

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, October 14, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.**TRAFFIC REGULATIONS (RIGHT HAND TURN).**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Since the introduction of the new right hand turn regulation in the city and suburbs, those who drive vehicles in the main streets have found that some motorists are taking advantage of turning against the red light—

The PRESIDENT—Order, the honourable member cannot argue his question before he puts it.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—To amplify my question, I was merely giving an overall picture of the point I was about to make.

The PRESIDENT—If the honourable member wants to give an overall picture I think the proper course is to ask permission to make a statement.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I shall follow your advice. I desire your permission and the concurrence of the House to make a short statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—In view of the fact that there have been changes in our traffic regulations relating to turning at the red light, some motorists are taking an unfair advantage of the regulations.

A member—Taxicab drivers?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I do not suggest they are taxicab drivers, because my experience has been that most of them abide by the regulations. There is a possibility of grave accidents taking place not only with pedestrians but also with cars going the opposite way. Will the Chief Secretary refer the new regulations that have been in operation for some time to the State Traffic Committee for it to make a review and report back through him to Parliament?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—We are in line with every other State except one on this matter and I think it is far too early to assess the value of the regulation. I have seen instances of people turning to the right and not giving pedestrians a proper go, but in the main the regulation is being observed and it has assisted materially in the movement of traffic. I am prepared to refer the question to the Commissioner of Police. I know that some

action was taken recently, but of course it is obvious that there cannot be a policeman right on the spot always. I think if the regulation is properly policed it will be a good one.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I rise on a question of rights and privileges and ask you, Mr. President, for permission to ask you a question.

The PRESIDENT—The honourable member has it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yesterday I rose to ask the Chief Secretary a question consisting of 18 words and the honourable Mr. Cudmore rose and objected. I understand that he thought I was going to read a lengthy statement, but that was not so. As that gentleman has complained about your giving the Opposition too free a go, and it is reported in the weekend press that he is the Leader of this House, I desire to know who is President of this Council and how many words a member can use before asking a question?

The PRESIDENT—In answer to the first part of the honourable member's question, I happen to be President of this Council. The number of words that a member can use before asking a question varies, because some people can say a great deal in less than 18 words. I could not give a definite number of words, but I emphasize that the object of questions is to elicit information and not make statements. That is provided for in our Standing Orders. I must admit that I did not hear the honourable member's statement yesterday because I was busy on something else when the objection was taken, but it is the right of any member at any time to apply or appeal to the President on a point of order, and that is what I understood the Honourable Mr. Cudmore did. The honourable member's words might have constituted a question for all I know, but as everybody was satisfied quickly the matter was cleared up. I emphasize the fact that the whole objective of questions is to get information and not to give it.

BREAD BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 950.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill repeals the Bread Act of 1936 which dealt with penalties, the power to recover from persons who supply bread, the vehicles in which bread was carried, the power to stop persons carrying bread for sale or

delivery, evidence, exemptions, selling bread made of unwholesome flour, penalty for adulterating meal or flour or selling flour of one sort of corn as the flour of another, the power to search bakers' carts, the power to seize adulterated meal, flour, etc., and penalties for having ingredients for the adulteration of bread and obstructing a search. This Bill repeals existing legislation and I can find no objection of any importance to it, consequently it is not necessary for me to address this Chamber at any length. Indeed, I am somewhat nervous as to what I should say because there seems to be a tendency to tighten up Standing Orders, and before one speaks permission has to be sought, so should I mention the word flour, which is the chief ingredient of bread, it is not with the object of transgressing Standing Orders.

As one who has long been associated with the production of the staff of life I commend the Bill favourably to members because I think it will afford protection to all concerned. If there were any weaknesses in it I am sure that the critics of the industry would have come forward ere this. The baking industry has made wonderful progress during the last half century and one could spend hours discussing the advances in the wheat, flour and baking industries. I suppose there has been more criticism by the public concerning increases in the price of bread than any other article I know of. Bread is the staff of life and when we realize the importance and significance of this industry we can readily agree that it should be protected. If the price of bread is increased by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a loaf there is always a hue and cry by the public. Bread is a food that is used every day in the life of a household, but one never hears such serious complaints about increases in the price of sugar, tea or butter and other commodities. People who object to the price of bread do not seem to understand the position and it is always a target for criticism.

The Bill alters the method by which the legal weight of bread is determined. At present it is determined at the time of sale, but reasons have been submitted in support of the suggested change, which appears to safeguard the interests of all concerned. The dough weight system is now to be introduced and the Bill confers powers on the Governor to proclaim regulations controlling the amount of dry matter which shall be included in loaves of various classes. The Bread Act now deals with two topics—the weight of bread and the adulteration of flour, but it is out-of-date and

is superseded by the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act. For a considerable time flour containing certain ingredients not in conformity with the Food and Drugs Act has been imported into South Australia.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Is it adulterated?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It contains chlorine and other things which are not permitted in this State, but as the result of agitation regulations have been approved which will give the local manufacturer the same consideration as is extended to importers. Approximately 1,500 tons of flour is made into cakes, pastry and other articles, so it was a serious matter for an industry which is in a very bad way. I would like the Government to arrange for members of Parliament to inspect certain flour mills in the city and country areas that are idle to show them the importance of the flour milling industry. Two large mills capable of supplying all local requirements are not employing one man. I do not know of any industry that has striven so hard to produce a good article as the flour and baking industries.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—What percentage of the flour used in South Australia is imported?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—About 1,500 tons was at one time imported for cake, pastry, etc. Of the 206,000 tons of flour manufactured in this State in one year 65,000 tons was consumed in the manufacture of bread and pastry, so members will realize that it is a very important industry and one from which the public expects a perfect article. I venture to say that there is not as much control of any other industry as there is over the manufacture of flour and bread.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Does the imported article under-sell the local product?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. it is a special article imported for a special purpose.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Could not they make it here?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They could, but the Food and Drugs Act did not permit it. The South Australian manufacturer can now do what he desires under the Act to compete with flour imported from the other States.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Is he doing it?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not know, but he has to face competition. Any product which has to face competition from interstate manufacturers in this respect should receive protection. I refer members to the third report of the Wheat Commission of 1936 of which the late Sir Herbert Gepp was

chairman. It will be found that its recommendations to a large degree have been carried out by the industry. I pay a compliment to the bread industry for what it has endeavoured to do and achieved in the interests of public health. In 1952-1953, a total of 200,472 tons of flour was manufactured in South Australia and of that quantity more than 135,323 tons were exported. The remaining 65,149 tons were consumed locally in the form of bread, cake, pastry, etc. As I said before, two of the South Australian mills out of a total of 27 could manufacture all the flour consumed here. Mills are idle simply because of lack of export demand. From a ton of flour a baker can produce 1,330 loaves, and that number multiplied by the 65,149 tons will indicate how important this industry is. It is asking Parliament for protection—not only for itself, but also the public. If an additional one halfpenny a loaf is paid for bread it represents an increase of approximately £2 17s. 6d. a ton in the price of flour. With an increase of 5s. or 10s. a ton nothing can be done to affect the price of bread. The Prices Commissioner closely watches the position, and I know that on several occasions application was made to him for an increase in the price of bread, but members must realize how difficult it is to deal with the subject when an increase of one halfpenny a loaf affects the price of flour to the extent of £2 17s. 6d. a ton.

I have been connected with the flour milling trade for many years and I know of no other industries in which there is such efficiency as in the milling and baking trades. In his last judgment on the subject Mr. Commissioner Morrison said that he did not know of any industry where the costs of production were so low as in the flour milling industry or of another industry where so few men were employed in comparison with the output. In the manufacture of flour and the making of bread costs are kept down to the absolute minimum. Recently Parliament passed a Bill to stabilize the wheat industry and provided that the minimum price for wheat should be 14s. a bushel. At present it is being sold overseas at even a lower price. The poor old age pensioners and ordinary citizens for a period of about 18 months have been paying an extra 1½d. a two-pound loaf in order that the wheat industry should be stabilized.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—You say that the 14s. is far too high?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not saying that. All I am saying is that the South

Australian consumer has met the position by paying an additional 1½d. a loaf. It is idle to put the blame on certain industries because Parliament has agreed that the price shall be 14s. for wheat; flour millers have to fix their price accordingly. Their prices are subject to the consent of the Prices Commissioner.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—That would represent about 5d. a loaf.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not concerned about that. I am not objecting to the 14s. A few years ago it required 48 bushels of wheat to manufacture a ton of flour, but today it takes only 46½, which means 21s. a ton less on a 14s. average. This has been achieved by spending a considerable amount in the industry.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Farmers have produced a variety of wheat that makes better flour.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They have not done much in that respect. I remember a few years ago that millers paid a premium of 8d. or 9d. a bushel for first grade wheat, but today all grades are bulked. Either this Parliament or the Commonwealth Government should do something about this because we cannot expect first-class flour if we do not get first-class wheat. We should encourage the farmer to grow a better class of grain.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—They are already doing that and taking advantage of all the information they can get.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—A section is doing so, but others do not care. Only 52 per cent of the farmers in South Australia voted at the recent ballot; they are not all interested. Farmers should be encouraged to grow a better class of wheat. We all realize the importance of the bread industry to this State. A few years ago there were 194 bakeries here employing 1,260 men. I cannot say whether the number of employees has been increased or reduced, but I know that a great amount of money has been spent to improve conditions and on machinery, and this has played a very important part in bringing the industry up-to-date. In recent years there has been a tendency to consolidate small bakeries and for one concern to obtain greater control. This may or may not be in the best interests of all concerned. If ever the industry becomes a monopoly I hope that Parliament will meet the position.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Monopolies are not always injurious.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is so; I know of one or two that have played a wonderful part in the progress of this State but others that have not done so well. Without casting any reflection on those interested I point out that we must have a watchful eye to see that this is not detrimental to the public. I have not seen any detrimental effect up-to-date, but if I do I will certainly not sit down and say nothing. I commend to honourable members the report of the Gepp Commission in 1936. Wonderful strides have been made since then, and Parliament need have no fear in passing this legislation. Perhaps there are some prejudiced people who are not prepared to consider this important industry, so I would like to quote from the third report of the Commission. It reads:—

The origin of the custom of making bread like materials is lost in antiquity, but doubtless in early times the work was carried out in the individual household. It is reasonable to assume that the results were not invariably uniform or satisfactory. Consequently, there was room for the early development of the craft of baking. The position had certainly been reached in Roman times, for the written records show that the trade in bread was subject to certain regulations in order to avoid exploitation of the consumers. There were no great innovations in the process until the latter half of the 18th Century, but from that time onwards a large number of changes occurred in the material used, in the plant and equipment available for the bakers' use, and in the regulations controlling the operation of the trade. Each of these innovations exercised some modifying influence upon the economic position of the industry. Today in the larger Australian cities there are examples of baking establishments which are representative of many of the stages in the evolution of the industry. In a sense each type of bakery is in competition with each other type and it becomes necessary to consider the salient features of each baking system to obtain a true picture of the economic position of the industry. The regulations controlling the trade and the workers engaged in it are important because they affect the different methods of baking in different ways and to different extents. A brief description of the processes which constitute bread-making is a necessary starting point for a clear understanding of the problems of the industry. The initial process consists of mixing the requisite quantities of flour, water, yeast, malt and in some cases certain other materials such as improvers and dried milk, and allowing the resultant dough mixture to stand for a determined number of hours whilst the yeast acting upon the sugary constituents of the flour sets up a mild fermentation. This fermentation produces carbon dioxide gas which, being more or less evenly distributed, results in the levelling of the dough.

Chemical substances known as improvers are now being used more widely. They have a

definite effect upon the behaviour of protein in the gluten of flour. During the inquiry, it was found that although bread of high quality was produced in all States, poor quality bread was also produced. The report said that there was room for substantial improvement. Since 1936, immense strides have been made in improving the quality of flour and bread and a considerable amount of money has been spent in modernizing flour mills and bakeries. The report is one of the best that I have read for a number of years.

To summarize the position, the loaf weight system does not protect the public but is a constant source of mental anxiety to bakers. It encourages under-baking and consequent lowered bread quality; weighing the loaf in the bakehouse does not prevent this. Under this system a baker in the summer would escape risk of prosecution if loaves were weighed in the morning, whereas another baker with better and more nutritious loaves weighed in the afternoon could be subject to prosecution and become a law breaker through no fault of his own. The dry matter system removes the opportunity of some cunning bakers to exploit the public and removes a source of injustice to bakers, but it is slow, cumbrous and expensive. It requires 36 loaves for sampling and a qualified chemist for testing. This system assumes that the greater quantity of dry matter the better the loaf, but this assumption fails to recognize that the constituent of the dry matter that makes it valuable for bread making is good quality gluten (protein).

The best bread and the most palatable and best balanced nutritionally can be made only from the flour with the most gluten of high quality. The dry matter system discourages the use of the best bread flour. This is unsound, because the baker should be encouraged to use the best flour available. Under the dough weight system competition and the consumer's sense of bread quality will ensure the baker uses the best flour because the weight of the loaf is governed by the weight of the dough and this system ensures the weight of the dough. It provides for the proper weight of the well-baked loaf. As the source of dry matter is the flour from which dough is made, the amount of dry matter in the loaf is also governed by the weight of the dough, so the dough weight system therefore protects the consumer against loss of food value in light weight bread and ensures the maximum amount of dry matter from the best flour available to the baker. I could go on and point out to

members the reasons for the change of legislation, but I do not think it necessary to go over this matter because I cannot see any real objection. This industry should be encouraged. It has spent a considerable amount in improving an article that should be satisfactory to the public. It has not taken unfair advantage of the people and has played an important part in the economy of the State and therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—It appeared yesterday that there would be little debate on this Bill, and I think all members are pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to give us the excellent address we have just heard from him on this subject. Although there may be little ground for debate this is a very important subject because, from time immemorial, bread has been the most important article of diet. As a purchaser and consumer of bread I have often heard of people's dissatisfaction with underweight bread delivered to them. It usually takes one of two forms—either it is under-baked or over-baked. As a lifelong grower of wheat I know very well the huge loss in weight of wheat after it is harvested. It is well known that on very hot days wheat will lose at least two pounds a bag a day, and that continues for quite a number of days. Consequently, it is a good practice to have the bags sewn and the wheat delivered as soon as possible as the saving in weight pays for the cost of cartage. When grain is stored it regains weight in the stack or during transport overseas. The same thing exactly happens with flour. A conscientious baker does not like to be regarded as a law breaker, but under prevailing conditions they have been unable to avoid breaking the law many times through no fault of their own. Bread taken out in a baker's cart loses about one ounce in eight hours and therefore it has been very difficult for the baker to give correct weight in the loaf delivered to the householder. Mr. Condon has given us a very good description of what dry matter in bread means so I do not propose to discuss that aspect.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—This Bill will not alter the methods of the baker, will it?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I think it will alter methods a good deal in as much as the dough will be weighed and subject to inspection at any time in the bakehouse. The dough to provide for a loaf must weigh 2 lb. 4 oz., the four ounces being to allow for loss.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—But will it actually alter the method of baking?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I feel that the method will be improved under the new system. Since 1937, when Western Australia introduced dough weight, this provision has given general satisfaction in that State and I pay a tribute to Dr. Sutton, who is now over 80 years of age, and who recently visited South Australia to attend the conference in order to give advice in improving the quality of our bread. Also as ex-Director of Agriculture he has done a great deal to improve the quality of wheat. I feel sure that this legislation will induce growers to produce a better quality wheat, relieve bakers of anxiety and give consumers more protection. Before concluding I would like to reply to some of Mr. Condon's remarks about wheatgrowers and what the consumer has conceded in recent years. I remind him that the wheatgrowers of South Australia have conceded approximately £200,000,000 to the consumer by accepting the home consumption price, but nothing is said about that today. When it is said that the consumer is now conceding something to the wheatgrower that should be remembered.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—But does not the farmer get that back through the pool?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—Not on the home consumption price. Farmers actually lost £200,000,000. Some reference has been made to the fact that only 52 per cent of the farmers voted in the recent ballot on the wheat stabilization scheme. That may indicate apathy on the part of the wheatgrowers, but on the other hand I think it shows that those who did not vote were satisfied with the scheme. I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill as I feel sure that all will benefit greatly from it. I also support Mr. Condon's remarks on the excellent work of the Bakers' Association and flour millers. I know that the position of the flour milling industry through the loss of the export trade is a very bitter subject for the honourable member, but it is due to the fact that overseas buyers of flour now want whole grain in order to mill it themselves, so the millers are victims of circumstance and nothing can be done about it. I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—In supporting this measure I draw attention to the number of times in the last 50 years that amendments to the Bread Act have been brought forward, each one of them endeavouring I have no doubt to tighten up the Act and provide various forms of assistance to the baking industry. This Bill deals with something of prime importance in the life of the people;

bread is the staple food of the community and it cannot be better than the quality of the wheat of which it is composed. I find that there is a general feeling of satisfaction among all Parties with this measure—a wonderful thing in any Bill. The reason for it mainly I think is that the bakers, under the present provisions of the Act, have felt that they have been unfairly dealt with, and the Government has found it very difficult to police the Act. This Bill defines what bread is, something never attempted in previous legislation. It also defines a bakery.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—What is a Vienna loaf?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—It is defined as bread which contains not less than the prescribed amounts of edible fats, sugar and milk or milk solids. I take it quite a lot of definitions not included in the Bill will be covered by regulations as is the common practice. Under the Act an inspector can be a person appointed by the Government or a person who is also an inspector under the Weights and Measure Act.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think he would be competent.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—He may be; he would not have a great deal to do except to examine scales in bakehouses and the conditions under which bread was made. I find that in the metropolitan area—I do not know about the country—there is an arrangement among the municipalities for one man to do the inspection for all of them and this has worked very satisfactorily. I am wondering whether that man will be appointed by the Government under this legislation or whether the same procedure will be followed as under the old Act.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Do you think that the Act could be adequately policed under that method?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—The councils say so, although they admit that it is not easy.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Does the honourable member believe that the Act can be policed under present circumstances?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I do not think it will be possible even under this legislation to police it adequately. I believe that the complaint in regard to bread largely is not so much as to its quality as to the fact that it is under-baked; we see it every day. Like everything else, flour would be one of the things in which one would look for certain qualities. If a person is buying cream for buttermaking he does not buy it on a gross

weight, but on its butterfat value. The same applies to the purchase of quartz. Its value is governed by the mineral content. The same argument applies to bread. It is the ingredients of the flour which give it its value. So, when one is valuing a loaf of bread it is not only the weight of the loaf, but the value of the ingredients which are considered. In the baking of bread a percentage is lost to evaporation owing to the water content of the dough. A baker may at any time have his product inspected. He may have been reported for under-weight bread. A loaf can be taken from the delivery cart and weighed and found to be under-weight, but that is not necessarily the baker's fault. It may have weighed 2 lb. or 4 lb., as the case may be, when baked, but not the statutory weight when inspected. The lost weight might have gone up in smoke. In the old days a loaf of bread was weighed and if it were short the baker put on an extra piece. There was no such thing as an under-weight loaf then.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Have not all these deficiencies occurred through the mechanization of the industry?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Very likely. Standardization has helped to bring about these things. A baker may be found with under-weight bread. It may not be that he was out to filch the public, but it lost weight in the process of baking or when being delivered. To remedy the position the Bill provides for a dough weight instead of a bread weight. This system has been successful in other places, and I understand has been adopted in Western Australia for 14 or 15 years. I shall read from a report on investigations conducted in 1939 by Col. G. D. Shaw, Senior Analyst in the South Australian Department of Chemistry. He says:—

It was found that bread loses from one-third to half an ounce in weight during the first hour after leaving the oven, but one lightly baked loaf from a very slack dough lost 0.64oz. Loaves kept at room temperature (68 degrees F.) from one to eight hours from oven lost approximately half an ounce in weight and a further half ounce during the next 16 hours. He says there is a continuous loss of weight during the process of baking. The fact that bread is short weight renders a baker liable. It is from that charge that the decent baker wants to be freed, and I have every sympathy for him. Col. Shaw quoted the following from a statement by Mr. P. F. Petersen, Acting Chief Inspector of Factories in Western Australia, which was made in March, 1954:—

After 20 years' experience (before and after the introduction of the dough weight system)

of inspectorial and administrative work in connection with the Bread Act, 1903/49, which is in operation in Western Australia, I am convinced it is much more effective and easy to administer than the previous control of bread under the former Act. The loaf weight system of weighing has been abolished under the present Act and has been replaced by what is known as the dough weight system, i.e., doughs are weighed in the bakehouse, after they have been made up, and prior to entering the oven for baking purposes.

It is much simpler to administer than the loaf weight system because an inspector may weigh doughs before they are placed in tins and, at the expense of the employer, if necessary, may also weigh the tins and dough combined. In most instances the employer or occupier of a bakehouse readily admits if the doughs are lightweight and prefers them not to be removed from the tins. Under the Bread Act, 1903/49, action may be taken against both the employer and employee; against the former if it is proved that he issued instructions to weigh doughs light, and against the employee if he weighed doughs light without instructions. On occasions the department or an inspector receives information submitted by employees in a bakehouse that they have been instructed to weigh light and, being zealous of their reputations, and knowing that they can also be prosecuted for weighing out doughs lighter than the prescribed weight, such information is made available to the department.

That is fairly convincing evidence that the dough weight system has worked satisfactorily in Western Australia. It would remove largely the onus of responsibility upon bakers for light weight bread and also the fear that at any time they might be pounced upon by an inspector and found to have a light weight commodity. If we can do anything to restore that feeling of confidence in people whom I feel sure are out to do the right thing, it is our duty to do it. I know of nothing in the Bill which will be detrimental to the public. It will result in an improvement in the baking industry and restore confidence to a body of men who, as has been stated this afternoon, are out to do the fair thing to the public. Therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 652.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—The present Act contains more than 900 sections and is one of the most comprehensive administrative Acts on our Statute Book. It deals with health, rates, drainage, weights

and measures and other matters appertaining to our well-being. It is interesting to know that there are 142 municipal and district councils in South Australia. I compliment their members, who carry out their work in an honorary capacity, and also council officers charged with the responsibility of administration. Our councils follow largely those operating in England, particularly the London County Council, as to administration, and are steeped in tradition. Mr. Bice said he supported the appointment of an advisory committee on municipal matters. I agree that all amendments to the Act should go before a Parliamentary Select Committee. I say that because members are charged with the responsibility of carrying Bills as submitted by the Government, or agreeing to amendments.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—There is already an advisory committee.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Yes, and I am not denying that it does good work. However, such committees are the responsibility of no-one. The fact remains that a Parliamentary Select Committee comprising members from both Houses would be charged with the responsibility of examining suggested alterations to legislation. I am not attempting to decry the activities of this advisory committee or any other such committee set up by the Government, but with a measure with such far-reaching possibilities as regards administration it is only right that a Joint Committee should be appointed.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE—Why should we not accept the responsibility ourselves? That is what we are here for.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am not suggesting that we should not take the responsibility. The honourable member has often suggested the appointment of a Parliamentary Joint Committee. We would not be shirking our responsibilities by submitting proposals to such a committee.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—You would still have to go outside for information.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Not necessarily. From time to time we insert amendments in the Local Government Act and then the following session or in a very few years other amendments are necessary.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—We do that with other legislation.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—But not so much as with the Local Government Act. I do not think the present practice conforms with the proper functions of Parliament. This Bill deals extensively with preferential rating.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Preferential?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The honorable member seems to want to confine everything exactly to his line of thought. Labor has always supported the system of rating based on unimproved land values. We have heard much about the development of our urban areas. The Minister of Local Government is carrying out much road work to enhance those developmental projects. It is essential to have schools in the various areas that have been opened up for development. Some private schools purchased land in anticipation of building schools when the population grew, and they pay about 25 per cent of the ordinary rate. These schools should be put on the same basis as State schools, which do not pay any rates, or if the Government is not prepared to go as far as that then it should provide at least that land held prior to the erection of school buildings should be rate free. In the district represented by my three colleagues and myself there is an area of land on which a school has not yet been erected, but the owners have been mulcted into paying rates. There is only one State housing authority, and that is the Housing Trust.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Councils can also construct homes.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It is quite true that they can build homes for their employees, but in other parts of the world municipal authorities are also housing authorities and construct houses for renting as well as for sale. Some members will perhaps ask where the money can be obtained, so I point out that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement provides capital for the purpose of constructing homes. I submit two points; the first is that private schools that purchase land to erect buildings should be relieved from the payment of rates; the second is that municipal authorities should have the power to construct homes for the people, because they could build homes as cheaply as the trust. If a proper plan were adopted by councils they could construct and sell homes at a very low deposit and thus enhance the prospects for their districts and build them up and carry out a policy of development. I put these points in the hope that the Government will consider them and perhaps submit some amending legislation, if not during this session, in the next session.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE (Central No. 2)
—I would first like to join with Mr. Densley

in complimenting the Government in bringing down this amending Bill half-way through the session. In the past Bills to amend this Act have usually been introduced right at the end, and it is obvious from the number of amendments on the file that this is a Bill that will always tend to bring up further ideas. We are fortunate in having had at least two weeks already to discuss it. This Bill amends a very big Act and therefore in essence it is a Committee measure. For that reason I had not intended to speak on the second reading because there is no question of the second reading not passing nor is there really any necessity for a debate on the second reading, but two things induced me to say a few words.

The first is that this Bill is here because of the continual difficulties caused by the pernicious system of land values assessment. I join issue with my friends opposite who have both said quite definitely that it is the policy of the Labor Party to favour land values assessments. That is single tax and is not my policy. It started with a well-known member of another place in the Port Lincoln district and on the West Coast, and it has spread like a noxious weed throughout the State causing trouble wherever it has been brought in. I congratulate the Minister on what he has done in the short time he has been in charge of the Local Government Department, but I join with Mr. Densley in hoping that he will have a look at the whole of this question. It is an astonishing thing that the provision for councils and corporations to adopt land values assessments has apparently been in the Act or its predecessors since 1923, but no-one thought about operating on it for a very long time, although there has been very definite propaganda by the Henry George League throughout the State. Wherever this system has been brought in it has caused trouble. The difficulties that have occurred in the Marion council are the main issue, although there are of course numerous others in this Bill.

I am very definitely opposed to the idea of the Labor Party that land values assessments is the proper thing. Rates are paid for services to be rendered; that is the thing we have to keep very clearly before us. It is a different thing altogether from land tax, which is a way of financing the general revenue of the country. Rates are collected by councils to enable them to render services to the inhabitants and they should not therefore be collected to the same extent for vacant land, the owners of which do not in most cases receive any services.

This brings me to a point mentioned by Mr. Perry and to an amendment that he has since placed on the files. In 1951 certain sporting associations and recreation clubs, which I remind honourable members form part of the green belt we are so anxious to preserve, found themselves in serious difficulty owing to land values rating and we inserted an amendment in the Act in that year in which for five years they were granted a certain concession. Honourable members will recollect that there was a conflict, and in fact a conference took place between the two Houses on the matter. I feel that that was a purely temporary measure. At the death-knock of the session we had to compromise and do something for five years to enable us to have a look at the matter later, and now is the time for us to look at it. I emphasize that the main thing is that these green areas used for non-profit-making sporting purposes do not require the services of the council in which they are situated. For instance they would have perhaps one garbage tin for 150 acres, whereas there might have been 600, and they do not require the council's services to the same extent as others. Rates are paid for services to be rendered by the council and if they are not rendered it is reasonable that those areas that do not require them should not have to pay the full rates. We will have an opportunity to discuss this further, because amendments are on the file. With these few words I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON moved—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole Council that it have power to consider new clauses providing for the reimbursement of councillors for loss of income caused by the carrying out of council decisions and directions; the establishment of land value system of rating on the authority of a simple majority of the votes of ratepayers; the establishment of preferential voting for council election and empowering councils to remit or excuse payment of the whole or any portion of the general or special rates payable by persons in necessitous circumstances.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Local Government)—As several members have placed far-reaching amendments on the file I think it would be desirable to report progress, and I move accordingly.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from House of Assembly without amendment.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 958.)

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—Several members when addressing themselves to this debate suggested that they would have preferred to have more information from the Government as to why the measure was introduced.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—I do not think we prefer it; we were just glad it was not there.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—If that is how members feel it would have been better not to make the request. I think I would be justified in saying that this Bill is not welcome legislation to anybody. Originally it was introduced to meet circumstances that existed at the time and a number of those circumstances still persist with the result that it is necessary to continue controls in a modified form.

When the States took over price control from the Commonwealth on 20th September, 1948, control in this State was continued on 430 items. Since then, 382 items have been decontrolled and 136 items have been re-controlled, which makes the number, at present under control, 184. Present staff is only 38 per cent of the total employed when State control was instituted. When items are de-controlled, it does not mean that no further interest is maintained by the Prices Department. Periodical checks are made, and, on several occasions action, not necessarily resulting in recontrol, has rectified the position. In addition to price checks in the metropolitan area, 609 country checks have been made covering 221 country towns. Numerous breaches have been detected and satisfactory explanations have been submitted in many cases, but 371 prosecutions (fines totalling £3,745) have been successfully instituted. Direct refunds totalling £45,329 have been obtained. The department has handled 61,237 applications, excluding investigations of written complaints which total 3,423. Telephone and verbal complaints exceed double this figure.

It has been necessary to warn 1,101 traders and 292 warnings have been issued this year, equivalent to 26.4 per cent of the total number. In addition, large sums have been

obtained for the consumer by negotiation with traders in connection with items decontrolled. It has also been found necessary to enforce price reductions on manufacturers, distributors and resellers on 170 occasions over the past two years. In all cases, industry or trade has been given ample opportunity to voluntarily pass on the benefit of reduced costs to the consumer before action by the department.

Since the inception of State price control, the public of South Australia has benefited to the extent of over £20,000,000. Of this total, major savings have been effected by the department on the following commodities and services:—

	£
Petroleum Products	6,441,922
Building	6,373,159
Footwear	1,038,850
Bread	797,167
Cartage	882,739
Electrical and Plumbing Repairs	940,867
Furniture	504,500
Cement	175,557
Paints	67,750
Superphosphate	431,808
Tyres and Tubes	669,463
Stevedoring and wharf towage	424,693
	<hr/>
	£18,748,275

The figures relative to superphosphate do not include the reduction for 1954-55 season, equivalent to £100,000 or reflect the full impact of recent paint reductions which amount to at least £250,000 per annum. Moreover, cognizance must be taken by the substantial savings in building costs. It has been conservatively estimated that without price control, the ordinary five-roomed house would cost an additional £300. Since January this year, consumer savings from decisions have amounted to £692,669, equivalent to £1,139,699 per annum.

Country consumers have not been neglected, particularly on such items as petrol which has been reduced an additional ½d. per gallon over the metropolitan reduction of 4½d. per gallon, plus a saving of £180,000 per annum on a freight differential application since 1952, equivalent to £375,000 in aggregate. The overall saving on petroleum products, tyres, tubes and superphosphate alone in country areas exceeds £4 million under State control. Savings on foodstuffs are known to run into millions of pounds but other than bread where usage is known, cannot be accurately assessed.

Within the last few months further examples for the justification of the department temporarily continuing on a limited scale are:—

Action found necessary and taken by the department on certain commodities in ensuring that the recent reductions in sales tax announced by the Federal Government for the benefit of the public were implemented, including a saving on ice cream amounting to £37,000 p.a.

Finalization of a building complaint involving a group building scheme which resulted in fourteen ex-servicemen each receiving a refund of £75, representing a total of £1,050.

A refund of £85 to a farmer on tractor repairs.

One hundred and thirteen individual refunds on building and building material complaints ranging from £180 downwards. Twenty-five of these refunds were for amounts in excess of £40.

Ninety-four refunds on other items including board and lodging, cartage, coal, motor repairs (not controlled), clothing (not controlled), foodstuffs, hardware. One of these refunds exceeded £200 and four exceeded £100.

At present, an apparent overcharge of £1,400 on galvanized iron is being finalized by the department and a number of users should benefit accordingly.

Prosecutions against 44 traders in metropolitan and country areas for breaches covering a wide range of commodities have been sustained. The great majority of these traders earlier received warnings for previous offences.

The necessity for continual checking of certain decontrolled items and on which evidence exists that without the protection of the department some traders would take advantage of the position.

The number of complaints which continue to be received by the department concerning both controlled and decontrolled items.

The continued shortage of certain materials including galvanized iron and the fluctuating but limited supply position concerning some other commodities. We know that the effects of this control over a period of years has been to maintain stable conditions in respect of wages and rents in order that industries in South Australia that are less favourably placed than those in the eastern States could successfully carry on and maintain full employment.

The claims by some about profit control are not borne out by industry financial reviews which disclose a buoyant and upward trend with increased profits, dividends and percentage returns applicable to companies selling entirely controlled items as well as those selling decontrolled lines. There is ample

evidence that price control is certainly not preventing traders from enjoying the benefits of increased efficiency. It is still performing a most useful service to both the community and the economic stability of the nation by acting as a "brake" against inflation and, at the same time, providing a protective measure to the public against exploitation by those who would otherwise take advantage of the position. It is for the reasons outlined that an extension of the Prices Act for a further 12 months is being sought with a view to its continued easing and ultimate elimination at the appropriate time. I submit that information to honourable members to indicate that the Government was justified in its action and had some background for introducing the measure.

The Council divided on the second reading—

Ayes (10).—The Hons. K. E. J. Bar-dolph, S. C. Bevan, J. L. S. Bice, F. J. Condon, J. L. Cowan, E. H. Edmonds, N. L. Jude, Sir Lyell McEwin (teller), W. W. Robinson, and R. R. Wilson.

Noes (5).—The Hons. E. Anthoney, C. R. Cudmore (teller), L. H. Densley, A. A. Hoare, and Sir Wallace Sandford.

Pairs.—Ayes—The Hons. R. J. Rudall and C. D. Rowe. Noes—The Hons. A. J. Melrose and F. T. Perry.

Majority of 5 for the Ayes.

Bill thus read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Duration of Act."

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE—Obviously I am opposed to this clause, which is the whole Bill. I do not know whether to applaud or to discount the new technique we have had introduced in this Bill, which is to draw up a measure with no reasons at all for its being considered, and when the teeth of the opposition have been drawn to then come out with the real reasons in reply so that the opponents of the Bill cannot really reply to the matter put forward. I think it would be preferable . . .

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this is not the time for second reading speeches.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE—I am opposing clause 3.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

CATTLE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 952.)

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern)—This is only a small Bill, but a very important one. Contrary to today's usual trend, it provides for a reduction in the rates instead of an increase. The Act has been in operation for a number of years and has achieved excellent results. When originally enacted it provided for 1d. in the £1 of the value of all cattle sold to provide a compensation fund. Over the years the rate has been reduced to ½d. and now it is proposed to reduce it to ¼d., with a maximum of 1s. 3d. a beast instead of 1s. 10½d. I contend that the Act has been instrumental in bringing about a great improvement in the health of our stock, in as much as with compensation there is a definite inducement for owners to give early notification of any disease, and that is very important. Prior to the Act, when no compensation was provided for, there was the temptation to allow animals to drag on to see whether they would eventually survive and throw off the disease; but, with compensation, if an owner notices any sign of disease he notifies the officials early and the animal is slaughtered. If disease is present he is compensated to the extent of three-quarters of the value of the animal, and if free of disease he receives full compensation.

Throughout the world there is movement on foot for the elimination of disease, particularly pleuro-pneumonia. I notice that Holland and Denmark claim that they have completely eradicated the disease and consequently are commanding world markets, particularly in Great Britain. I noticed in last night's press that Western Germany is endeavouring to copy their example so that it can successfully compete with them. Since the Act has been in operation there has been great improvement, particularly in our cattle country. In yesterday's press it was reported that it was likely that the disease had been eliminated in the Alice Springs area and stock from there would now be allowed to enter South Australia. The incidence of the disease there has been cleared up sufficiently to enable cattle to come into the settled parts of the State. Under the Act a fund has been built up of some £73,428 and that seems ample to meet any serious outbreak. The proposed reduction of ¼d. in the £1 represents about £6,000 a year, which will reduce the amount necessary to be provided by the Government by about

£2,900 and an equal sum by stockowners. I believe there is ample in the fund for all necessary commitments and therefore have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE secured the adjournment of the debate.

POLICE PENSIONS BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 954.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—My object in speaking to the Bill is to make a comparison between the police pensions fund and the Parliamentary superannuation fund. Contributions by members of the force are to be increased. The existing pensions were last fixed in 1950, and shortly afterwards the benefits operating in other States were further increased. The police pensions scheme here is unique in that part of the benefit is taken in the form of a lump sum payment on retirement at the age of 60. South Australia is more generous in its police pensions than the other States. The Bill increases the present pensions by almost 50 per cent. The greater cost will be to the Government. The proposed minimum annual contribution by male members of the force is £41 a year for a man who commences to contribute in his twenty-second year, and £52 for a man who commences to contribute at the age of 27. Clause 20 of the Bill sets out the normal rate of pension on retirement at or after the age of 60. The present lump sum is £1,250. Clause 21 deals with the pension of members who are forced to retire because of injuries received in the execution of their duties. The pension in such cases is at present £312 a year, and there is no provision for a lump sum payment. The pension will be raised to a standard rate of £364 a year and in addition the retiring officer will receive a lump sum of an amount varying in accordance with his years of service and age. The Police Force is worthy of consideration by Parliament in regard to pensions. It renders a valuable service to the community, and as it has been difficult to get new trainees to join the force, every encouragement should be given so that they will know that at the end of their service at 60 years of age they will receive a reasonable pension.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—They face great dangers at times.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is so, and at 60 years of age they should be entitled to

some consideration, because the ordinary workman does not face the dangers that they do. A policeman has in effect to be an encyclopaedia, he must have tact and must possess many other qualifications that the ordinary person does not need to possess. Parliament has been very generous, and rightly so, in increasing pensions paid to other people. The Police Pensions Fund balance-sheet for the year ended June 30, 1954, reveals the following:—

	£	£
The total funds and liabilities were:—		
Accumulated funds . . .	880,624	
Interest reserve account . . .	4,660	
Sundry creditors	807	
		£886,091
Which were represented by assets, as follows:—		
Investments—		
Australian consolidated stock	597,001	
Other inscribed stock	261,730	
Interest accrued on investments	7,376	
		866,107
Current assets—		
Cash at State Treasury	—	19,984
		£886,091

The revenue statement for the same period is as follows:—

	£	£
Income was derived from the following sources:—		
Subscriptions	32,249	
Subsidy from State Treasury	68,400	
Interest	29,607	
Total income		130,256
Against which the expenditure incurred was:—		
Pensions to—		
Police officers	54,265	
Dependents	12,378	
		66,643
Payments to police officers on retirement	12,500	
Cash payments to widows	4,010	
Adjustments for officers transferred from Public Service		62
Payments on resignation, discharge or death	6,717	
Salaries and office expenses	509	
Total expenditure		90,441
Resulting in an excess of income over expenditure transferred to accumulated funds of		£39,815

I now wish to compare this state of affairs with the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund, because Parliament has been very generous

in its obligations to various pension funds, including the Public Service, which I heartily support, but no member of Parliament was entitled to any superannuation, irrespective of whether he had perhaps 30 or 40 years' service, until a scheme was introduced six years ago. Until last month members were not entitled to any superannuation at all unless they had paid or made up their contributions to the total contributions payable for six years. The Parliamentary fund financial statement showed a total income for the year ended June 30, 1954, of £12,164. From this income expenditure was incurred as under:—

Annuity Payments—	£
To ex-Members of Parliament	1,400
To widows of ex-Members of Parliament	1,329
Administration Expenses—	£
Payment to Treasury	
Department for clerical and typing services ..	10
Allowance to secretary	50
Printing and stationery	3
	63

Total expenditure for the year £2,792

After six years the balance in the Treasury in this fund is £53,273, which shows the growing amount that has accumulated. A few of us

may not be here much longer and we have rendered service to this State over a long period, but what do we get out of it? Do we get from it as much as we are prepared to do for other people? When a man enters the Public Service he is assured of from 45 to 50 years' service; he does not have to present himself for election every three or six years, but has continuity of service, whereas a member of Parliament has to go before the public which says whether he shall remain in Parliament or not. I heartily support any move to increase pensions payable to members of the Public Service, the Police Force or any institution coming under our control, but it is about time, in view of the healthy nature of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund, that some consideration was given to men who render valuable service to the country for a long period. It must not be forgotten that we do not receive superannuation for nothing; we contribute £76 a year for it. Whilst we are generous in many respects, there is also another side of the picture to be considered. I support the second reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.12 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, October 19, at 2 p.m.