

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, November 17, 1954.

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

SUBSIDIES ON PRIVATE SCHOOLS BUILDING COSTS.

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

That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that financial aid be made available by the Government to recognized private schools on a pound for pound basis on the capital cost to erect new school buildings similar to the scheme inaugurated by the Government to assist institutions providing for the care of aged persons.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1253.)

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—In my opinion it is not desirable that financial aid should be made available by the Government to what might be called recognized private schools. I would not know what schools could be brought under the term, and contend that this scheme would not in any way be similar to that inaugurated by the Government last year to assist institutions to care for the aged. The Government's obligation is to care for the aged poor, and to assist in that direction it introduced last year a scheme whereby institutions could take advantage of the money offered by the Government. My main objection to the motion is that we have in all States built up a very excellent scheme of State education. In South Australia it is costing taxpayers well over £6,000,000 a year, and if the motion is carried and put into operation it will cost the Government a substantial additional sum.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Are not private schools saving the Government money?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I agree that they are saving it a considerable amount, and so are private motor car users. If the public who are now using their own motor cars used public transport it would add a fairly big burden to our transport system. The Government is not asked to subsidize a man who uses his own motor car.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—That is a puny analogy.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—The honourable member might think so. State schools are doing a particularly good job.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—No-one is decrying that system.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—In 1891 the education of children up to the compulsory school leaving age became free—that is up to the primary school stage. It was later that secondary school students were allowed to participate in education free; before then they had to pay. The State puts no embargo upon anyone.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—If private schools were closed tomorrow State schools could not accommodate the children.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I agree it would place an added burden on the State to provide accommodation. Anyone who wishes can send his children to a private school and that is done for many reasons, among them being that people believe their children would be better educated and that they would have a good religious background. That is one fault I have to find with the State system of education—it has not sufficient facilities to provide that religious background. It has made some contribution in as much as it provides that religious education may be given and is given. I understand that the system is well availed of. Throughout the State part of a day each week is set aside for religious instruction. In New South Wales they go a step further and make religious instruction compulsory in every school for at least one hour in each week, although there is a conscience clause which permits people to object to their children having religious instruction in State schools.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—My motion covers schools of all denominations.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I appreciate that, but I have had no application by any private school for grants in aid.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Have you looked around and made a few inquiries?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Yes, and I have found that some are totally opposed to this motion, and that none have applied for assistance. In my opinion they would be far better without any Government assistance. As the English system was introduced into the debate, I looked through the 1944 Act very carefully and found that in every instance in which assistance is given it is always accompanied by the registration of teachers and inspections by Government inspectors.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Our private schools are inspected by Government inspectors now.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I appreciate that, but if there is any further encouragement

given by the Government to these private schools we will have a system of compulsory inspection and registration and they will be brought more or less into the national scheme, which I do not think is advisable. At the expense of the taxpayers we have provided a system of education that we all approve and commend, and if we encourage private schools by providing money to assist them in building programmes they will enter into competition with State schools.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—The State schools cannot accommodate the present pupils.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I know that school attendances are increasing and the department is finding it difficult to accommodate pupils, particularly with the increase in the number of students caused by immigration. However, that does not mean that we should adopt some other method.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Are you advocating the closing of private schools?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No. I know that education began in the monasteries and abbeys and in fact the only educated people in those days were the priests who were the teachers of the communities. Most of the big English schools are based on a religious foundation. However, since then we have gone much further and the State has taken a much greater interest in education. Free public education began in England because it was feared that with the industrial revolution, unless all the people could get some modicum of education there would probably be a degraded population. I examined the Queensland Act and I found that the only grant in that State is by means of bursaries. I think 12 are provided for each school.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Are they all denominational schools?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—No, anyone can go to them. The only people assisted in that State are the boys who win scholarships from the State schools to enable them to study at grammar schools at the Government's expense. I can find no instance in which the State is directly assisting these schools by means of money grants to assist them in building. It would be unwise for the State to undertake such a matter as this, because the schools are free now but immediately the Government enters into their domestic lives it will want some control. This motion is merely a request to the Government to consider the matter, so nothing can be achieved by its passing.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Don't you think the Government would give some consideration to the matter?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I do not think it would, from what the Minister has said. The Government is opposed to the motion and therefore would not give any consideration of any value to those who are seeking this reform, if it can be called reform. I have listened to all the speeches made and quite a lot of the information that has been brought into the debate has been very interesting. I do not wish to go over the ground that has already been covered. We are only asked to discuss whether the Government should be asked to aid these institutions, and I do not know that anything more can be said about it. I do not think this would be a good thing because it would interfere with our established system of State education, and if it did that it would do a great deal of damage. I therefore oppose the motion.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—A point has been raised whether this Chamber is in order in discussing this motion. I feel that the fact that the President has permitted this debate indicates that we are in order. The Government of this State provides a certain standard of education for all children and I think we all agree that it is a good standard. I appreciate that the department has ambitions to improve that standard and it is doing so in the face of an increasing number of pupils and the increasing cost of providing facilities. The attendance of children at schools of approved standard is compulsory and in addition the Government is very liberal in the provision of scholarships to children of ability to provide them with opportunities for advanced education. It is necessary that a percentage of our children should be provided with an opportunity for education of a higher standard to fit them to take highly responsible jobs in industry, the professions and other spheres, and consequently the Government provides facilities for children of ability to have that extra opportunity. I commend it on its policy of reserving scholarships for country children. Some examinations are competitive amongst all sections, but some scholarships are reserved for country children, and I think that, despite the arguments advanced to the contrary, democracy as represented by this Government is fulfilling its obligations to the people of a democratic country. Some of the arguments advanced on this motion do not hold water. The Government is providing a very full educational

system and extends it to all sections of the community. It does not, however, object to the fundamental right of parents to send their children to whatever school they desire, and there are many who, for various reasons, send their children to schools, which are mainly denominational, for specialized education and that religious background which is not generally available elsewhere.

Parents who send their children to these institutions voluntarily alienate themselves and their children from the benefits of Government education and subsidies, and I think the fact that they do it of their own accord removes any obligation on the part of the Government to face up to payments towards that particular education. I have listened with considerable interest and sympathy to supporters of the motion, but have not been impressed by some of their arguments. Mr. Bevan referred to the possibility of these schools closing down and the responsibility being thrown on the Government for the education of children at present attending them, but I think that possibility does not exist. We have enough confidence in the organizations now conducting these denominational schools to know perfectly well that this would never happen.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Apparently that is all you are going on.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I am about to offer the honourable member some measure of support, but if he prefers it I shall be only too happy to sit down. People who desire to get their children into one of these denominational schools are usually asked to which religion they belong, and generally if they are not members of that religious faith their children are not accepted as students until the demands of the people of that faith are satisfied so I think we may discount that argument very largely. We have had very good service from the private schools and there are many who will frankly admit that the education received there has been of tremendous benefit to them in their life's work. Although it was not my privilege to attend one of these schools I realize the tremendous benefit that has been gained by many who have been through them. If they are to provide for normal expansion in keeping with the increase in our population it is evident that they are going to have a very difficult job ahead of them in view of present day heavy building costs. Consequently, I feel that it would be, perhaps, most desirable for some assistance to be rendered to them. I cannot visualize any private school requesting support for its general educational system, and

any step in that direction would bring them under a degree of Government control which, I am sure, no denominational body would desire to face. Therefore, I feel there is no probability of their asking for any subsidy beyond some assistance on actual building costs.

I have no doubt that the background of religious training provided in these schools is of great value and that it would be difficult indeed to get that kind of education under other conditions, so, particularly on behalf of people living in the country, I would like to give some support to the motion. The Government provides a very good system of secondary education, but it is not readily available to many people in country areas who are desirous that their children should go on to secondary schools. Although in some cases there are relatives or friends prepared to board country children within proximity of the school, it is difficult in many cases to get proper accommodation for them. Most of the denominational schools provide boarding accommodation to a limited degree, and from that point of view it would be of great advantage to country people if the Government decided to give some financial backing to projected new buildings, even perhaps insisting that it should be used to provide boarding facilities for country children. I realize that wherever opportunities are available the Government provides higher primary, or technical, or area schools, or whatever best meets the case, but here again there are many country children in the smaller country centres for whom it is most difficult to get the extra learning without the obligation of asking friends to board them while they are away from home. Therefore, I feel that this is a field in which the Government could furnish greater facilities for country children, and from this point of view I am happy to support the motion.

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

ANATOMY ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Read a third time and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 16. Page 1320.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—The revenue estimated to be collected by the State this year was stated in the Treasurer's Budget Speech as being

£51,049,000 or £1,327,000 less than last year. It is proposed to extinguish the deficit by using portion of the accumulated surpluses of previous years. Discussion on this Bill enables us to indulge in what might be called grievance day. I suggest that the Standing Orders Committee be called together to consider an amendment to Standing Orders. It will be noticed that I have not asked any questions for a considerable time, because I refuse to ask this Council for the right to ask a question. At the first opportunity I am lodging my objection to that course. It is not many years since an amount of £10,000,000 on the Estimates was under discussion, whereas today the amount provided is five times as much. In the earlier years there was considerable debate and members criticized the spending of £10,000,000 in one year, but in recent years the amount has been increased to nearly £53,000,000. The Government has missed the bus in the last few years. My reason for saying that is that it now proposes to increase charges when wages are pegged and when the prices overseas for our primary products are falling. When things were buoyant charges should have been increased for social and other services, but not now. In good times the Government allowed things to plod along without attempting to meet the position. With overseas prices falling, primary producers are not in a position to meet their commitments to the same degree as they were two or three years ago. The Harbors Board has increased its charges, and the Government now proposes to increase water and sewerage rates.

Included in the Estimates before us are a number of items that could be called socialistic activities, or nationalization schemes, which have always been supported by every honourable member. Yesterday we heard Mr. Cudmore, who was reported recently in the press as being the Leader of this House, criticize the Opposition for supporting what he termed nationalization schemes. I suggest that he should stop shadow fighting, and if he holds in horror some of the legislation submitted why does he not show his true Liberal principles? This bluff of the Socialistic tiger is moonshine. The Government and the Council have passed more Socialistic legislation, if it can be termed as such, than any Labor Government ever succeeded in doing. Some members come here and try to bluff the public that they are opposed to nationalization and to Socialistic schemes, but I suggest that they should be watched as to how they vote. Why should honourable members try to bluff the people? This Government

is only a self-inflicted Government, has been elected under a gerrymander and is not truly representative of the people. If members believe in their principles let them be men enough to stand up to them when the opportunity is presented.

I am reminded of the occasion when a sum of £200,000 was placed on the Estimates for the development of the Leigh Creek coalfield. Who opposed that more strongly than my honourable friend, Mr. Cudmore? However, when the scheme came to fruition he claimed it as his baby and now cannot speak too highly of this Socialistic proposition. He is supported by others here who opposed the legislation, but support the scheme now it has proved a success. If legislation is Socialistic or nationalistic and is good, let honourable members support it, no matter what Party introduces it. In his Budget speech the Treasurer referred to the amazing change in the industrial outlook of South Australia. The value of production per head in this State in both primary and secondary industries is greater than in any other State, but there are some industries here which have not achieved success. You, Mr. President, have heard me on previous occasions refer to certain industries, but I appear to have been a voice crying in the wilderness. I think an injustice has been done, and I will take every opportunity, irrespective of what honourable members think, to try to right that injustice. I do not know of any other State which has closed its factories as has been done in South Australia. Many matters are introduced in this Council which have no connection with the Party point of view. I consider that no member should depart from the principles upon which he is elected. It is true that some of our industries have thrived, but that is because they have to deal only with competition within the Commonwealth.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—You are referring to secondary industries?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes. It is the primary industries which have to sell their goods overseas which are faced with a competition which is not faced within Australia by secondary industries. Certain industries have thrived in Australia because they are not competing with other parts of the world. The prices of our wheat, wool, butter, cheese and other primary products are controlled by overseas markets. The Government intends to inflict higher charges on people who have to compete with other parts of the world, and who may not be in a position to meet those charges, whereas the Australian manufacturer,

who deals solely in Australian markets, is in a better position than the man who has to compete on overseas markets. I have said previously that certain industries have suffered. The milling trade, which I have often defended here, is in a worse position today than at any time during the last 20 years, but nobody cares. When one travels through the State one sees large flour mills barricaded and closed. In the last nine months the value of this industry's output has fallen by £44,000.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—That is because its costs are too high.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Chief Conciliation Commissioner has stated that he did not know of any other industry in which there were lower costs of production.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—What is the reason for the present position?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is due to the neglect of the Australian Government. Will any honourable member deny that wheat is not being sold overseas for less than it is available on the Australian market? It is because other countries are not carrying out their part of the wheat agreement. The Prime Minister has complained about the treatment meted out to Australia, but apparently Parliament is not interested in the manufacturing side. What help have I and other Labor members in this Council obtained when it came to the question of dealing with an industry that has done so much for Australia? We hear a great deal about people refusing to work. I know of a number who want to work, but are not allowed to do so because their places of employment have been closed.

The Hon. A. J. Melrose—What about the wharves?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The honourable member does not care a damn about these mills being closed.

The Hon. A. J. Melrose—That is not true.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—You have spoken about people who will not work but I am telling you about those who will work but are not permitted to do so. About 15 months ago the Federal Arbitration Court decided to peg wages. Since then, prices have increased and the standard of living has been reduced. Recently unions applied to the court for increased margins, and this courageous Government we hear so much about sent Queen's Counsel to the court to oppose increases.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Did you read the report of the evidence?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am saying what I was not permitted to say previously, that this Government sent Mr. Chamberlain, Q.C., to Melbourne to oppose certain increased margins, and I defy contradiction on that.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—If you read the transcript you would get it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I read the press report, not the transcript. Mr. Chamberlain said the Government did not object to certain increases but that it objected to the main part of the case. The unions have been fighting for a standard that the court refused, and this meant £1 3s. 8d. a week to each employee. This amount is the cost of living increase since wages were pegged.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Where, in South Australia?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—For the whole of Australia.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—You are thinking about Western Australia.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not. It is my duty to conduct these cases in the court and I know all about them. In the first quarter after wage pegging, mill employees lost 6s. a week. This courageous Government that can do no wrong, supported by honourable members all around me, sent Mr. Chamberlain to prevent the men from getting their standard back to what it was 12 months ago. I protest against this attitude because, if my colleagues and I do not do that, nobody will. I had not intended to introduce the margarine question into this debate but for a statement that appeared in the press this morning in which the Minister of Agriculture said that he would see that the law is carried out in South Australia. No man in this House has a higher regard and a greater respect for the Minister than I have, because I worked with him for a long time, but his attitude is wrong. Although the Government can carry out this law it cannot prevent the importation of margarine from other States because of section 92 of the Constitution. As I mentioned here previously, it is being brought here from another State at a higher price. I am not a manufacturer, but I try to protect the interests of the people.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—So do we.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—If you do why not give consideration to local manufacturers? Not only is margarine being imported but the price is 4½d. a pound more than the local product. I suggest in all seriousness that during the recess the Government should consider the points I have raised. I do not object to the protection of an industry but I object to local

manufacturers being penalized by the closing of their businesses while margarine is imported from another State.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—These people work on a quota, and they have manufactured that quota. You would have to amend the Act.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, and I have asked the Government to do so. The big men can do what they like, but nobody has any sympathy for the small men. Why does not this Government interfere with other by-products; why pick this one?

The Hon. L. H. Densley—You are the one who is doing that.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not, but I will at all times speak when I think an injustice is being done. I am not speaking for myself but I am putting up a fight for the manufacturers because industries should be encouraged to increase output in the interests of Australia. It is no good getting a court award unless the industry is regarded as being all important. An employer is entitled to as much consideration as an employee. I have always stood for that, and that is why I have raised this matter again, not for any personal gain, but to remove what I think is an injustice.

In 1948 Parliament established a super-annuation fund to provide pensions for members, and to give them the same consideration as has been extended for many years to public servants. This House was prepared to make some provision for members who were not perhaps as fortunate as others. Quite a number of men who have come into this House have had other incomes but this Parliament has gained by having men with business ability who probably made sacrifices to come here. By their experience they can render valuable services to the country and many of them are acquisitions because of their knowledge and devotion to duty in the interests of the State. Parliament set up this scheme and as time went on it was amended, although we have had to pay extra into it. Until a few months ago no member was entitled to receive any benefit. The amount now standing to the credit of the fund is £53,273 and the Government could well review the position and increase benefits.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—Would you reduce payments or increase benefits?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Why not increase the benefits? However, I do not care which. I do not believe we should get anything for nothing, but something should be done or the

fund will accumulate to beyond what is required. I hope we will all be here in another 10 years. However, we are paying into the fund all the time, so what are we going to get out of it? I have on previous occasions dealt in some detail with the various items of Government expenditure and I do not wish to weary the Council by going over them all again. However, I propose to touch on one or two which I think are deserving of our special attention. Over £32,000,000 is invested in water supplies and the operations for the year ended June 30, 1954, resulted in a deficit of £802,000. Total earnings showed an increase of £89,000. Excess earnings over working expenses were £81,000 and the excess earnings over working expenses represented a return of 0.25 per cent on the funds employed, whereas a return of 2.75 per cent would have been required to meet full interest charges. In the past seven years the number of water services has increased by 43 per cent and the mileage of mains by 20 per cent. Consumption of water increased by 52 per cent. The only water districts which succeeded in meeting working expenses, excluding debt charges, were Barossa and Morgan-Whyalla. Other country water districts failed to do so by £321,496. The earnings of the Morgan-Whyalla water main scheme included an amount of £33,864, being a royalty of 3d. a ton paid by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company on ironstone ore, and an amount of £41,000 paid by the Commonwealth Government for the cost of water supplied. Other districts linked with the Morgan-Whyalla scheme contributed £79,400, so if it were not for the the contributions I have mentioned what would have been financial position of this scheme?

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—We have to pay for the water but cannot get it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—We must recognize that, in view of the number of new services and increased consumption, the department has done a very good job. It is all very well to criticize, but the department has been hampered by shortage of both material and labour, as well as other things beyond its control, and I pay a tribute to its officers, from the top to the bottom, for the job they have done under difficult circumstances. Treasurer's funds employed in the metropolitan sewers undertaking as at June 30, 1954, amounted to £6,325,000. The return was 2.5 per cent whereas a return of 2.84 per cent would have been necessary to meet full interest charges. Earnings for the year totalled a little over £601,000.

Turning to the Harbors Board, we find that the total State funds employed as at June 30

were a little under £11,000,000. Reconstruction of wharves at berths 1, 6, 8 and 9, cargo sheds, seamen's pick-up centre, roads, drainage, water services, etc., involved an expenditure of £95,400; purchase of land £801,000 and reconstruction of Osborne coal-handling plant £80,630. It is intended to spend £125,000 at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island. We all know that land settlement on Kangaroo Island is expanding rapidly and it is necessary to provide for a quicker turn-round of shipping. Although several schemes were submitted to the Public Works Committee it is proposed to enlarge the present jetty, and make necessary alterations on the foreshore end to provide better shipping services at cheaper cost to the users. There are 90 ports and jetties under the jurisdiction of the board, of which seven are leased. Only 36 were engaged during the year in shipping operations and of those 13 were operated at a loss. Last year the board's operations showed a record deficit of £210,766, which was £81,000 more than for the previous year, although total earnings increased by £141,000. The record volume of goods handled amounted to 9,629,312 tons, which was 2 per cent greater than the previous year. Tonnages handled at Port Adelaide were 179,000 tons higher than in 1952-53, but 209,784 less than the record quantity handled in 1951-52 in which year imports were abnormally high.

Harbors Board charges have just been increased, but this should have been done in buoyant times and not when there is a falling off of tonnages handled through the ports. Just as we missed the bus in regard to waterworks we missed it in respect of harbours undertakings. Mr. Cudmore referred to the increase in water rates. As far as I can understand most of our valuable land in the best parts of the State has only been paying a rate of 4d. an acre, which it is now proposed to increase to 7d., but that should have been done years ago and therefore I say again we missed the bus. We are now going to penalize the people at a time when they are not in such a good financial position to meet the heavier impost as they were a few years ago. It is not the responsibility of the Opposition always to criticize; it is our job also to offer suggestions in the interest of all concerned and I think the points I have brought forward are worthy of the Government's consideration. I think they contain some merit and I earnestly hope that they will be considered on that basis.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY (Central No. 2)—I listened with interest to the introduction

of the Bill and later to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. There were times when I thought that Mr. Condon and myself were almost arm in arm. There were passages in his speech with which I heartily concurred, but the trouble with him and some of his remarks is that they do not dovetail. All sorts of factors go to make up the economy of our country, and to single out one or two instances is always dangerous. We have heard Mr. Condon on the flour milling industry on other occasions and we have every sympathy with him.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—He wants action.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—We cannot create action unless we can convert overseas consumers, and that is very difficult. Mr. Condon always couples Socialism and Nationalization. Although it is true that they run together, to say that nationalization is solely attributable to Socialism is definitely wrong. Nationalization of certain things has long been the policy of this country, and in the most conservative countries some form of nationalization has always gone on. Therefore, to twit the Government and its supporters by saying that in supporting some forms of nationalization they are supporting Socialism is going a little too far. Mr. Condon also criticized the Government for imposing increased charges at this late date. He cited wharfage charges and water rates on country lands. I consider that country lands have not paid their fair share toward the facilities provided which make the land habitable, and I am pleased that an increase is proposed. If honourable members study our methods of finance they will find, unfortunately, that this will not make much difference. Whatever increased charges or rates are imposed by the Government, resulting in additional income, we run the danger of having the Commonwealth grant reduced commensurately. The Government has been wise in some cases in not increasing costs and adding to the burdens of primary and secondary industries, taking into account that it does not make a great deal of difference to the final result.

I congratulate the Government on the Budget presented. In the main the figures are based on those of the previous year. The fact that last year we ended with a surplus of £1,809,000, plus £300,000 or £400,000 indicated in the Supplementary Estimates, shows that South Australia is either being wisely governed or is enjoying a very prosperous period. It is many years since the Government's revenue has been so

buoyant, but it is unfortunate that when surpluses do occur they cannot be used for special purposes or the reduction of taxation. The surplus of last year and those of the preceding four years are taken into account by the Grants Commission when fixing the amount to be made available to South Australia. It is expected that the State's operations this year will end in a deficit of £1,933,000; the loss will have to be made good out of the surpluses of previous years. That hamstrings the controlling authority and prevents it from attaining a position where surpluses can be used for special purposes. We must be thankful that our State is enjoying a period of prosperity. However, the unfortunate fact is that we are unable to enjoy to the full that prosperity by reducing State costs.

This year the Government expects to receive £3,000,000 from taxation for the registration of motor cars, trucks and cycles, an increase of £665,000 compared with last year. It is also expected that the Transport Control Board will bring in another £120,000 to the Government's coffers. Road transport is evidently meeting the demands of the people, and is growing despite all the restriction imposed by Governments. I was pleased to notice that there has been an improvement of £800,000 in the railway revenue this year compared with last year. The burden of this department has been carried by the taxpayers for many years, and therefore it is gratifying to notice that its position is improving, presumably due to the increased carriage of freight, improved methods and the introduction of diesel engines. It would appear that railway transport will always be necessary in Australia. I cannot conceive the time when railways will not be needed. It is to be hoped that the improvement in the railway's position will continue and so lessen the burden of taxpayers.

It is interesting to notice that the two Ministers present today are controlling the two biggest spending departments. It has been said that this Council does not control the expenditure of moneys, but we are the watchdogs of that expenditure. It is proposed to spend this year an additional £203,000 on hospitals. This is in addition to the special donation made last year by the Government of over £200,000 for homes for the aged. Between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 will be spent on roads and over £14,000,000 on railways, an increase of £263,000 compared with last year. I congratulate the Ministers on the work being done by their departments. I feel that our finances are being carefully watched, but I hope the

time will arrive when the spending authority will have a little more responsibility in raising its own revenue. It is interesting to notice the amount of revenue we raise—from general taxation £7,000,000, public services and works, £27,000,000; territorial receipts £339,000 and from the Commonwealth £16,200,000. I pay a tribute to those public servants who prepare the State's case for placing before the Grants Commission. Speaking to the Address in Reply, I referred to the royalties being paid by the Broken Hill Pty. Company for the iron ore shipped from Whyalla to Newcastle. I am pleased that the negotiations by the Government have resulted in the company's paying an increase from 6d. to 1s. 6d. a ton royalty.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Did you notice the increased price for iron and steel in today's paper?

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—True, this increase is reflected in the price of steel, but South Australia will be better off from the royalties received. However, I am afraid that the Grants Commission will inflict a corresponding reduction on the State's grant, and therefore we will not benefit very much. The price of steel has been increased, but it is a nation-wide spread and to my way of thinking that is the fair way to spread it. There are many factors which affect the price of steel, apart from the royalties paid by the company. It is among the cheapest royalties paid in any part of the world, if not the cheapest. The company, which I understand originated in South Australia, has a wonderful record. I was surprised recently to see in the press a report which I consider damaging to the company, and subsequently to read a report submitted by the Director of Mines. I think he exceeded the mark on one or two points. Some comments are necessary on this report and I propose to make them.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—You said it was a good report.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—It was written by a very zealous and competent public servant and it contains many valuable suggestions. I am indebted to the Director of Mines for it. It makes very good reading, but I join issue with him on two points. The first is the table showing the growth of steel production in various countries from 1939 to 1951. Between those years Canada increased production by 132 per cent, some of the defeated nations showed a decrease and the United Kingdom and Australia are at the bottom of the list with an 18 per cent increase. I accept the figures, but to my mind they place

the B.H.P. unfairly in an unfavourable light because they were the war years and no company did more service to this country during that period than the B.H.P. It supplied steel at below the ruling rate and limited its dividends to five per cent. This was done voluntarily because of the serious position in which this country was placed, and it would not have been done by many other groups.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—That was done under a Labor Government.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—Mr. Menzies was in power when the war started and that is when the company did these things. I think what it did would bear comparison with any other company in the world, and I have the greatest respect for it because I have some knowledge of what it was attempting to do during that period. When the war ended it was faced with a shortage of labour and coal and despite all its efforts the results were not satisfactory. At that time steel could have been exported to any country because of its low price here, but, because of these shortages only 60 per cent of the production capacity of the company was used. The last few years of the war placed a very big burden on the company which, if it could have been maintained at full production, would have shown a very different picture from that published by the Director of Mines. I make these comments because I think an injustice has been done to the company in citing these figures without giving any indication that there were factors bringing about this position. It has been very difficult to keep to a programme over the last few years, but the company increased its capital in the last five years from £13,000,000 to £29,000,000 and spent £46,500,000 in fixed assets. According to press reports its production this year will be well over 100 per cent more than in 1939, so any comparison with other countries is unjustified in this respect.

It is true that the B.H.P. is not as popular as it might be and that is because it is a victim of its own efficiency. There was a time when it depended on customs duties imposed on goods from overseas, and I can well remember the time when a levy of 12½ per cent was necessary to enable it to compete with overseas products. Now the company can produce steel at a much lower price than the overseas companies it is a victim of its own efficiency. Most countries are able to interchange their products easily and if there is a shortage of steel in one country the adjoining country provides it at about the same price. What has

drawn attention to the position in South Australia is the fact that when the user cannot obtain Australian steel he has to purchase it from overseas and pay 50 per cent more. Although I have every sympathy with the user, I do not see why there should be any reflection on the company. I know that in certain countries the prices of imported and local products have been averaged, and it would be very much better for the average user if some scheme like that could be evolved here. However, it has not been, and many people who cannot get the local product feel frustrated.

The second point on which I join issue with the Director of Mines is a statement that appears on page 20 of his report in which he says:—

In my considered judgment the Government would be fully justified in taking over the leases of the Broken Hill Pty. Coy. and the company's iron ore, plant and equipment if the company is unable to give any guarantees on the establishment of a steel plant at Whyalla. The agreement was entered into with the company solemnly by this Parliament and any suggestion of repudiation as suggested in the report would not find even an echo in this Chamber. I was surprised that the suggestion should have been made especially in view of the type of company working the leases. If anything must be done, surely it can be brought about by reasonable negotiations and not by force or threat as indicated in that paragraph, which is claimed to be a considered opinion. The report was evidently made because of a shortage of steel and the advantage to South Australia if development were to take place. However, I point out how much development has taken place already and that the money had to be spent where the activities of the company were organized and where its plant was working. In that way it meant only an extension of certain sections of the plant. Any suggestion that the policy of the last few years should have been altered and that steel works should have been established at Whyalla is out of the question, because they could not have been established there quickly.

In the main the Director made out a strong case. The establishment of a steel plant at Whyalla would naturally be very attractive and would be a worth-while industry for this State, because we have raw products, not only iron ore, but also limestone at Rapid Bay and dolomite at Ardrossan. Therefore, South Australia ranks very high in the supply of raw material and naturally one desires that, if possible, the finished article may in future be made in this State. Two South Australians

have been prominently associated with this company, particularly in the formation of its early policy, namely, Mr. Harold Darling and Mr. Essington Lewis. I do not think there ever have been two men in any industry who have looked at things more from a national point of view and who had a greater desire to assist their home State if it were economically possible to do so. Mr. Darling has, of course, passed away and although Mr. Lewis is still there the future policy of the company will be determined by others. I sincerely hope that it will continue in the same national spirit as in the past.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They both laid the foundations.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—And they deserve great credit. While I hold no brief for the Broken Hill Proprietary Company I feel that, in view of the criticism levelled at it, I should pay a tribute to it. The company has served Australia well and, although it holds a monopoly of the steel industry, it will always be a benevolent monopoly in the interests of Australia. I express the hope also that, not by force but by mutual arrangement, Whyalla and South Australia will have some form of steel-works. I support the second reading.

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

RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 16. Page 1312.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill amends sections 115 and 116 of the Renmark Irrigation Trust Act of 1948. Section 115 empowers the trust to construct and maintain drainage works for the prevention and/or removal of seepage conditions in the district and section 116 authorizes the trust to impose a drainage rate to meet construction and maintenance costs incurred under section 115. This rate is not to exceed 5s. a half year for each acre of land and the rate has to be imposed uniformly over the whole district whether the land rated derives benefit from the drainage works or not. At present only £4,500 a half year is received in revenue and the balance to meet expenditure has to be made up out of general rates. The Bill proposes that the trust may impose a special drainage rate not to exceed 10s. an acre a half year, in addition to the general drainage rate, and the land benefited will bear a greater rating burden than other land in the district.

I understand that the proposal was submitted to the ratepayers and there appears to have been no objection by the people concerned so I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Midland)—I also support the second reading. The last time we amended these sections of the Act was in 1948, shortly after I was elected to this Council. At that time we repealed sections 115 to 121 and inserted two new sections which apparently have operated satisfactorily for the past five or six years. It now appears that, for reasons fully explained in the Minister's second reading speech, it is necessary to give the trust some further powers to recover the expenditure incurred in connection with drainage works for the prevention or removal of seepage conditions. New section 116 (2a) authorizes the trust to impose a rate to meet these costs.

It must be remembered that the Renmark Irrigation Trust is the authority which controls all matters in the district. It is the sole authority for the construction and maintenance of irrigation works, and in addition it has powers which are normally exercised by a district council. Apparently the trust has always referred any proposed alteration of the Act to the people concerned before submission to Parliament and that has been done in this case. Since it was before us some time ago—and incidentally I note that it went through the House of Assembly with only two speeches on it—I have received no request to oppose the Bill and consequently I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 16. Page 1317.)

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—Mr. Cudmore in opening his remarks yesterday said that the Bill appeared to have the support of all members, and he complained of the lack of criticism of the measure. He said that he expected that Mr. Condon would support the Bill as it was a step towards nationalization. Apparently some members support what we know as nationalization in connection with the Leigh Creek coalfield and Radium Hill, and even in our forestry undertakings, but oppose it when it comes to a question of public transport. I believe that

Radium Hill is one of the best examples of nationalization that is to be found, and Leigh Creek coalfield, of course, which has been established longer, is an even better one. It is, however, quite inconsistent to applaud nationalization on the one hand while criticizing it on the other.

Labor members have always advocated the appointment of a Ministry of Transport. If this were done an advisory committee should be set up whose function it would be to inquire into the whole of our transportation systems and report to the Minister. The council would be responsible to the Minister, who, in turn, would be responsible to Parliament, so that we would get from time to time a true picture of the difficulties we are meeting in public transportation. I feel that this is the only way we can adequately deal with this particular problem. Perhaps other honourable members will not agree with me. Parliament would then have the opportunity to debate the question from time to time. The measure goes part of the way towards meeting the proposals I have mentioned and will give the council wide powers.

Clause 4 provides that the council shall consist of a chairman and two other persons. We should seriously consider whether a council of three will be sufficient to discharge its functions. The Bill gives no indication as to who shall be appointed. I do not intend to convey the impression that we should be told the actual individuals, but the Bill should contain a clause specifying the representation. In reading the Bill we are left to assume that one will represent the tramways and another the railways. It leads me to ask will they be the Railways Commissioner and the General Manager of the Tramways Trust, or will they be subordinate officers of those organizations? Even if the latter, could the council possibly function efficiently? Imagine the chief executive officer of either taking orders from a subordinate. Because of the numerous duties of the Railways Commissioner and the General Manager of the Tramways Trust it would be impracticable for either to be appointed on the advisory council. I fear the additional duties would be such that they would not be able to carry them out adequately. If subordinate officers were appointed what a fiasco would result. Imagine a subordinate officer going to the Railways Commissioner—and under the Bill I suggest he would have power to do so—and instructing him to do certain things! The same could apply to the General Manager of the Tramways Trust. Assuming that we were

in that position, would we accept directions and instructions from a subordinate? I am led to assume that this will be the actual position under the Bill in its present form.

The Hon. E. Anthony—The Government makes the orders.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I doubt that. The Bill gives the council supreme control and authority except in the expenditure of money.

The Hon. E. Anthony—It can only recommend to the Minister.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Is there anything in the Bill to say that the Minister must do other than table the report? Does not clause 14 give this council full power? Under the Bill it would have full authority to dictate to the Railways Commissioner or the General Manager of the Tramways Trust.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—It could only make recommendations. It is only an advisory council.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—But the Bill goes beyond that. The council will have the full powers of a Royal Commission. I consider it should consist of at least five members, two of whom should be representatives of employees. Their vast experience should be of great assistance to the council. I make that suggestion because of our experience following the appointment of employee representatives on the Electricity Trust, the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board and other organizations. The Bill mentioned only two forms of public transport. I suggest that the title of the Bill is misleading, as suggested by Mr. Cudmore yesterday. In his second reading speech the Minister of Railways intimated that it was a Bill to control all forms of public transport, but it mentions only two forms—railways and tramways. Because of this, I suggest there should be an employee representative from each of these bodies. If other forms of transport are to be considered they also should be given adequate representation.

Clause 12 provides that the council shall inquire into and report only on matters of public transport referred to it by the Government, and then present its report to the Minister of Railways. If it is necessary to establish this council then in my opinion something else is required. Why restrict its activities only to matters referred to it by the Government? Why not give it power to conduct a full inquiry on transport and then tender its report? If a matter is not referred to the council it will have nothing to do. The Bill provides for the remuneration of members of the council and its employees, and the appointment of members

is to be for three years. Does the council have to sit back and wait for the Government to refer something to it before it can start an inquiry? If it is to be an advisory council to advise the Government on the conduct of public transport, why not allow it to go ahead and do the job and inquire into all forms of transport? When its inquiry was completed it could then submit its report, which could then be given effect to or rejected as considered advisable. To set up a council representative of public transport and then say, "You are not to do anything until such time as we instruct you to inquire into a certain phase of transport" seems to me to be wrong. Where is the necessity to restrict its activities?

Clause 14 appears to be the vital clause. It gives the council all-embracing powers with the exception of the expenditure of finance. In that respect it must go to the Government for funds. I feel that under this clause if a subordinate officer of the railways or the tramways were appointed he would have power to give instructions to his superiors. I draw attention to the phraseology in the Bill in its reference to "public transport services." I suggest there are public transport services other than the railways and tramways. For instance, a very large fleet of taxicabs operates in the metropolitan area. They are an important form of public transport and do considerable business in carrying passengers. Recently legislation was introduced in the House of Assembly to control their licensing and general operations. If this form of transport were embodied in the measure there could be an inquiry into taxicab services. One honourable member has already mentioned private buses as being another form of public transport; but no mention is made in the Bill of representation for them. Apparently they will come under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Tramways Trust and therefore have no say.

I consider the measure is one of great importance and will place much control in the hands of the council. My understanding of the Bill is that once the council has reached a finding, except in relation to the expenditure of money, the Railways Commissioner or the General Manager of the Municipal Tramways Trust will have no alternative but to give effect to its recommendations. Parliament will have no say in the conduct of our transport system, and members will only have the opportunity to debate the work of the council if money is to be voted as a result of its recommendation. The measure should provide for the setting up of a Ministry of Transport.

I consider that it will do nothing to alleviate the losses experienced by the Municipal Tramways Trust. Programmes have already been embarked upon. We will find out the reasons, but members will not have the opportunity of debating them unless questions of finance arise. The expansion plans of the Tramways Trust for the next 10 years involve vast sums of money so we will have an opportunity to discuss the matter when it comes before Parliament, but it is only when money matters are involved that we will have any say in the affairs of the council. Our public transport is a service that should be nationalized and placed completely under Government control. The railways are under public control, so why should not the tramways also be controlled?

The Hon. F. T. Perry—They are under control.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—If that is so, then I am a Dutchman. The only way in which they are controlled is that they are continually getting money to operate and if this were not provided they could not carry on. However, that does not give the Government control over them. A trust controls the affairs of the tramways and until legislation is introduced to take them over they will still be under that control. All transport, including taxicabs, should be brought under the control of a Minister of Transport who would set up an advisory council which would be responsible to him and through him to Parliament. This measure is too vague as it leaves everything to assumption, but as it is a step nearer having some control of our transport, I support the second reading.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I did not intend to speak on this matter until I heard Mr. Cudmore's remarks yesterday afternoon. I, like the Leader of the Opposition, take exception to the attitude adopted by him on certain legislation coming before this House. It is rather amusing to hear him violently oppose certain legislation from time to time, and then immediately it is passed and becomes a success he basks in the limelight of that success. Every member of this Chamber knows where the Opposition stands on all legislation. It makes up its own mind—

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Or it has its mind made up for it.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—At least it has a mind to make up, unlike my honourable friend. It makes up its mind and records its vote in accordance with Labor policy. This is another occasion on which the Government has filched part of Labor policy but it has not accepted the whole of that policy to work in

the interests of the people of this State. It proposes under this Bill to set up an advisory council on transport, whereas Labor policy is to set up a board to control all transport and place it under a Minister responsible to Parliament. This proposal does not seek to attain that. This afternoon the Minister of Railways by way of interjection attempted to convince this House that the council would be merely an advisory council, but during the second reading speech he said:—

The report of the council must be submitted to the Minister of Railways and laid before Parliament.

That does not indicate that the elected representatives of the people will have any say with regard to that report other than when voting money to carry out any decisions.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—It does not say that the council shall have any power to carry out any decision.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I know that. The Minister continued:—

In order to enable it to conduct its inquiries the council is given the status and powers of a royal commission. The principal powers conferred by this provision are to call and examine witnesses, to obtain the production of documents, and to inspect premises. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the council the Government is empowered to make orders binding on the Railways Commissioner or the Tramways Trust, or both as to their general policy, or as to what is to be done in any specific circumstances. Such orders may be made for the following purposes, namely, ensuring adequate services, preventing overlapping or duplication of services, and securing efficiency and economy. It will be obligatory for the trust and the Railways Commissioner to obey any order made under the Bill, subject to Parliament voting any money which may be required for that purpose.

The Minister did not place the whole of the facts before this Chamber. He will probably claim in his reply that it is not mandatory on the part of the Government to accept the report of this council, but if the Government does not give due consideration to the council then why set it up as a Royal Commission? The Government is pinning its faith on this council to get it out of the financial morass in which the Tramways Trust has placed it, but the only way to deal with the transport problem is the method suggested by

the Opposition. This State has two systems of transport—the railways under the control of the Railways Commissioner, who is a very excellent executive officer, and the Tramways Trust, which is another important form of transport. Although the railways are run efficiently, in this and in the last session we were asked to provide hundreds of thousands of pounds to make up a deficit brought about by the inefficiency of the Tramways Board over many years, when it did not formulate a policy to meet various exigencies that arose. This legislation is merely a farce, a sham and a fraud.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—But you are supporting this sham and fraud, aren't you?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Yes, because it is part of Labor's policy, but the Government was not courageous enough to accept the whole of Labor's policy whereby the two systems would be placed on a better basis.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—We are only supporting the second reading, but we will have something to say during the Committee stages.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The Opposition knows what difficulties will be met and that the Government will be asked to pass money in conformity with recommendations made by the council from time to time. The Government should place all transport under the control of a board directly responsible to a Minister. The Minister of Railways is not in control of the railways, except that he recommends policy to Parliament from time to time, because the Act prevents him from taking full responsibility as a Minister. I do not suggest that if he had the dictatorial power that the Premier exercises over his department he would not show the same element of ability that he has displayed here from time to time. I support this measure because it is the best offering in the circumstances, but I hope the Government will heed what I have said and attack this matter in the fearless way as the Opposition desires.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.28 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, November 18, at 2 p.m.