now is the time—and not 20 years hence—to decide on the appointment of a body to investigate this problem specifically before it is too late.

Most members will commiserate with the Treasurer that too few of our wealthy citizens died during the last year, thereby depriving him of expected revenue from succession duties. However, it was interesting to note that the Estimates were elastic enough to allow for these setbacks. I remind members of my attitude when the Bill was introduced last year for the purpose of gaining a comparatively small increase in revenue. However, we finished the year with a substantial surplus and I hope that we may always have one. Incidentally, it is of some interest to note that the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund reflects a most prosperous state of affairs and one which, I respectfully suggest, might well be given further consideration by the Government.

Other speakers on both sides have applauded the desirability of sound finance and naturally I support them. This being a rural State, handicapped in many ways, it must depend largely on the whims and vagaries of Nature, but there is one item we, and we only, can control, namely, cost of production. I say emphatically that the employees of this State should—and finally must—support every reasonable incentive offered them by an efficient employer, and I say with equal emphasis that the inefficient employer can no longer be

bolstered up by the State, either directly or indirectly, to the ultimate detriment of the people as a whole. Although it is difficult to apply that principle to Government undertakings because so many of them are not of a directly productive nature I feel that, as revealed by the Auditor-General's report from year to year, much is being done to encourage at least the incentive outlook even in Government departments. This should always have the attention and, where it is given, the support of all members. If employers and employees do as I have said and the Government contributes by pruning ruthlessly any inefficiency, and where possible gives the responsibility to the man prepared to do the job, instead of always having regard only to seniority, we should always be able to balance our Budgets. The details of the Budget speak for themselves, therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—The estimated expenditure for the ensuing year is £51,355,000 and the estimated surplus £10,000. The Treasurer has presented his sixteenth Budget and as 15 of them have been successful I see no reason to expect that the sixteenth will break down. The small increase of only 7 per cent in expenditure indicates that the price structure is more stable than it has been for some time. We are soon to receive measures dealing with increases in motor taxation and harbour charges and therefore will have opportunities to consider the strong protests that are being made in various quarters in respect of these matters. I am disappointed to know that harbour charges are to be increased because that affects the district I represent. It does not so much affect districts which do not have to rely on water transport, but it will further increase cost of production on Eyre Peninsula. I do not propose to indulge in a city *versus* country debate; we have already listened to one honourable member doing that. We are all so dependent one upon the other that it is unwise to attempt to set up barriers, but when allegations are made to the detriment of country people their representatives must defend them.

Education is an ever-increasing problem and two of the most difficult questions which have to be faced are transport and teaching staff. Last Saturday morning I visited the Cummins area school and the headteacher, Mr. Goldney, described some of his difficulties. This school now consists of 16 small buildings which have been removed from places where the schools have been closed, and the staff is finding it most difficult to carry out its duties in the way

it desires. The buildings are of a temporary nature only and the teachers are looking forward to the time when they will be moved elsewhere and replaced by a building comparable with that recently opened at Port Augusta. The Cummins school committee has raised over £1,000 to provide equipment and they desire to see it placed in a better building. I believe that the school transport system is one of the greatest difficulties; there is a constant change of drivers and difficulty in getting suitable vehicles. The department has an efficient officer in Mr. Harris who does a magnificent job in trying to satisfy all the requests made to the department. Recently there was an attempted strike on the part of school transport drivers on Eyre Peninsula because they considered they were underpaid.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Were they?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I cannot say, but they considered that they were not getting as much as others elsewhere. One member suggested that people in the country were not paying as much for transport of their children to school as city people were, and in refutation of that I quote the case of the Wanilla school. There are five ex-servicemen with young families—six children in all. These five men take weekly turns in providing transport, which involves a trip of 18 miles each way and an average of about three hours daily. Reckoning the 36 miles at 9d. a mile is 27s., and three hours at 6s. is 18s., or a total of £2 5s. a day. Against this the department pays 7d. a day per child—3s. 6d., making the net total £2 1s. 6d. a day, or 8s. 3d. for each family. That is an example of the cost of school transport to country people. From Yeelanna a school bus runs to the Cummins area school. Recently the driver and owner of the vehicle got into financial difficulties and a syndicate of five men took over his liabilities. They found themselves committed to a debt of £1,700 and they value the vehicle at only £400.

When water supplies are discussed the question is always asked whether one is in favour of increasing rates. In some cases it may be justified, but not always. In some parts of the State unproductive country is within the ratable area so any increase of rates would add to the burden.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—At Yeelanna the rate is 4d. an acre.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—In the Hundred of Tooligie much of the land has not been taken up because it is unproductive and the water rates are so heavy.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—It is not fair to put the same rate on that land as on the Cummins and Yeelanna country.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—The Cummins and Yeelanna people agreed to accept a rate of two and a half times normal rating, but I am told by Mr. Campbell that even that increased rate returns only 1 per cent interest. Water was never meant to pay; the indirect revenue raised from it is its greatest value.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Doesn't the honourable member think it is wrong for the Government to subsidize it when a body of citizens offer to pay?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—No.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—At Yeelanna and Cummins is some of the best land in the State, yet the water rate there is only 4d. per acre, and that is wrong.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—People in the city use more water than those in the country, on gardens and vegetable patches, from which no revenue is produced; the country returns the greatest value from water used. This year £14,000,000 will be spent by the railways. Although many say that road transport should replace them, the railways in my opinion must be maintained, because heavy haulage by road is extremely expensive. I recently purchased two tons of cement for £21, and it cost £16 10s. for delivery to Port Lincoln; this is a very large sum. The cost of petrol is another problem on Eyre Peninsula. Last Friday I filled the tank of my car before leaving Adelaide, and paid 3s. 4d. a gallon, but on arrival at Port Lincoln I had to pay 3s. 11d. In some parts the price is 4s. 6d. a gallon.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Isn't that an argument that the companies should run steamers there?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—Petrol is delivered to Port Lincoln by steamers, so I cannot see why there should be such a big difference in price. Some firms transport the petrol there in drums, of course.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—The companies sign what is called a cartel.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—It was mentioned in this Chamber yesterday that Roseworthy College is extravagantly conducted.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—That was the opinion of one member.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I realize that, and that opinion is not generally supported, because it is not the true position. The honourable member was guided entirely, I think, by the Auditor-General's report.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—The Auditor-General did not suggest it was extravagantly conducted.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—No, he did not. Yesterday Mr. Anthoney asked whether any practical farmer could remain in business if a 2,000 acre farm cost him £81,345 a year to run, but that is not the correct comparison because nobody on the land could ever spend such a large sum on 2,000 acres. The college, however, is not a profit-making concern, but is for educational and experimental purposes. A comparison was made between Roseworthy and Longerenong College in Victoria, but the set-up at that institution is entirely different. Until a short time ago it did not issue any diplomas, and as there is not a large number employed there, it does not incur the same expenses.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—That institution lost money in spite of that.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—But probably not as much as Roseworthy, because it is not engaged in the same advanced education. Roseworthy, in conjunction with the Waite Institute and the C.S.I.R.O., brings new knowledge into practice. The remarks made in this Chamber caused embarrassment to the principal of the college, and he has prepared a statement on the history and activities as follows:—

It is quite wrong and unfair simply to divide the total annual expenditure by the number of students. Roseworthy is a teaching college but it is also a centre for investigational work. One of its important tasks is to fit fundamental research to local conditions, to form a link between places like the Waite Institute and the C.S.I.R.O. on the one hand and the Department of Agriculture extension service on the other. In this connection a whole series of trials is always in progress, testing of new varieties, testing rates of fertilizer application, testing the incorporation of peas with wheat and comparing new varieties of oil plants with wheat and barley. Similar trials are carried out in the sheep flock, the piggery, the dairy, the poultry farm and the orchard. This knowledge costs money. You can never get it for nothing. At Roseworthy we keep the cost down because students do some of the work. They learn practical experience, they learn how to run field trials and they actually supply the labour force. In its history through this policy Roseworthy has discovered the value of superphosphate in Australia. That is going back to the 80's. The first experiments were done there, the details were worked out and Roseworthy did the propaganda work for super in the early days.

Professor Perkins was very active in connection with the origin of superphosphates.

The Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford—Professor Lowry was.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—Mr. Spafford informed me that Professor Lowry and Professor Perkins were both very active in this direction. The report continues:—

Later the college did a great deal of the sorting out of the details of breeds and management for fat lamb raising in this State. Roseworthy has always been the main plant breeding centre for this State. Plant breeding alone has meant enough to our agriculture to pay for all college activities. In the early 30's plant breeding policy was directed specifically towards the production of quality wheats—to raise the standard of flour without losing or while also improving yield, straw strength, rust resistance, and so forth. The State now has a series of Roseworthy wheats with weapon names following in from Sword—Rapier, Javelin, Scimitar, Dirk and Sabre which give top grade production with excellent flour quality. The Waite Institute added rust resistance to those varieties and so they are grown today as Dirk 48, Scimitar 48, and so forth. As a teaching college, Roseworthy has always supplied the Department of Agriculture with a large part of its staff. Where else would the men have come from? You can't pick up these experts in the street. The universities are not turning out enough either. The Department of Lands needs its quota of college men. So does Education.

In recent years the Land Development Executive was staffed from top to bottom with college men and what a magnificent job they did in assessing soil types, surveying and clearing and bringing land into production. Many of South Australia's most distinguished men began at the college. W. J. Dawkins, A. E. V. Richardson, W. J. Spafford, R. C. Scott, Mr. David Riceman, an old college man, recently won the Medal of the Institute of Agricultural Science for his work on copper and zinc which opened up the coastal country and is now developing the Coonalpyn Downs. The late Mr. Norman Brookman was a college man. He noticed that on the ironstone ridges of his property he could only grow clover where he burned down a tree. The Waite people tested the ashes and found molybdenum was the key. Two ounces of molybdenum replaced five tons of ashes, and so we have the key to prosperity not only for the ironstone country of this State but for an enormous area of South-East Australia. The C.S.I.R.O. believes that the use of molybdenum will double the sheep in Victoria and New South Wales. We are on the brink of vast development. We are spending a lot of money on scientific agriculture but we shall get it back a hundredfold.

The C.S.I.R.O. is spending millions but myxomatosis alone will pay for all that several times over. Roseworthy is not the research centre for all this, of course. It is, however, an important link in the chain. More and more college men are needed to fit the new knowledge to local conditions. If you choke the colleges, where will you be? Roseworthy is spending about £100,000 per annum. Of this, two-thirds is for wages and salaries. Incidentally, the C.S.I.R.O. gives over £4,000 for

fundamental research being carried out by a special unit at the college. No mention is made of that in the figures quoted. That research is of a long-term nature. Appointments, wages and salaries are all considered, of course, by the Public Service Commissioner. No one of these appointments is extravagant or unnecessary, but all wages and salaries have been rising, as we know. Of the other third a considerable proportion is for new equipment, machinery, farm buildings—expenditure, in other words, of a capital nature. The buildings on which students work cost much less than they would cost by contract and the students get necessary experience.

The Australian Universities between them are costing £4,750,000 per annum. Before the war the figure was £850,000. Roseworthy has not gone up as much as that although it has greatly increased its activities and responsibilities since before the War. Incidentally, this country spends less money on that type of education than do some others. Australian Universities cost us 11s. per head per year. The figure for Britain is 12s. 6d. and for Canada is 25s. Those figures are in the Current Affairs Bulletin of Sydney University for March, 1953. Lord Bledisloe a few years ago visited the college. He was chairman of the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, England. His opinion afterwards was published to the effect that Roseworthy was an outstanding establishment. I think he said it was the best he'd seen. For many years Roseworthy has played an active part in the wine industry.

Mr. Spafford told me that before matters relating to the wine industry were taught at Roseworthy every student had to go to France for that education. The report continues:—

Names like Haselgrove, Wiedenhofer, and R. H. Martin come to mind. In more recent years the college has turned out nearly 50 men with the Diploma in Oenology. The industry wants more. They do a good job, but they cost a great deal to produce. You have to pay for quality. It is ridiculous to say that a college should be run for nothing or that the college farm should pay for the teaching. You might almost say that a high school should cost nothing.

Agricultural education has paid tremendous dividends in the past. It will pay even more in the future when we think of the full application of advances like trace element work, myxomatosis, weedicides and insecticides to mention only a few.

But it is also a fact that Australia is not spending as much per head of population on agriculture as they spend in the U.S.A. and Canada, and it is a fact that, pleasing as our progress is, it is well behind the rate of progress for those countries. Since before the war the United States and Canada have increased their agricultural progress three or four times as fast as we have. That is what can be done. The way to do it, is not by cutting down but by continuing the generous policy towards agricultural education, research and extension which has been the policy of this State since the war.

The Minister of Agriculture has arranged a visit to Roseworthy next Friday and I am sure that most members are looking forward to it.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Is Mr. Anthoney going?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—He told me yesterday that he was not, which is a pity because a visit will enable members to appreciate what is being done. It has also been suggested that very few persons who have been educated at Roseworthy have been successful in later life, but I know of hundreds of successful men who were tutored at Roseworthy and who are as wealthy as others who did not attend that college. I maintain that indirectly every primary producer benefits from the activities of the college. I have carried out experimental work and appreciate how much it costs. Much experience can be gained from carrying out experimental work in conjunction with a college such as Roseworthy. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

HONEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Attorney-General)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The object of the Bill is to extend the operation of the Honey Marketing Act, 1949, for five years. This Act will, unless renewed, expire on June 30 next year, and it is therefore necessary to deal with the future of the scheme during the present session of Parliament. Before the Act of 1949 was proclaimed a poll was held to determine whether the marketing scheme should be brought into operation, and out of about 500 beekeepers who were entitled to vote 302 voted Yes and 151 voted No. Thus the original voting in favour of the scheme was two to one. The Government has reason to believe that if a poll were now taken on the question of the continuance of the scheme the voting would be even more strongly in favour of it because of the successful operations of the Honey Board which have resulted in better returns to the producers for an increased production of honey.

The Government asked the secretary of the Honey Board to furnish a short report indicating to what degree the operations of the board

had been successful and to what extent the beekeepers supported a continuance of the board. The secretary's report is as follows:—

The extent to which the operations of the South Australian Honey Board have been successful, and the extent to which beekeepers in this State support the continuance of the board, can be gauged from the following facts. The total quantities of honey handled by the board in 60 lb. tins during its three years of operation have been increasing, and are as follows:—First pool period, 64,407 tins; second pool period, 74,174 tins; third pool period, 117,763 tins. During the past 12 months statistics show that there was produced in this State 127,600 tins, and of this quantity 117,763 passed through the agency of the Honey Board, leaving only 9,837 tins as a carry-over or honey sold interstate. Prior to the operations of the board 90 per cent of the honey produced on the border of South Australia and Victoria at Naracoorte, Bordertown and Keith was sent to the Victorian market. Since the operations of the board in this State, conditions have changed considerably, and last year over 85 per cent of the border-line honey was sent to the South Australian Honey Board. Before the operation of the Honey Board the price received by beekeepers for choice honey, including the container was 6½d. per lb. and many producer members claim that had the board not come into operation the price for choice honey would have fallen to as low as 4½. per lb. in that first year. At the conclusion of the first pool the board paid 7½d. per lb.; the second pool resulted in just under 9½d. per lb., and the third pool resulted in just over 9½d. per lb. The reason for the drop in the last year's pool was that 81.7 per cent of the honey was exported at a realized price of 9½d. per lb, as compared with 65 per cent the previous year.

Prior to the operation of the board beekeepers were not paid any allowance for the tins in which they sent the honey to merchants. Today, they are receiving up to 3s. 3d. each for tins in good condition. This principle of paying for tins has now been followed by New South Wales where their beekeepers are receiving today an allowance of up to 2s. 6d. for each tin. The Board through its agents and because of more orderly marketing has increased the quantity of honey shipped overseas, both to the United Kingdom and to other European countries. Exports in 1951 period totalled 41,160 tins (approximately). Exports in the year 1952 totalled 48,071 tins. Exports in the year 1953 reached the all-time record of 133,439 tins or the equivalent of 3,606 tons. Generally, it is felt by beekeepers and packers that the operation of the board have stabilized the market for honey and have provided for beekeepers a price which is nearer the cost of production with a reasonable margin of profit than it has ever been before.

On October 4, 1949, when the Government was introducing the Honey Marketing Bill I submitted in a report that the eastern States Beekeepers' Association had suggested that South Australia proceed with its marketing

Act and that if it was successful they would follow suit. It is interesting to report that during the last two years beekeepers' conferences throughout Australia have moved for a uniform marketing system based upon the Act operating in South Australia. A draft Marketing Act has been prepared by the Department of Commerce, Canberra, and would have been dealt with at the last Agricultural Council meeting had wheat not taken up the time of the Council. As further evidence that beekeepers support the operations of the South Australian Honey Board, I would like to submit the following resolution which was passed at the Annual Conference of South Australian Beekeepers held in July last:—

"That this meeting expresses its confidence in the South Australian Honey Board as it is at present constituted and congratulates members of the board on the excellent results obtained."

Mr. J. R. Peck, president of the Victorian Apirists' Association who was present at the conference, stated:—

"That he would not like to see the discussion closed on the board's interim report without first expressing his high regard for it and the results gained, bearing in mind the factors that have been influencing the result. He thought the board had done a very good job for the last year and that it could be proud of its success in disposing of such a large quantity of honey on an apparently weak overseas market and coming out of it as well as it had done."

The Government has acceded to the request of the board for an extension of the Act and accordingly this Bill provides that the principal Act will remain in force until June 30, 1959.

At the same time, the Bill provides means whereby honey producers can, if they wish, bring the operation of the principal Act to an end before that date. Should circumstances arise in which honey producers no longer want the present scheme, there seems no reason why they should be forced to operate under it until the expiry of the Act as fixed by this Bill. The details of the Bill are as follows:—

Clause 3 corrects an erroneous reference in section 21 of the principal Act to another

section. Clause 4 provides, by enactment of new section 36a for the termination of the principal Act before June 30, 1959, by means of a poll of producers. Subsection (1) of section 36a provides that at any time after December 31, 1954, not less than 100 producers may petition the Minister of Agriculture for a poll on the question whether the Act shall continue in force. Such a petition may not be presented within two years of the holding of a poll. Subsection (2) provides that a poll must be held within three months of the presentation of a petition. Subsections (3) to (7) provide for the conduct of polls and the preparation of voting lists.

Subsection (8) provides that if a majority of producers voting at a poll vote against the continuance of the Act, the Governor shall proclaim a day falling within three months of the poll after which day the Act shall cease to apply to the sale or delivery of honey, and shall also proclaim a further day on which the principal Act shall cease to continue in force altogether. It will thus be possible to give the Board time to wind up its affairs after the Act has ceased to apply to the sale or delivery of honey. Subsection (9) saves the validity of a poll in the event of any defect occurring which does not affect the decision given on the question submitted at the poll. Subsection (10) gives power to make regulations dealing with the conduct of polls. Clause 5 amends section 37 to provide that the principal Act will remain in force until June 30, 1959.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.10 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, November 12, at 2 p.m.