

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, July 28, 1954.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

(Continued from July 27. Page 125.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—When Her Majesty the Queen opened the special Session of Parliament in March the Opposition paid a tribute of loyalty to the Throne and indicated how pleased members were that Her Majesty had performed the ceremony. There is no need to add anything other than to say that I endorse the remarks of the two speakers yesterday that her visit further cemented our loyalty to the British Empire. His Excellency the Governor and Lady George have endeared themselves to the people of South Australia, who have a very high regard for them. The visit of Her Majesty entailed much forethought, vision and work. In that respect I wish to add to the tributes already paid to you, Mr. President, the Clerk of Parliaments, the Assistant Clerk of the Council and the whole Parliamentary staff for the part they played during the visit. They carried out their duties in the most dignified way. Everything was done thoroughly, and I give those gentlemen full marks for their efforts.

Some may think it is rather formal to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, but that is not so. I listened attentively to the two speeches made yesterday, and without hesitation I can say that we heard one of the best speeches Mr. Robinson has ever made in the Council. It was full of valuable information and I compliment him on it. Mr. Perry, who seconded the motion, gave very good advice, stressed his points effectively and added to the debating standard of this Chamber, and I also congratulate him. They sang the praises of the Government from their point of view.

As so many suggestions have been made by the Opposition and put into effect, a few more suggestions from this side will be an advantage. I listened to the praises extended to the Government by the two honourable members yesterday in their reference to the Leigh Creek coalfield, the Port Augusta power house,

the operations of the Electricity Trust, afforestation and many other State activities. May I remind the Council that many of our Acts on the Statute Book would not have been there but for the assistance of the Labor Party. There is no need for me to remind members that frequently measures which they support and on which they congratulate themselves have been carried by only one vote in this Chamber. Therefore, the Government and its supporters should remember that although the Government may initiate legislation it is Parliament which puts it into effect and finally decides the issue. It may be said, "Let us do away with Parliament and allow the Ministry to run the country." I do not subscribe to that. With all due respect, I remind the Government that it is only a minority Government and not here because it has received a majority vote from the electors. Unless we have co-operation in Parliament we shall not make that progress which is so desirable.

We read in the Governor's speech about the buoyancy of the State and how it has progressed over the year. Let us all take some little credit for that progress. I am not so much concerned with what is contained in the Governor's speech as with what has been left out of it. Whilst we speak of the finances of the State and are proud to know the progress that is being made here, there are a few matters that are well worth considering. For a number of years employees of the Government and many outside institutions have been receiving long service leave, so why cannot something be done to care for all employees in industry, who have given long and faithful service to their employers, by granting some special reward on or before retirement? The older men in industry have a steadying effect on the younger men but some employers have done nothing to care for their future. After 10 years' service employees in every industry should be entitled to one week's leave for each 12 months' service, and I earnestly urge the Government to consider legislation to put all employees on an equal footing with other States controlled by Labor Governments.

I next come to the question of marginal rates, not only to Government employees, but to all and sundry. The living standard of tradesmen and semi-tradesmen has been reduced, and the Government should set an example to industry by restoring marginal rates and allowances for its employees. For the purpose of comparative wage justice in industry generally, a wage formula calculated on a proportionate

basis may be a satisfactory solution when determining speedy wage increases in abnormal times but it is not a measuring rod one should use in determining the margin for skill, which is the payment for the value of services of an employee to his employer in any industry. Unfortunately during the past few years the standard of tradesmen has been reduced, and there is no incentive to the young men who know that they will not receive fair and reasonable treatment.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Whose fault is it if the irresponsible boy of 21 gets the same wage as the married man of 28?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Young men at 21 are called upon to defend this country the same as any other men and if they desire to marry and build up the future generation every encouragement should be given to them by paying a fair and reasonable wage. The baby of this Chamber, Mr. Rowe, is just as worthy and valuable to this community as I am, and on reaching the age of 21 men have the right to stand for election to another place.

Although we have endeavoured to improve the Workmen's Compensation Act over the last few years, since we last discussed the matter legislation in other States has been further amended and employees there receive a more reasonable deal than in this State. The citizen of South Australia has just as high a value and reputation as the workers in other States and, in view of the state of buoyancy in our finances about which we have been reminded, surely we should give the same consideration to employees as Labor Governments have given in other States. It is most unfair that when a man meets with an accident he loses a portion of his wages and when he has recovered and it comes to a question of arriving at a lump sum for compensation every penny that has been paid to him in weekly instalments is deducted. That is unfair and unreasonable because in the end he gets little or nothing for the disability that he has to carry through life. Consideration should be given also to a man who is injured going to or coming from work. All we are seeking in this democratic State is what is in existence in other States. Are not our reputation, dignity and standards equal to those of any other Parliament in Australia? Therefore, instead of lagging behind, let us set an example that may be followed by other States. Mr. Perry said yesterday that it is necessary to reduce manufacturing costs in order to compete in the world's markets, but in many cases the utmost has already been put

into industry in order to reduce costs, and in many instances quite successfully. However, I have mentioned before one industry concerning which a Conciliation Commissioner said that he did not know of any other manufacturing industry in Australia where the costs were so low, yet everyone knows of the state of that industry, to which I have referred on several occasions.

His Excellency said that stability of prices and costs has been achieved and that production is still increasing. That is true of some industries but not all. I noticed in today's press a report that agreement has been reached on the stabilization of the wheat industry. If that is the wish of the majority of the people I am prepared to support it, but I should say there would be a very keen debate on the legislation when it is introduced and we will have an opportunity to say more on the subject then.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—When you refer to the majority you mean the majority of the growers?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, we will not have any say. We will be asked to pass the legislation, and I suppose it will be one way traffic, but a few words may be said on the other side of the question. Quite recently, at a Federal Council meeting of the union of which I have the honour to be president, it was decided to place before the Premiers of the four wheat exporting States the serious position of the flour milling industry. We followed that with a conference with the representatives of the flour mill owners suggesting that the Federal Government should be approached to consider granting a subsidy on all wheat manufactured into flour for export. That is the union's point of view and the other side can speak for itself. I have approached our own Premier on several occasions and he is very sympathetic for he realises the importance of the industry and is prepared to do all he possibly can to assist it. I appreciate the efforts of the Premier or any other person who is prepared to do something to assist us to recover the trade that Australia has lost. I regret to say, however, that the situation today is worse than it has been for the last 15 or 16 years, with idle mills in cities and throughout the country. I must say that I have been disappointed in not having more assistance from the press of South Australia in support of an industry that has manufactured in 12 months 2,355,000 tons of flour, bran and pollard. I think our press could have done a lot more to help us, but everybody has

been talking wheat, wheat, wheat; the poultry, pig and dairy industries have a right to be considered as well as other sections of the community. I do not know what will be the result of the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne on Monday but I reiterate my thanks to the Premier for what he is endeavouring to do.

One of the most disturbing features of our economy—and I have drawn attention to it before—is the financial position of our water supply undertakings. Water is so essential that even if losses are sustained on the various schemes they must be undertaken in order to develop the State. I will give members some information, which I hope will not weary them, in order to present a clear picture of what the State has to face.

A few years ago the profit returned from the metropolitan water scheme was just below 11 per cent on capital expenditure, but today it is being run at a loss—for the first time as far as I can remember. It is very disturbing to know that, whereas some years ago our various water schemes, with the assistance of the profit made on the metropolitan section, returned a profit of 2½ per cent, last year there was a loss. I do not advocate an increase in water rates—that is not my prerogative—but I am prepared to consider any suggestions. The Government should ask the Commonwealth Government for an increased grant to meet the position so that the State can be developed effectively. The same applies to other essential State works. Because of our commitments in developing South Australia, I would hate to think what the rate of taxation would be if we had to collect our own taxes. That is one reason why I advocate a continuation of uniform taxation.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Do you think that our taxation would then be more than the average?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, because we are told that we are doing things in South Australia which are not being done in any other State. In that case we must find the money. The South Australian Government does not treat its employees as liberally as is done by Governments in the other States. It will be necessary to spend much money on the extension of water works during the year. The Mannum-Adelaide water project alone will absorb £2,000,000. The first stage of the work on the construction of the South Para reservoir has been completed, but a large amount will be necessary to finish it. Since the last report of the Public Works Committee was submitted

to Parliament in August, 1953, works have been referred to the committee which will cost in the aggregate £11,750,000. I desire to pay a compliment to the secretary of the committee, Mr. Steele, and to his assistant, Mr. Sexton, who have a wonderful knowledge of the projects under consideration, and do a great deal of work. They are both very efficient, and we can well be very proud of them. They have to prepare numerous reports, and at times it is necessary for them to take work home. Because of their efforts it is only right that their work should be recognised.

During the last 12 months the Committee submitted many reports. Among them it was recommended that the Warren trunk main be enlarged and the supply to that reservoir be augmented by the construction of a branch main from the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline at an estimated cost of £3,350,000. Another scheme was an extension of the Salisbury water supply to serve the Housing Trust area near that town at a cost of £51,730. It was also recommended that a cast-iron cement lined main be constructed from the South-East corner of section 25, Hundred of Playford, along the Cleve-Cowell road to serve the Cleve township at an estimated cost of £25,000. Another recommendation was for a water supply to serve the uranium treatment plant at Port Pirie and the township, to be constructed at an estimated cost of £105,000. The Committee also recommended that the sewerage system be extended to serve Croydon North at a cost of £55,000 and that the Blackwood, Belair and Eden Hills water supply be augmented by the provision of a new main to be laid along the Shepherds Hill Road, including the construction of storage tanks and a pumping plant, at an estimated cost of £29,300. Another recommendation was for an extension of the main to provide a water supply to serve the Housing Trust area at Northfield at an estimated cost of £35,000.

Since the presentation of the committee's last annual report the following matters have been referred to it:—The construction of sewerage treatment and disposal works at Dry Creek, the provision of a pumping station and a rising main for the pre-treatment of waste from the Metropolitan Abattoirs, and an extension of the main to the treatment works at an estimated cost of £5,207,000; a water supply for the hundred of Hutchison at an estimated cost of £30,550; a sewerage scheme for Whyalla at an estimated cost of £576,000; the construction of a reservoir at Myponga Creek and the

provision of a trunk main from that reservoir to the metropolitan area, together with a pumping station to supply Yankalilla and Normanville, and boost pumps to supply Noarlunga and McLaren Flat at an estimated cost of £3,000,000; the construction of an extension from the Tod River main to the Hundred of Chandada at a cost of £250,000. Also the Committee has been asked to report on improvements to the port at Port Lincoln and many other things. The amount of money spent on our water schemes to date is colossal. I doubt whether there is a commodity more needed than water. I am not in any way opposing any of these schemes, but I think Parliament should be reminded that the money has to come from somewhere. I emphasize that in order that South Australia should be developed effectively increased grants should be made available by the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Do you mean that people in the other States should pay for what we want?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I have often heard the honourable member say that we are paying for a lot that we are not getting, but which people in the other States are getting. I do not wish to take any credit away from the Government for what it has done in developing the State, but if we had to depend on State taxation we could not meet the position as well as it is now being met under uniform taxation. I could not convince many members because their outlook is not sufficiently broad.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—They believe in standing on their own feet.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Could that be my socialistic friend putting that? We have only to look at the Government and its supporters and then at the Leigh Creek coalfield and the Electricity Trust. It is no good criticizing without being prepared to put something forward, and I am prepared to submit propositions. They might fall on deaf ears but this House must not always have one way traffic. Some of the best men to rule Australia have come from the workshops and their suggestions, although ridiculed, were carried out subsequently by Governments of a different colour. My honourable friend may not think that our suggestions are worthy of consideration but the Opposition is prepared to give fair and reasonable consideration to every measure submitted to Parliament, irrespective of whether it is a private or a Government Bill, and all we ask in return is that any

legislation we introduce should receive the same consideration from Government members.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Don't you get that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It comes to a question of policy. I do not object to any man carrying out his principles and policies.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—I thought you were thanking the Premier a little while ago for taking up matters for the flour industry.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, and I always give credit where it is due, as we should all do irrespective of where the help comes from. That is what makes Parliament. In any Parliament in the world it is the Opposition that helps to make a Government by assisting to make laws that are abided by and are in the interests of all concerned. Other public works dealt with in earlier references and still under discussion add to the colossal amount of over £11,000,000. A long range programme for harbour improvements for the next 50 years will cost £40,000,000. Nine references refer to this matter, some of which have been dealt with, including the Osborne coal handling plant and Port Adelaide harbour improvements, but it is proposed to spend a further colossal sum not only at Port Adelaide but at Port Lincoln, Wallaroo and Port Pirie. Once again, where is this money coming from?

The Hon. E. Anthony—Haven't you any faith in this country?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—This instrumentality is another that has paid profits in the past but is now facing a deficit, yet we are called upon to meet this extra expense. I have enough faith in Australia and South Australia to know that people will stand up to their obligations when asked to do so. It is no use trying to belittle problems or projects but surely one is justified in pointing out that these things cost money, yet because one says that one is asked if one has any faith in the country. I was born here and am still here and I know there is not a better place in Australia. The Harbours Board was asked recently to consider a project for a deep sea port at Cape Jaffa, an undertaking estimated to cost about £9,000,000 but the superphosphate company interested in the project went cold on the idea because it had already incurred considerable expenditure at another port. That lessened any hope of providing a deep sea port in the South-East, which would have cost £425,000 annually and would have yielded a revenue of only £72,000. The Committee was forced to report against the proposal for the present. At some future time when we all

have faith in Australia it may be necessary to construct a deep sea port there.

I will leave education and mining for other members to discuss, but would like to say a few words about local government. Many years ago a Royal Commission presided over by Sir John Bice inquired into the acquisition of wharves and finally recommended that they should be acquired. That became law in 1930 and since that time the Port Adelaide City Council has lost £450,000 in rates on non-ratable property, offset by a few thousand pounds for subletting. That money has had to be made up by the local ratepayers and, although we have endeavoured to persuade this and past Governments that the council has a reasonable case for compensation, so far we have not been successful in obtaining it.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—Doesn't the council get any Government grant?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No more than any other council. My remarks apply to a slight degree to Port Pirie and Port Lincoln—anywhere where there is a port.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—It applies to a lot of places, even the city of Adelaide.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but to a lesser degree. I refer to wharves, not non-ratable property such as local courts, customs buildings and so on. I ask this Government to give favourable consideration to this matter because we have read in the press that it is handing out money to other councils for roads and, although I do not object to that, surely a little could be given to Port Adelaide. There is no comparison between the losses made by other councils and Port Adelaide.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Governments have spent a lot of money in Port Adelaide.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—And they have recouped a lot, too. If the Unley or Burnside councils had lost £450,000 I can imagine what would be the attitude of my honourable friend.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Councils in my district have lost quite a lot too.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—But nothing like that sum. Every ratepayer of Port Adelaide has had to help make up the loss and that applies not only to residents but to all businessmen and manufacturers. Recently the Harbors Board has been acquiring property which otherwise undoubtedly would have been used for home-building purposes, and I suppose the same principle will apply there; it is now Harbors Board property and therefore non-ratable. How much longer is this to go on? I urge that the Minister of Local Government, who is not in the Chamber at the moment,

should at least read my remarks and that the Government, which has been giving assistance to other people in so many ways, show a little more generosity to the ratepayers of the chief port of South Australia.

His Excellency's speech mentioned the question of police pensions and said that legislation will be submitted to provide for increases. While I am not yet in a position to know what increases are to be granted to police officers, I point out that increased pensions are also overdue to public servants. For instance, the payment per unit to public servants was increased to £39 under the amending Act assented to in November, 1951. The basic wage was increased to £9 15s. a week that month, whereas the present rate is £11 11s., therefore to place superannuation payments to public servants on their just basis the amount per unit should be increased to £46. In the Commonwealth public service the payment per unit was increased in April last from £39 to £45 10s. per annum, and, as it is the policy of the State Government that its employees should not be debarred from enjoying a standard of living comparable to that of Government employees in the other States, I strongly suggest that the unit payment should be increased to £46, even if it should mean some increase in payments by existing members.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Is the honourable member anticipating the reply to a question already on the Notice Paper,

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am simply stating what I think should be done, but I can assure the honourable member that he can rely on any help that I can give him in that respect.

In his speech His Excellency stated:—

The campaign to eradicate fruit fly from the suburbs of Adelaide has continued with a large measure of success. Only one infestation was found in the spring of 1953 and none during the ensuing summer, although many reports were investigated. The pest has not recurred in any of the centres where measures were taken for its eradication.

In view of that statement and the suggestions I made last year when the Fruit Fly Act was being discussed, I cannot understand why the department has continued with its costly, irritating and, to me, uneconomic system of eradication. Since the first infestation it is understood that numerous traps have been laid on suburban properties but, as stated, there has been no recurrence of the pest. Notwithstanding this, gangs of men have been operating since at great expense to the taxpayers and often with any lack of system. For instance I have been advised on good authority that in

at least one case one man was seen entering properties laying baits in trees, but he was shortly followed by the spraying gang, who in spraying washed off the baits before they had a chance to become effective. This alone shows lack of efficient control. I also understand that the number of gangs employed have been considerably reduced. Whether this has been because of the representations made in this House last year or inability to obtain labour I do not know. However, in any case the action of the department has been devoid of all logic and the following illustrates my point. Although the only infestation occurred when grapes and figs were about in the flowering stage, grapes had been infested by bees and birds and had begun to rot before the fruit was picked. Decayed figs fell on the ground and in some gardens are still to be seen in sodden heaps. The position obtained for months. Eventually the gangs again visited properties and removed grapes which occupiers would have had to bury, but for which they will eventually be paid, but left heaps of other decayed fruit on the ground. What a shocking waste of the taxpayer's money. It has already cost the Government about £700,000 and it may well run into nearly £1,000,000. Whether the money was well spent I am not in a position to say, but members know that there has been much criticism in previous Parliaments of the huge expenditure and I think this is a matter which might well be looked into with a view to saving some of the expenditure.

In conclusion, the Opposition assures the Government that it will give careful consideration to all measures that will be introduced, and in return I hope that the private Bills that are to be brought down this session will receive favourable and sympathetic consideration, for they will contain a lot of merit. Before resuming my seat I would like to thank the mover, Mr. Robinson, and the seconder, Mr. Perry, for their kindly personal references to me and the way members received them, which I appreciate very much.

The Hon. SIR WALLACE SANDFORD (Central No. 2)—I congratulate both the mover and seconder on their speeches yesterday. I fully endorse what they said in reference to the great honour South Australia enjoyed in having this Parliament opened by Her Majesty the Queen in this very Chamber only a few months ago, and I am sure that not a single member will forget any incident of that memorable occasion, and will carry the very happy memories of it to the end of their lives. Mr. Robinson delivered a thoughtful, clear and

carefully constructed summary of the duties and achievements of the Cabinet Ministers and the departments under their control and I approve warmly all the conclusions and encomiums that he voiced. We have a Premier whom we can hold in the very highest regard and esteem and of whom we are very proud. Fortunately for us he is endowed with the ability to select his colleagues with judgment and wisdom, and the result is that there now exists a greater degree of confidence in South Australia's future than ever before in the State's history. Mr. Perry emphasized this in seconding the motion, and by statistics proved very convincingly that our prosperity has never been equalled.

The opportunity was taken of referring to the expansion of the Cabinet by the creation of a new office in this Council. All of us are so well acquainted with Mr. Jude's work in this Chamber that we are sure that he will unquestionably achieve all that we hope he will do.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Members of the Opposition have already said that.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—It would be wrong if, in speaking on the appointment of one of us, some references were not made to it by all speakers. There have also been changes of portfolios in the House of Assembly. Recently, there appeared in the press a telegram from Canberra regarding the high respect and esteem felt by those there who had come in contact with the former Minister of Agriculture, Sir George Jenkins. We can be very proud that these remarks were applied to a member of our Parliament.

Paragraph 6 of His Excellency the Governor's speech is a record of prosperity and progress. Truly we live in a land which, as Mr. Perry indicated yesterday, although he did not use exactly the same words, is flowing with milk and honey. The extension of duties and increase in the burden of responsibilities have demanded a widening of Government services and activities. I am sure that not only inside Parliament, but outside as well, general approval is felt at the action taken by the Government.

Among the steps of progress special reference should be made to the war service land settlement scheme. I am sure all members will have felt pleased with the progress reported in this respect in the Governor's speech. The problems which have faced Governments in the past have been studied and largely overcome, and it is of interest to learn that the total number of settlers under this scheme is approaching the one thousand mark. There can

be no question as to the obligation due to those who defended us, and there is a genuine feeling of approval in the way that their settlement has been handled.

With the increase in trade with additional acreages being brought under production, the question of transport becomes increasingly important. I was interested to hear Mr. Robinson place emphasis on this point yesterday, and it was cheering to learn that railway activities continue to be extended in various areas. We have noted with interest and approval the improvement in services generally by the use of diesel engines. Those who travelled to Port Augusta last week for the opening of the powerhouse were, I am sure, unanimous in their expressions of approval of the value and general advantages to passengers, as well as in the transport of goods, because of the introduction of diesel engines. I congratulate the Government on having been so progressive in introducing this type of traction.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—What has happened to the electrification of our railways?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—That will bring its own teething problems, which I am confident the engineering staff will satisfactorily overcome. Road construction and maintenance continue to receive attention, and with special grants and increased motor revenue this is made possible. I feel sure that road users generally are satisfied with what is being done on their behalf. The value to South Australia of Broken Hill is fully appreciated. It is generally regarded as being commercially attached to South Australia. In many ways I do not think we have shown our appreciation of this association, although it is now becoming obvious. It was not long ago that negotiations were undertaken for the provision of water to the Radium Hill mine from the Broken Hill supply, whereas on the other hand it is proposed that electricity should be supplied from South Australia to the Broken Hill area. It is therefore somewhat of a two-way traffic. The huge extension of secondary industries in South Australia is reflected by the activities of the Electricity Trust, whose sales for the year totalled 675,000,000 units, or more than 100,000,000 units above the quantity sold in the previous year. Those figures are astounding. We appreciate the work being so courageously undertaken by the Government and efficiently being carried into effect by the trust, which is so carefully managed and is a great credit to the staff. The Governor referred to this matter when opening the Port

Augusta plant, and the possibilities of even greater extensions must be truly tremendous.

Reference has been made, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition, to the extension of our water supplies. We have heard him on this subject before. I ask him not to overlook the fact that although considerable sums are required for the establishment and operation of these public works, credit must be given to the income arising from the investment, both directly, which is extremely substantial, and indirectly, which is so hard to calculate. In recent years the public has been watching with interest and confidence the construction of the water main from Mannum to Adelaide, where extensions for domestic and industrial use are so eagerly awaited. Not only are our city and suburban water requirements being furthered, but it is cheering to know that in addition both Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula are receiving special attention. These country areas will gain greatly thereby. We know from personal experience how very much less production on Eyre Peninsula would have been had the Government in power not tackled the job of supplying a water service from the Tod River reservoir, close to Port Lincoln, as far afield as Thevenard and Ceduna. It is satisfactory to know that Yorke Peninsula, which has flourished and been an extremely reliable wealth-producing area, will have its prospects of production still further increased when a reliable and substantial water supply is available.

The public generally as well as members will be glad to know of the further development of the mineral industry. It is a matter of very great satisfaction to us, and the department managing it is deserving of credit. It is surprising to many people to learn that the mineral production of South Australia has been maintained at the record value of £6,000,000 a year—a truly astonishing figure when it is remembered that the production of primary and secondary industry also has gone ahead at the same time. Only a few short years ago we were disposed to regard South Australia as a place where rural industries were of the greatest value, and to consider that for secondary production we were dependent on the eastern States. So many problems appear to have developed in such a short time that call for initiative, determination and energetic attention; for example, pyrites and the production of acid so necessary to make soluble the phosphatic acid in the rock to be treated before full use can be made of it in the growth of cereals.

It is now more than 50 years since Prof. Lowrie stimulated the use of phosphatic rock, and in laboratory tests it was found that the acid could be made soluble and readily and quickly assimilated by cereal roots. He rendered a great service to South Australia and to those who have followed the methods of our farmers. It is not inappropriate to mention that the Roseworthy College, of which Prof. W. Lowrie was Principal, has several of its students in this House and the House of Assembly, not the least of whom is Mr. Jude, who has recently taken the high office of Cabinet Minister. The work that has already been done in the use of pyrites is extremely creditable and one can be perfectly confident that there will be much more produced because the acid is obtainable here. That is a matter for credit to the department and the Minister in control of it.

For a long time our forestry assets have made a great appeal to most of us, and we are consequently happy in the knowledge of the increasing prosperity of our silvicultural undertakings. It is almost astonishing to learn that in this State, where the percentage of aridity is greater than in any other part of the Commonwealth, in only 20 years log production has increased almost tenfold and the total area of plantings is about 125,000 acres. So much then for the rural, industrial and physical expansion of our State's affairs. Even so, the progress and development has been only slightly touched upon in the references I have made to the growth of our State during the last few years. When we reflect that in addition to all the material progress that has been made our Education Department is faced with the fact that during the last five years only the numbers of new scholars have risen by 47 per cent, and that no other State in Australia has had an increase of this magnitude, we can but faintly realize yet another of the difficulties that have beset the administrators, teachers, builders and equippers and even scholars. I am sure it is not in the least an exaggeration to say that every one of those to whom I have just referred has earned our approval and gratitude for coping so satisfactorily with such conditions.

It is but a short step to the subject of health when considering the responsibilities of statesmanship. The establishment and equipment of new hospitals has been brought about in spite of acute shortages of both labour and materials. The construction and completion of the nurses' building at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the nurses' home at the Royal

Adelaide Hospital, and the Infectious Diseases building at Northfield, as well as constructional work at Parkside, Mount Gambier and Port Augusta, call for expressions of approval and appreciation when we think of the demands made in every direction by all sections of the community. So many things have been achieved that it is almost impossible to indicate satisfactorily one's appreciation of the difficulties that have been faced and subdued.

It cannot be considered that even a short summary would be complete without reference to the wonderful progress achieved by the Housing Trust. During the current financial year it is considered that 3,550 homes will be built, which will make a total of 21,000 houses completed since the trust's inception. We all realize the urgent necessity for obtaining migrants. The urge is undoubtedly much greater today than ever before in our history and it has been brought home to us not only every day, but every hour, that the shortage of population is our "Heel of Achilles"; that here is our vulnerability. We must speedily increase our population, and that necessitates providing houses for them with the least possible delay. The Government is therefore rendering a service of the greatest value in making it possible for migrants to have rooms to live in, if only so that they may send back to their folks at home good reports of this new land to which they have come. It will not be without value to our children and to their children after them.

History teems with examples of peoples and civilizations being overrun, but as Mr. Cudmore reminds us when quoting Patrick Henry, the American insurgent, "The only thing we learn from history is that we never learn." It was indeed a proud boast that Mr. Menzies was able to make recently that not only is the nation more prosperous and more productive, and providing more social services and better defended, but that we have more friends abroad than ever before. It was indeed a proud boast that he could use those words about our relationship with the teeming millions surrounding us. Let us never forget the value of such a claim. I draw attention to the scope of Bills referred to in paragraph 35 of the Governor's speech, all of which will be given our careful consideration. I support the adoption of the *Address in Reply*.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—It is not my intention to speak at any length on this motion, but only to make some general observations on one or two matters mentioned

in the Governor's speech and to reserve more detailed comment until legislation is presented for consideration later. Although I endeavour at all times to avoid repetition, it is inevitable that there must be some, but although some of the matters to which I will refer have already been mentioned by previous speakers, I feel I must make some comment on them. Although I will do so briefly, I do not want that brevity to be taken as a gauge of the sincerity of the sentiments I am about to express.

At the outset, I wish to say that as one of the representatives of the people residing in the northern and western portions of this State I feel extremely proud and appreciative of the very great honour bestowed on this Parliament by Her Majesty the Queen when she so graciously performed the ceremony of declaring the Parliament open. That day, and the ceremony associated with it, will go down as the most memorable in the history of Parliamentary Government in this State, and all members must feel very fortunate to have been entitled to participate in such a memorable occasion. I also join with others in offering my good wishes and congratulations to the two members of this Council whom Her Majesty saw fit to honour during her visit—Sir Lyell McEwin and the Hon. Frank Condon—and I heartily subscribe to the opinions that have been expressed, for in both instances those honours were well bestowed and richly deserved because both gentlemen have rendered valuable services to the people of this State.

The keynote of His Excellency's speech was optimism for the future, and I think that optimism arises as the result of the revealed position of stable prosperity enjoyed by all sections of the community in Australia. Unemployment is at an exceedingly low figure, secondary production is showing a satisfactory expansion and the primary producers have enjoyed a series of good seasons, the last of which achieved some records in respect of yield. An average of over 18 bushels an acre for the whole of the area sown to wheat has never been achieved before. The 1,000,000 acres sown to barley was also a record. The number of sheep depastured in South Australia has now reached more than 12,000,000—another record—and it is of interest to note that of that number 8,750,000 are depastured inside Goyder's line of rainfall. This indicates that the policy of diversified agricultural practices has been followed with considerable advantage in recent years by the agricultural community. There is not now so much of having, as it were, all one's eggs in one basket

in relying simply on cereals. There has been a recognition of the value of depasturing stock, as not only does this assist in meeting the different markets but is of real advantage to the land from which subsequent crops are taken. Wool and stock prices continue to operate at a high level, but unfortunately the overseas markets for cereals, especially wheat, are somewhat unstable at the moment. With millions of people eking out a precarious existence at near-starvation levels one has difficulty in supporting the contention that there is over-production. The conflicting economics associated with this anomaly must be solved in order that the surpluses held in the food producing countries may be made available to those people who are in dire need. In this connection I make so bold as to say that the wheatgrowers might well consider foregoing some of the advantages of the higher prices with a view to meeting the market in those countries where the people cannot afford to pay the current prices. This would be not merely a charitable gesture, but I think would be good business. Those engaged in many other forms of business make every effort to get their products into the hands of the people who most need them and who are most likely to be future good customers, and the wheatgrowers of the Commonwealth might well consider making an effort, even at some initial loss, to assist those who at present cannot come into the market for our produce at prevailing prices.

The State in partnership with the Commonwealth entered into a solemn obligation for the rehabilitation of returned servicemen, and as one who has been associated with land settlement and development schemes it is pleasing to know that a high degree of success has been attained. We are prone to think that the tempo of development has been somewhat slow, but we should not forget all the difficulties which confronted us in the initial stages. It is unnecessary, I am sure, to remind members of the shortages that prevailed in the necessary plant, machinery and manpower. The State has purchased land that was more or less in its virgin state and in addition has made use of large areas of Crown lands likewise in a virgin state, and all of this called for much organization, hard work and machinery. From the latest information available it is pleasing to learn that the great majority of the soldier settlers have progressed to the extent that they are meeting their full commitments to the Government.

An event of great interest and importance connected with the economic development of the

State occurred on Friday last when members were privileged to attend the switching on of the electricity power plant at Port Augusta. This function, as other speakers have said, marked another step in the States' programme for the fuller use of its fuel resources and the provision of a greater volume of electric power at progressively cheaper rates. Members who, over the years, have supported legislation rendering this project possible have done so with the idea that its benefits would be distributed throughout the State and not confined to towns and industrial organizations, and consequently I stress the need for the farmer having more consideration. Cases have come under my notice where the owners of properties through which the power lines pass find it difficult indeed to get a service from those lines, one reason being the high cost of the transformers necessary to break down the voltage to make the energy available for domestic and farm use. We have been informed that the Electricity Trust is now showing quite a substantial profit and I therefore suggest that the trust might well consider setting up a fund out of those profits from which assistance might be rendered to those in circumstances such as I have described. Members will recall that when the measures incidental to this great scheme were under consideration the potential universal benefit to the people throughout the State was the determining factor in forming our opinions. Consequently, I feel that more consideration should be given to the small user of electrical power so that he may be relieved of some of the high initial costs involved in the installation of services.

Of all the subjects dealt with by His Excellency I know of none of greater importance than that of transport and the construction and maintenance of roads and highways which are complementary to our transport system. I give full marks to the Commissioner of Highways and his department for what has been achieved, often under difficult conditions, and to the body of voluntary workers who give time and service in the offices of local government. Notwithstanding this, I look forward to an acceleration of road construction and an extension of the mileage of sealed surfaces on the main highways of the State. One is encouraged to anticipate this by the fact that the increased revenue from higher motor taxation will all be available for road work and by the evidence that in some localities there are people who own big mechanical plants who are very much interested in the possibility of undertaking contracts.

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It was my privilege to accompany Mr. Jude, the Minister of Local Government, on a comprehensive tour of Eyre Peninsula several weeks ago and I cannot over-estimate the benefit that will accrue from this visit, both to the people of the districts concerned and, if I may say so, to the Minister himself. He made personal contact with the people who are entrusted with the responsibility of local government in the nine district councils on Eyre Peninsula, the corporation of the town of Port Lincoln, and the Whyalla Town Commission, and in addition he has gained firsthand knowledge of what has been achieved and what should be done, and I am sure that the combined result of all that will be of great benefit to the Minister, his officers and all the districts concerned.

One other matter mentioned in His Excellency's Speech concerns financial assistance to organizations for the provision of homes for the aged and infirm. This subject is exercising the minds of residents in some country districts where there appears to be a growing need for such a social service. In many of the older towns are aged folk who have spent their lifetime working and giving community service and who, in the eventide of their life, often find themselves without kith or kin and beyond the stage where they can obtain profitable employment. Established in the metropolitan area are homes and refuges where a limited number of such people can receive assistance, but the need far exceeds the facilities available. With a view to relieving the position in many districts, religious organizations and individuals, and in some instances the local council, are taking the matter up. One important aspect is that more comfort and satisfaction can be given to these elderly people if they can be kept in the districts where they have spent most of their lives, where they know the local people and have their friends and are in an environment to which they are used. We have rather a striking example of this at Alice Springs where a home has been established for elderly bush folk. They are employed as their fancy takes them in small garden plots and so on, and in one way and another their closing days are being made a little more happy and comfortable than is often the case with people in similar circumstances. As a considerable sum is to be made available by the Government for this purpose, I trust that when representations are made by organizations in the outer areas they will receive sympathetic consideration.

Mr. Condon referred to the unfortunate position of the flour industry. I regard him as

perhaps the best authority in the State Parliament and possibly in the State, if not the Commonwealth, on this question. He has been honourably associated with the employees' side of the industry for a long time and consequently his opinion must be respected and he must be regarded as one who can speak with authority. This session is not the only occasion we have heard our honourable friend speak on this subject. He never misses an opportunity to bring what he declares to be the parlous position of the flour industry to our notice. However, I have been somewhat disappointed that on each occasion he has never put his finger on what is the real cause of the trouble. In answer to an interjection by me during the first Session of this Parliament he said he considered that the price of wheat was mainly responsible. I am a representative in a country district where a number of flour mills have been put out of business. That is nothing new. I can recall that many years ago in practically every town of any size a flour mill was established, and other members will readily recall those circumstances. A number of them were closed down and we still have them closing down, but I do not know the answer to the problem. Following the honourable member's reply to my question I looked up some figures concerning the export of flour and the average price of wheat. The latest figures I could get related to 1951-52, and I submit them for what they are worth. In doing so I appreciate there may be all kinds of answers, but it is the line of thought that comes to one in trying to ferret out something tangible which will help to give a true realization of where the difficulty lies.

In 1949-50 the average price of wheat in South Australia was 14s. 5d. a bushel, in 1950-51 it was 14/8½d. and in 1951-52 it was 16/7½d. Although there was a progressive rise in the cost of wheat over that period the overseas export of flour increased. In 1949-50 it amounted to 92,000 tons, in 1950-51 to 129,000 tons and to 130,000 tons in 1951-52. I cannot divorce from my mind that it is not the price of the raw material which is so much concerned in the marketing conditions now prevailing and that there must be some other cause. No-one seems to be able to say just what it is. Mr. Perry had some interesting remarks on the subject some time ago and I am inclined

to agree with him that labour is the biggest factor in the cost of production. I know from the statistics I have read and the opinions expressed by people who should be in a position to give an authoritative statement that in any production labour, direct or indirect, comprises the major part of costs. That being so, it seems to me that is possibly where we have to start. I do not make this elementary comment with the idea of being critical, but in the hope that someone will come forward and tell us what the position is, because we cannot afford to lose this very valuable export flour trade, or for that matter lose any export trade. Our flour export trade is of value not only because it earns us overseas credits, but engaged in it are specialized tradesmen, men who are usually brought up in the business and as a rule find it difficult to direct their activities into some other avenue, and from that aspect alone it is a matter of very great concern.

We are enjoying evident prosperity, but just how real it is one sometimes doubts, and wonders whether we are not inclined to adopt the same attitude as the ostrich and stick our heads in the sand and refuse to realize what the economic implications might be. In this regard I might mention the important agricultural industry. Undoubtedly it is very much over-capitalized. While satisfactory prices remain for wheat and wool perhaps we can get along fairly well, but if there is a recession in those prices then will be the time for people to sit up and take notice. It would not be so bad if those who had paid high prices for land had only their own funds to lose; but I am afraid that if prices recede many who have had to get assistance from financial institutions and have to meet heavy interest burdens will find themselves in unfortunate circumstances similar to those which occurred some years ago. We can only hope that they will not. It is a warning that those in a position to do so should review the matter in a more practical light and keep their feet on the ground. I support the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.15 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, July 29, at 2 p.m.