

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Tuesday, November 24, 1953.

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

**ASSENT TO ACTS.**

His Excellency the Governor intimated by message that the Governor's Deputy had assented to the Health Act Amendment and the Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Acts.

**WILLESDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

The President laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on the Willesden Primary School, together with minutes of evidence.

**QUESTIONS.****SITTINGS OF THE COUNCIL.**

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—According to press reports Parliament will go into recess probably on December 3. Can the Chief Secretary say whether there is any legislation yet to be introduced that will require a longer session?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—One or two small Bills will be introduced, but it is not expected that they will necessitate sitting beyond the first week in December.

**YOUTHS FOR INDUSTRIES.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—In view of the report of the Superintendent of Secondary Schools that the number of boys leaving secondary schools is expected to double in the next seven years, is it the intention of the Government to call a conference of representatives of the Employers Federation, Chamber of Commerce, and trade unions for the purpose of advising those boys who desire to enter industry?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—As there is already in the Education Department a group of officers whose duty it is to advise boys during their school life on this matter, it is considered unnecessary to call a conference as suggested by the honourable member. In addition, there is a Commonwealth Employment Service whose function it is to advise young persons who are about to leave school on suitable avenues of employment in keeping with their aptitudes and qualifications. The present position is that there are more opportunities for employment than there are candidates to fill them.

**SEWERAGE OF MOUNT GAMBIER AND NARACOORTE.**

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (on notice)—Is there any possibility of limited sewerage schemes being considered for the central areas of Mount Gambier and Naracoorte in order to overcome the ever-increasing difficulties connected with hygiene in those areas?

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—Sewerage schemes, being works of a permanent nature, involve large capital expenditure and it is essential that any limited schemes should fit in with final schemes with as little alteration and additional expense as possible. It follows that trunk sewers and pumping stations must be of their final capacity, and accordingly, the treatment works must include the main essentials which form the major part of the final installation. In the case of Mount Gambier, if the scheme were limited to the central area and the hospital, the estimated cost would be at least 50 per cent of the final cost of the scheme. However, the number of properties receiving benefit would be only about 15 per cent of the number to be included in the final scheme, whilst the running expenses and maintenance would be little less than those needed for the final scheme. There is also another aspect, namely, that the costs of the final scheme would be much greater if it were carried out in more than one stage. It will be seen that if limited sewerage schemes are installed only a few of the people requiring sewerage facilities will benefit, while the small amount of revenue will be out of all proportion to the capital and maintenance costs involved. Also, the cost of the final schemes will be increased, thus reducing the already small estimated percentage return on the outlay. The position at Naracoorte would be similar to that at Mount Gambier.

**SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Read a third time and passed.

**TEXTILE PRODUCTS DESCRIPTION BILL.**

Read a third time and passed.

**DA COSTA SAMARITAN FUND (INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEES) BILL.**

(Continued from November 19. Page 1547.)

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 passed.

Clause 7—"Quorum and majority decision."

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I move—

In subclause (1) to delete "Any two" and to insert in lieu thereof "A majority of the."

This Bill was in the custody of the Attorney-General who was chairman of the Select Committee to which it was referred. As a result of that Committee's investigations the Bill has been endorsed but with certain amendments, of which this is the first.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Opposition, deep regret at the illness of the Attorney-General and the hope that he will soon be restored to health.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 8 to 17 passed.

Clause 18—"Transfer and conveyance of property to trust."

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I move to insert the following suggested new subclause—

(2) "No stamp duty shall be payable upon any such transfer, conveyance, or assignment." The purpose of the amendment is to make it unnecessary for this fund to pay stamp duty.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The amendment was submitted in a report by the Attorney-General and I believe it was based on information received from the Parliamentary Draftsman. It is the usual procedure accepted by the Government in regard to all benefactions, particularly when they have been transferred from a trusteeship to an incorporated body. The accumulated funds are being applied to that purpose and it is suggested no charge should be made upon them.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—I support Mr. Bardolph's remarks. It is provided in the clause that the trustees of the deed shall transfer, etc., to the trust all property vested in them.

Suggested amendment carried; clause as suggested to be amended passed.

Clause 19—"Trusts."

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I move—

In line 3 of paragraph (a) to delete "outgoings" and to insert in lieu thereof "other expenditure lawfully," and to insert after "trust" in line 4 "on or in connection with the trust property."

The word "outgoings" is a vague term and the amendment proposes the insertion of words which will more adequately describe the expenditure of the trust. The amendment is certainly an improvement on the original drafting.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 20 to 24 passed.

Clause 25—"Advice and directions."

The Hon. A. L. McEWIN—I move—

In the first line to strike out "two trustees" and insert in line thereof "trustee"; to strike out "or" at the end of the second line and after "directions" in the third line to insert "or orders."

These amendments are for the purpose of simplifying procedure.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—These amendments are required to bring about consistency, because in the early part of the Bill the number necessary to constitute a quorum has been altered.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (25 and 26) and title passed.

Bill reported with amendments and a suggested amendment and Committee's report adopted.

#### ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (FEES).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 19. Page 1552.)

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)

—It is inevitable that because of rising prices the cost of road making has considerably increased, and the only source of extra revenue for this purpose is the people who use the roads most. The motorist is already heavily taxed and is paying a great deal for petrol, spare parts and other things, and he will now have to bear the extra burden of this taxation, although, I suppose, this is more or less to be expected. The claimant States are dependent on decisions of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, an extraneous body not responsible to Parliament, although it largely controls the policies of Governments because it is able to dictate policy under the threat of reduced grants.

The Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford—But the commission works under an Act.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Yes, but it is not responsible to the people as members of Parliament are; it does not have to face electors every few years. Much as I admire what the commission does in its exhaustive inquiry into the financial condition of the State, I doubt whether the basis of that investigation is correct. Some States are claimant States and some are not, and conditions in those States vary. Although I assume all these things are considered, the report is only a bald statement of what has been inquired into, and the decisions arrived at, and members have very

little guidance as to how a decision is arrived at. The non-claimant States of New South Wales and Victoria have conditions entirely different from ours. The commission comes here and makes inquiries, and says "You should be taxing your motorists more, and unless you do so your grant will be cut". In these times it would seem inevitable that the motoring public, in view of the great deterioration in our roads, should be involved in further charges. It must not be forgotten that although the Minister said there had been no increase in fees since a certain date, the 25 per cent rebate that was abolished in 1948 was an indirect form of increase. The fairest way to tax the motorist is through his petrol consumption, but we know that this cannot be done as it is a Commonwealth prerogative.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Has the Grants Commission made any recommendation regarding that?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I could not say. Its reports do not disclose enough detail to enable us to ascertain whether it has or not, but since the petrol tax was imposed many years ago for the purpose of improving roads the Commonwealth has collected many millions of pounds. It is very difficult to ascertain exactly what the amount has been, but I believe it is about £27,000,000 annually. Of that, less than half comes back to the State. I have searched through *Hansards* in order to find out exactly what was said about it when the imposition was first made but I cannot find anything to explain just how it was proposed the money was to be spent. However, I have a fair idea that it was imposed to raise revenue to be spent specifically on roads. I know our Premier has made representations to the Commonwealth Government, in common with other Premiers, for a larger share of the petrol tax revenue, but without success, and the result is that we have never been able to finance road expenditure fully. Even the money that this tax will bring in will not be nearly enough to pay for the maintenance and extension of our road system, although it will be something to help a bad situation. One does not need to go to the country to find bad roads because there are plenty in the metropolitan area and although councils have spent £1,500,000 out of their own funds they still had to be helped considerably by the State. This gives an idea of the gigantic task confronting us. A motor tax is not an equitable tax; people who use their cars perhaps only two or three times a

week have to pay exactly the same as the motorist who is constantly using the roads.

The Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford—Can any tax be equitable?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—The guiding principle of taxation is to place the burden on the back that can carry it best.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—You must concede that the man who uses the road most does pay more through the petrol tax.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—That is true, but that goes into Commonwealth revenue and we are not getting our fair share of it. All the States should make a concerted effort—

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think that is where this Government has been lacking?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No. Our Premier has made every effort in this direction. I have a schedule showing the effect the tax will have on the large carrying companies. It is all very well to say that a tax can be passed on, but that is not always the case. We should have some sympathy for these people.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—They do not contribute to the upkeep of roads.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—They do.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—I thought you were on the side of the little man who cannot pass it on.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am trying to hold the balance evenly, but the big carriers play a very important part in the transport system of this country. After all, they carry 79 per cent of the commodities transported; whatever goes on the rail goes first by road, whether it is loaded inwards or outwards. They are doing a very big job for the community. During the war they were indispensable, and we are finding them equally so in times of peace. For example, without road transport we should never have shifted the wheat from the railway sidings in some parts of the State.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—You cannot expect a railway to every farm.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Of course not. Road transport is much more direct and less expensive to the farmer and that is why he uses it. The firm of Collier-Dring will have to pay an increase of £1,152 a year if this Bill is passed. That charge will have to be passed on and will still further increase the cost of living. How are we ever to get out of the inflationary spiral when we increase taxes which can only result in increased wages? C. H. Martin & Co. will have to pay £559 more and Gamblings Ltd. £1,147. I mention those few

only out of a considerable list. The trouble is that when these charges are passed on a little more is added.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Not necessarily.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No, but almost invariably.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—What about the small man?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am arguing for the small man. This is going to hit everyone, but I am afraid it cannot be avoided. If we are to get more and better roads we will have to pay for them, as the Leader of the Opposition has said over and over again. He is an advocate for payment for services rendered and we have to realize that if we want these services they have to be paid for. None of us likes imposing extra charges, but we should attempt to make them as equitable as possible.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Isn't this a class tax?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Of course a motor tax is a class tax. However, motorists want good roads and if they do not get them there are deputations waiting on the Government to know why. The Government cannot make roads without money so there is no alternative. Therefore, much as I dislike the increased fees, I must support the Bill.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—I approach this question in much the same manner as Mr. Anthony. Members will agree that the major roads of the State have deteriorated considerably in recent years, whereas vehicular traffic has increased, making greater demands on road maintenance. Good major and arterial roads are a necessity, not only to this State but to the entire Commonwealth. If Australia were invaded, our major country roads are in such a state of deterioration that it would be an impossibility to move a modern mechanized army in sufficient time to stem an invasion.

The increases provided in this measure are too harsh and will create hardship to some sections of the community. The private motorist who uses his vehicle at week-ends in providing pleasure for his family will be the hardest hit. He will pay the same registration fees as a man who uses his vehicle every day for business reasons. The purpose of raising additional revenue is to maintain roads, but it is surely feasible to expect those who use the roads most to pay the most for their upkeep. The registration on commercial vehicles will be increased considerably, but that increase will be passed on to the consumer.

The Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford—How will it be passed on to the overseas consumers?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—They are not paying petrol tax, and I point out that many commodities exported are marketed overseas at a lesser cost than locally. The increased registration fees will be passed on to the consumer and his purchasing power will be decreased. The private motorist will not be able to pass on his increased fees, but because of the passing on tactics he will finally be paying the registration fees, through increased costs of goods, of commercial vehicles. The Commonwealth Government should make a greater allocation to the State from the £26,000,000 collected from petrol tax. Our share for this financial year is £1,675,000, but should be greater. From the total amount collected from petrol tax the Commonwealth Government earmarks £10,000,000 for maintenance of aerodromes and similar works, but it should account for its expenditure in the same way as the State must account to the Grants Commission for its expenditure. I realize that a great deal of work has been done at the West Beach Aerodrome, but £10,000,000 is a large amount to spend annually on maintenance of aerodromes. A person who travels by aeroplane becomes familiar with the major aerodromes of the Commonwealth, but one does not often see very much construction work being undertaken. What happens to that £10,000,000? I do not think it unfair to expect the Commonwealth Government to explain its expenditure. According to the Grants Commission, South Australia is only down £269,000 on motor taxation, but from this measure the Treasurer expects to collect £1,100,000 additional revenue. The anticipated revenue for 1953-54 from petrol tax, registration fees, drivers' licences, etc., is £4,375,000, but a fairer basis of collecting additional revenue would have been to increase the petrol tax.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—What would be the good of that if we do not receive sufficient money for our roads?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—The States have a duty—

The Hon. L. H. Densley—They have not the power.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I am well aware that the States have no power to levy petrol tax, but they could bring pressure to bear upon the Commonwealth to see that they receive a fair return from any additional petrol tax. It is time that all diesel-driven motor transport

should contribute more equitably to the upkeep of roads. Owners of such vehicles pay registration fees but do not contribute anything by way of petrol tax. Many of these vehicles carry heavy loads and add to the deterioration of roads. They have an advantage over petrol-driven commercial vehicles and it is time the operators of diesel-driven vehicles were obliged to pay a comparable tax. I do not think that the 100 per cent increase in drivers' licence fees can be justified. Sufficient revenue will be derived from the proposed registration fees without increasing licence fees. I also suggest that this increase will be passed on by business organizations which own a number of motor vehicles and who pay for their drivers' licence fees. The consumer, in many cases the private motorist, will be paying not only his increased licence fee but the increased licence fees of business organizations. We must also consider the car which is driven by several members of a family. Although such a car is being used all the time by different members of the same family, each will have to pay an increase of 100 per cent for a driver's licence, and this is unjustified. I hope that an amendment will be moved in Committee to provide for no increase.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE (Midland)—I have listened to the discussions on this Bill with a great deal of interest, and it rather made my blood boil to find that once again the spectre of the Grants Commission raised its head, because I like to think that this State is inherently self-reliant. All too frequently to-day we are told that we must legislate in certain preconceived directions because of the effect that it will have through the Grants Commission on us. Our economy is being undermined by these things and I hope I will live to see the day when this State will be entirely self-reliant and independent of that body.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—We are being made to fit into a master plan.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE—Yes; almost compulsory unionism. Like many others, I have felt that if we got back all the money that was taken in petrol taxes and excise and spent it on our roads we would have been all right. However, fuller reflection should make us realize that all the petrol brought into Australia or distilled here is not used by the motorist. Air travel has become a recognized mode of transport and is increasing every day; it uses a great deal of highest quality petrol. A certain amount is also used by the fishing fleets and stationary engines. The figures of

the proportion used by the motorist and the money raised from excise on Australian distilled petrol are not available to us. We have been told over and over again that the import duty on distilled petrol is 10d. a gallon, from which 6d. is earmarked for roads, and 8½d. on locally distilled petrol, from which 3½d. is provided for roads. We have also been told that petrol tax yields £27,000,000 per annum, of which £14,500,000 finds its way on to the roads. Whether that bears a just proportion to wear and tear and the needs of automobile transport we have no figures to prove.

I have thought for some time that in the development of our roads we have bitten off more than we can chew, because we have only a small population, a very big territory, and the mileage of fairly well developed roads is absolutely staggering. When we first felt the pinch in maintenance costs at the beginning of the last war it seemed to me that we would have difficulty in meeting these charges, let alone finding money to make further roads. This problem will be before the Highways Department for many years to come. We think largely in terms of metropolitan roads—if there is a bad road in the metropolitan area there is a schemozzle about it—yet in country districts there are many mediocre roads, known as graded roads, serving people whose industry and existence is vital to this State, and the mileage of these runs into colossal figures.

I realize that complete equity and fairness cannot be achieved in registration fees, and we must submit ourselves to an embracive scheme in which one minority will suffer badly and another minority will get more than it deserves. Private motorists can be divided into two sections: business men who travel 20,000 to 25,000 miles per annum, and small private users who travel perhaps 2,000 or 3,000. Both classes pay similar registration fees, but it would be more just if they each paid, by means of petrol tax or some other pay-as-you-go system, their share of the services the State renders. A motorist who does 10,000 miles per annum or more cannot really complain if he has to pay a fairly stiff registration fee, because he gets his money's worth in the swifter and easier transport, and as the roads improve his maintenance costs will decline. I can remember very well some years ago that for each 5,000 miles I drove my car a new set of spring shackle bushes had to be installed, yet for some years now I have not had any trouble with these and really hardly knew if they are still used.

Some concession should be made to people who do only a small mileage and also to labourers in country areas. Although I am not making any special plea for the country as against the city, these men have no other means of transport because of the disappearance of the horse, brought about by the lack of interest by the State in its existence. The Minister of Agriculture would say that his department has tried to encourage horse breeding by paying premiums for foals, but although I breed them myself I have never considered the premium worth acquiring because it is so trivial. On the other hand, this State, the Commonwealth and every country of the world has given its attention very earnestly to the mechanization of industry, including primary industry. The recent strike of London petrol delivery drivers caused England to realize in a very short time that a small group of men could hold up the nation because of the extent to which we rely on motor transport.

The vast majority of men working in the country come to work in motor vehicles, usually the cheapest they can acquire, and the total mileage covered by such vehicles would not exceed 2,000 or 3,000 a year, so excessive registration fees impose a real hardship on these people. I am not moved to tears by the case put forward for the family car, because if several members have a licence they get a good deal of use from the vehicle. I am pleased to see that consideration has been given to the courageous people who are compelled to move about the metropolitan area in invalid chairs. I feel that these people should not be forced to use the roads when there is plenty of room on the pavements; I am sorry to see them at the mercy of traffic at any time. I do not know if the mechanical elephant owned by a city firm has been exempted; it seemed to me rather a trivial thing for the department to tax. Although I realize the Bill must be supported, I hope that before any similar measure is introduced an endeavour will be made to deal with the question on a mileage-driven basis rather than on a flat power-weight basis.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 19. Page 1558.)

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—This Bill, which provides for the continuation of price control for another year, will be

regretted by most people, because it was hoped that with the greater supply of goods we would see a more quickly disappearing list of commodities controlled. However, I feel we will never get away from controls unless we are prepared to make a considerable effort to achieve that end. Although I have realized for some time that any alteration hurts some people, I hope that some day we will be able to face up to the alternative and abolish control.

During the war we saw perhaps the worst phase of price fixing in the cost-plus system of production. I think most people who take notice of these things will agree that there was no more effective way of increasing costs and diminishing quality. Although I do not say that price control is exactly the same as cost-plus it bears a close resemblance. At present there is no great shortage of any commodity; although dearer, nearly everything is in more plentiful supply. I appreciate that, owing to shortages on the world's markets, some of our products have been commanding very high prices which has had the result of forcing up local prices. This, in turn, has increased labour costs and thus created the inflationary spiral. We have always criticized certain groups of people who, when seeking increased wages, have asked for, perhaps, two or three times what they really hoped to get in the hope that they would eventually get somewhere near a reasonable amount. Unfortunately, this has become a common practice. Whether it be merchants or primary producers, the basis of negotiation seems to be to ask for more than one hopes to get in order to be sure of getting what one really wants. That is a very bad state of affairs and I would be quite happy to take the risk of doing away with price control.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Will you advocate that in your electorate?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I would be quite happy to do so for I believe that ultimately the people would be much better off. Unfortunately, when people are asked to pay more than they think they should they clamour for price control, but, on the other hand, when they have goods to sell they do not want controls, so I say the sooner we can get away from them the better it will be for the State. I appreciate that we have a system of bounties and subsidies on certain commodities produced in this country, so it would be difficult to eliminate controls entirely, but the more we can get away from bounties, subsidies and tariffs the better it will be for the country. I would be prepared at any time to face up

to any small immediate loss which might accrue for the sake of the greater benefit to the community as a whole.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—Would the honourable member apply that to primary products?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I would be quite happy to do so; perhaps more happy than the Minister thinks. We cannot expect to get high prices for primary products and pay low prices for superphosphate and cornsacks, but I would be quite happy to do away with price control and I hope that there will not much longer be need for the reintroduction of this legislation.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I am somewhat surprised by some of the statements made by Mr. Densley. First he said he was opposed to the cost-plus system, but he did not give the background to show how it came into operation. He should know that it was forced upon us by the emergency of war and had it not been for the system the gearing of Australia's resources to war needs would have been impossible. It is no argument to say that it fails in peace-time. During the war, under National Security Regulations the Commonwealth Government had complete control and regulation of prices and commodities, but when hostilities ceased we found there was a shortage of consumer goods; industries which had been geared for war production had to get back to a peace-time economy and it was necessary for Governments to control prices in order to prevent the iniquitous black marketing which some people attempted to indulge in.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—The controls made black marketing.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Certainly not. When the National Security Regulations expired the Commonwealth submitted a prices control referendum to the people with a view to implementing an over-all control throughout Australia. I think my friend opposite opposed it most vehemently. The upshot was that price control reverted to the States.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Was the Commonwealth glad to hand it back?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I doubt it, but there was a great clamour from certain members of Parliament in this State to have the powers handed back. When they got them they wanted the Commonwealth Government to continue its policy of subsidies in order to maintain uniform price levels.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—Mr. Densley agrees with the policy of 14s. a bushel for wheat.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—And he voted for the continuance of the honey marketing legislation. The people who clamoured for State price control now find themselves in a most awkward position, because the States have been unable to control prices effectively.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Then you admit that price control does not work.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am saying that price control in this State has failed completely.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—It would fail anywhere.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It did not fail during the war.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin—To what would you ascribe the failure in this State?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—There was a clamour by the States to take control out of the Commonwealth Government's hands, and I have some interesting figures published by the Commonwealth Statistician for the June quarter or 1953, showing how prices have risen. These figures show prices for various consumer goods in 1949 and at present, and are as follows:—

	June Quarter					
	1949.			1953.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Milk, unbottled, delivered (per quart) ..	0	0	9	0	1	3½
Bread, 2 lb. loaf ..	0	0	7½	0	1	0
Butter ..	0	2	2	0	4	1½
Loin of lamb chops ..	0	1	8	0	3	10
Plum jam ..	0	1	5½	0	2	3
Sugar ..	0	0	4½	0	0	9
Tea ..	0	2	9	0	4	2½
Steak ..	0	1	1½	0	2	3½
Sirloin or beef ..	0	1	11	0	2	4
Firewood (per ton) ..	3	3	6	4	14	0

That list shows increases of up to 200 per cent, proving conclusively that price control by the States has failed and that the only successful method of dealing with prices is by means of an over-all Commonwealth control. Mr. Densley attempted to justify his argument by bringing in all sorts of extraneous matters. He wants to do away with all tariffs.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—But he wants the barley, honey and egg boards to suit the primary producers.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I do not deny them the right to have those boards to protect their interests, but they should concede the same right to the consumer. Mr. Densley said he hoped the time was not far distant when tariffs on everything could be removed and we could be as free as the birds of the air.

I remind him that but for our tariff policy and the development of our secondary industries Australia would have been in a very serious plight during the war. The efforts of our splendid young men and woman, who sprang to the colours to defend the nation, would have been in vain. The removal of all tariffs and the consequent influx of cheap foreign produced goods would destroy our secondary industries and, if the emergency ever arose again they would be unable to marshal their resources for war purposes and Australia would be in a sorry plight. We should be proud that secondary industries have been established because they contribute to our economy and to the maintenance of the Australian way of life. I support the second reading.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE (Midland)—Like Mr. Densley, I shall welcome with open arms any measure to abolish price control. I realize that war necessitated price control but it is a long time since the end of the war and the State today enjoys an all round prosperity superior to anything in its history. Although some articles may have been more valuable—and as I have previously stated, the present wool clip is worth only half what it was in the boom period—conditions generally are more stable. We no longer have the war as a justification for price control nor is there any real excuse for any shortage. Individual cases can be suggested, such as the decontrol of potatoes in New South Wales, but my opinion is that if controls were entirely removed, while there may be an increase in prices and a shortage in the market for a time, eventually the laws of supply and demand would operate and the withholding of goods from the public would not be possible because, without some form of official control, that is a risky business. Growers of primary produce and manufacturers of goods would have to sell in the markets that existed.

Generally speaking, I am not in favour of boards of control of any kind. I do not pose as an authority on wheat, nor as any sort of authority, but my own experience of persons who grow and sell wheat on the ordinary markets is that they come out safely in the long run. The chief trouble with some wheat-growers, which they harp on, has arisen through their holding wheat and gambling on the market instead of conducting their businesses as good growers. I would venture

to say that it is almost certain that if a board of control is appointed, the article controlled soon disappears from the market. The control of eggs, under an Egg Board, whilst a good idea for certain people, has had an adverse effect in the country. Farmers' wives, who originally took surplus eggs to the local store and placed them to the credit of their accounts, cannot do so now because the store-keeper will not handle them on account of the red tape involved in filling in forms and applications. Sales of this nature in the country have practically ceased and today eggs are probably dearer than even in the pioneer days of the State. I feel it is better to stand on our own feet at the earliest possible moment and to weather, while we are prosperous, the difficult period that might ensue for two or three years before our economy stabilizes. I hope that the Government is giving earnest attention to the possibility of freeing us from price control.

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

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I oppose the motion. This measure is for the purpose of extending legislation for 12 months.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. E. Anthony)—The honourable member cannot debate the motion.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—This Bill has been before the House for three weeks and it is time it was disposed of.

The ACTING PRESIDENT—The honourable member can vote against the motion if he desires but he cannot debate it.

The Council divided on the Hon. Sir Wallace Sandford's motion:—

Ayes (13).—The Hons. E. Anthony, J. L. S. Bice, J. L. Cowan, L. H. Densley, E. H. Edmonds, N. L. Jude, A. L. McEwin, A. J. Melrose, F. T. Perry, W. W. Robinson, C. D. Rowe, Sir Wallace Sandford (teller), and R. R. Wilson.

Noes (4).—The Hons. K. E. J. Bardolph, S. C. Bevan, F. J. Condon (teller), and A. A. Hoare.

Majority of 9 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.43 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, November 25, at 2 p.m.