

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Tuesday, May 24, 1955.

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

**PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.**

The PRESIDENT—On Thursday last, I promised the Hon. F. J. Condon that I would further consider the position in respect of the need for Ministers to resume their seats when tabling papers in their various capacities. The relevant Standing Orders are numbered 457 and 458, from which it will be seen that the time for laying the papers on the Table is “any time when other business is not before the Council,” that the papers must be laid on the Table “without comment,” that subsequent action is limited to a motion (moved by a Minister) for the printing of the paper, or a motion moved by any member that a paper be read, and if necessary, a day appointed for its consideration.

Standing Order No. 183 provides that where a Minister moves without notice for the printing of a Paper when laying the same on the Table, no discussion shall arise unless the motion has been moved for the purpose of making a Ministerial statement. As I stated on Thursday last, “As I see it, nobody is losing anything by the present procedure.” The rights of members are unaffected by the present practice, and I therefore confirm the ruling given, namely, that the Minister was in order in laying the papers on the Table in his several capacities without resuming his seat.

**QUESTIONS.****PAVING SCHOOL ASSEMBLY YARDS.**

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I ask leave to make a statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—My attention has been drawn to the condition of school assembly yards, especially those at newly erected schools where the pupils gather prior to marching to their classrooms. Those not paved are in a muddy condition after rain. Complaint has been directed to me especially concerning the Mansfield Park school assembly yard and the approaches to this school. Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Education to investigate the possibilities of paving school assembly areas, especially those at newly erected schools?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—I am not in a position to answer the question at present, but will get the information for the honourable member and let him have it as soon as possible.

**SUBSIDIZING PRIVATE SCHOOL BUILDINGS.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I ask leave to make a statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The Premier has stated in the press that £250,000 will be allocated on a pound for pound basis for building additions to denominational hospitals and for new denominational hospitals. Will the Government consider an extension of that policy to provide for the building of denominational schools and additions thereto?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—The Government has from time to time extended its patronage to those making some effort to improve the facilities available to the public for their social needs. Old people were considered last year. The present proposal is to provide additional hospitalization for those who would prefer to have this accommodation available and toward which they are prepared to contribute. I am afraid that that has no relationship to the honourable member's question, which is in another field altogether, and which of course must depend on the economic position just as much as any other consideration.

**QUALITY OF SUPERPHOSPHATE.**

The Hon. L. H. DENSLLEY—Has the Chief Secretary any report regarding the quality of superphosphate supplies to Kangaroo Island and the possible delay to settlement there as a result?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I have no report, but if I can get any information I will gladly make it available to the honourable member.

**SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**

The House of Assembly notified its appointment of Sessional Committees.

**ADDRESS IN REPLY.**

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I, We, the Members of the Legislative Council, thank Your Excellency for the Speech

with which you have been pleased to open the present Session of Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we shall give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the Session.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland)—Mr. President, I move that the Address in Reply as read be adopted. I feel a very great sense of honour in having been selected to reply to the very fine speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Mellis Napier, on Thursday last. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to bring certain matters before the House, and as this is the first opportunity that I have had since my election to address honourable members on various subjects about which I feel strongly, I feel that I might firstly mention one or two things about His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. South Australia is very fortunate in having a man of the calibre of Sir Mellis Napier who can so ably occupy the position of Lieutenant Governor when His Excellency the Governor is absent from the State. It takes a man of very high calibre to carry on the exacting duties of representing Her Majesty the Queen in this State, and we are extremely lucky to have a man with the culture and legal experience of Sir Mellis Napier. The Governor, Sir Robert George, who is overseas at present, is another whom we are fortunate to have as a representative of Her Majesty. I noticed in a recent press report that Sir Robert was received by Her Majesty, and I feel quite confident that he would have had no hesitancy in expressing to Her Majesty the loyalty of this Parliament and the people of South Australia. Both Parliament and the people dearly love the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, as was demonstrated when they were in our midst about a year ago, and I am sure we look forward to having our representative of Her Majesty back again in this State at the end of his well-earned furlough. I am sure that every member will agree when I say that we sympathize with His Excellency and Lady George in the severe loss they, together with many of our friends, sustained during the recent bush fires. I sincerely hope that on their return they will experience good health and continue in the very exacting duties they are called upon to carry out as representatives of Her Majesty.

I would like also to say a few words on the passing of Lord Gowrie, who was Governor of this State just before the war. He was a man

we all looked up to as one possessing dignity and administrative ability. He was a gallant soldier, a Victoria Cross winner, and served the Crown and the Empire for the whole of his life-time. I would like to place on record our appreciation of having had him as Governor of this State, and our sympathy to his bereaved relatives.

Since the last session of Parliament we have sustained a very severe loss in the passing from this House of the Honourable Reginald Rudall and from the House of Assembly of Mr. H. S. Dunks, both of whom rendered very signal service to the State. Mr. Rudall was a Rhodes Scholar in 1908, studied law at Oxford and came back and served in the A.I.F. from 1915 to 1918 as a commissioned officer. He was a lecturer in Constitutional Law at the university, and was in private practice in Gawler. He entered politics in 1933 and in 1938 he was given the portfolios of Lands, Repatriation and Irrigation. I very well remember him in that capacity in which he served ex-servicemen on the river, giving them nothing to which they were not entitled but giving something that was very fair. He entered this House in 1944 as the representative for Midland district, served from then until 1946 as Minister of Lands and from 1946 to 1953 as Attorney-General and Minister of Education. I think that is the period for which he will be best remembered. Long after most of us are dead the service that he rendered to this State in the capacity of Minister of Education will stand as a living monument to him. From 1953 until January 1, 1955, the date of his death, he served as Attorney-General and Minister of Industry. During the war he received the most crippling blow that any man can receive, the loss of his two sons on active service, but he carried out with courage and outstanding ability the duties of the portfolios entrusted to him. There is very little more one can say except to offer to that very loyal and courageous woman, Mrs. Rudall, the deepest sympathy of this House.

It is very fitting that another member of the Midland district should have been selected to fill the portfolios held by the late Mr. Rudall. I refer to the Honourable Colin D. Rowe, and I am sure that all members join me in congratulating him on receiving that very important portfolio. By his energy and zeal, as well as by his legal training, Mr. Rowe has already indicated that he will do a very fine job as Attorney-General.

I should very much like to thank and compliment members of the staff of this Council, Mr. Ball and Mr. Drummond and other officers, who have been very kind to me as a new member and have given me many of the things I need, for I think that a new member is very much in need of many things. They have offered me a lot of assistance and advice and I hope that I am capable of benefiting from it. I am very grateful to them for the way in which they have helped me since my election.

It is not my intention to speak at great length on matters which His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor brought up in his address because I am yet a novice in matters of State. However, there are one or two things which I consider to be important, which I think I ought to bring out, and I hope all members will agree with me. Firstly, I congratulate all Ministers and the staffs of their departments on the programme of works foreshadowed for the coming year. We are very proud of the work that has been completed, and the programme outlined appears to offer many of the remaining things we need. I take this opportunity of complimenting members of both Houses who are members of the Public Works Standing Committee and the Land Settlement Committee. The work these gentlemen do in the interests of the State is of paramount importance, and I do not suppose that any of us could calculate the amount of money that the deliberations of the committees have saved the State over a period of years. Their work is exacting, and it must be very onerous at times, so I am sure I have the support of every member in complimenting those gentlemen on their splendid work.

His Excellency's speech showed that almost every section of the community will benefit from the sound financial position of the State. I am sure that all members will have read the speech with great pleasure and agree with it. The credit, to a large degree, for the position the State is in is due to those who administer departments and the officers who assist them, and both of these groups are entitled to the greatest commendation from this Parliament. I was very interested to read the programme outlined for the health of the people and was pleased to see that country hospitals, as well as city hospitals, are to receive vast improvements in things such as operating theatres, maternity blocks and x-ray units; that is the sort of thing on which we want to see the State's money spent. We ought to do everything possible to prevent sickness by the use

of mobile x-ray plants. I am pleased that the Minister responsible for that department is present, for I consider that the use of mobile x-ray plants, which go around the country seeking sufferers before they are incurable, is one of the greatest services this Government has ever provided. Inoculation of the people for the prevention of sickness is most important, and the more money that can be spent on research into unknown and obscure ailments the greater the service to the country. I was especially pleased to see that those august bodies which provide homes and shelter for the physically and mentally handicapped are to be given subsidies again this year. If the Government doubled its subsidies to the people who are prepared to look after the old and the mentally and physically handicapped, the taxpayers of South Australia would not say it was wrong.

Decentralization is a subject which comes up, in some cases, only once every three years, when an election is looming. It is a subject that receives much lip service, but sometimes is not practised. I am of the opinion that the practical approach to decentralization is to provide in country areas such roads, housing, water supplies, hospitals and education facilities as will draw industries to areas that need populating. We cannot expect people to go to the sparsely populated parts of the State while they can enjoy every amenity in the city unless someone is prepared to provide facilities and amenities in the country for them. Consequently, I am very pleased to see in His Excellency's speech that many of those things are included in the programme for the development of country areas. There must be an incentive for people to decentralize, and there must be some areas into which they can be sent, and the only way to draw people away from the cities is to provide equal facilities in the country. Subsidizing railway and electricity services is another means of assisting people to get away from congested city areas. South Australia, like most of the major States, has its population concentrated at or near the seaboard. This is only natural because we are an importing and exporting State and it would be quite unwise to take materials from the seaboard inland to have them processed and then drag them back again to the seaboard. However, South Australia, unlike most of the other States, has a natural inland waterway in the Murray River, and the only point at which that river reaches the sea is in South Australia. Therefore, I think this Government

ought to seriously consider the development of the Murray mouth to enable sea-going vessels to come into the natural lakes near the Murray mouth to pick up and discharge cargoes from and into river-going craft which would go as far afield as Mildura in Victoria and Wentworth in New South Wales, serving the wheat, wool and fruit-growing areas *en route*. I feel that that is something which the Government must look into. We have an opportunity to use our great waterway with fast river-going craft and barges, establish industries on the banks of the river, bring cargo ships in from the sea and send our exports away from a safe and natural inland harbour.

The Departments of Lands and Agriculture are extremely important to the prosperity of the State. I have grouped these two departments because I feel that both must keep pace with each other. Scientific knowledge must keep pace with development; without scientific knowledge we cannot have development. These two departments are working in liaison. I refer particularly to the wonderful efforts being made in the Keith area with scientific development under private enterprise. That is the way the State should be developed. I congratulate those who have worked so hard in the development of both horticulture and agriculture. I am particularly interested in horticulture because it is something about which I have a slight knowledge. I consider that the settlements of Loxton, Loveday and Cooltong will be standing and living memorials to those who designed and developed them. But for the efforts of departmental officers and those who provided the money, these closer settlement areas would have remained scrub. These projects have resulted in the settlement of many of our ex-servicemen in an area which I consider one of the finest South Australia has ever seen.

The area at present occupied by Mildura was at one time portion of a sheep station of 30,000 acres supporting 30 people, who had an income of £1,500 from 3,000 sheep. Today Mildura has 30,000 people with an income of £4,000,000 and the district is contributing large sums in taxation. It is certainly a very lovely place. Anything any Government can do to develop such settlements is worthy of consideration; the money would be wisely spent.

I cannot exclude from my remarks, even at the expense of being condemned as being long-winded, some reference to the outstanding job done in the development of the natural resources of the State. To mention but a

few, we have our mineral surveys, coal production, uranium mining, the supply of Murray water and the use of wind for the making of electricity. These all help in providing full employment and prosperity for the people, and the Government is to be complimented on its efforts in these directions.

I now turn to a section of the community who are not enjoying quite the same prosperity as other primary producers. I refer to fruit growers. They suffered severe losses owing to bush fires in the Adelaide Hills, and adverse weather conditions in the Barossa, Clare and Murray Valley areas. These have an important bearing on growers' present precarious position. I have in mind particularly apple and pear growers. Their markets in the United Kingdom and in Continental countries were developed over the years by great ingenuity on the part of local ambassadors. It is unfortunate that this year not one case of apples or pears has been exported from the State. It is sad to think that if we cannot supply a market overseas in one year we automatically lose it. There are numerous contenders for the markets in Great Britain, Denmark and other continental countries, and because our growers have been unable to supply requirements for one year it will take many years to build up the markets again.

I have the greatest sympathy for growers in the Adelaide Hills, especially those who lost so much in the bush fires and by climatic conditions. Not only have they been adversely affected this year, but will suffer for many years in trying to re-establish their export markets. The growers of apricots and freestone peaches have also been dealt a very bitter blow this year. South Australian canners previously bought most of their crops, but this year were reluctant to pay the price set by the Fruit Industries Sugar Concession Committee, a body which for many years has fixed the price received by growers. Canners received a privilege in the form of a subsidy on sugar. This system has worked satisfactorily for many years both to growers and canners, but canners this year broke away from the established custom and declined to pay the price set by the committee, a Federal body which has always been considered fair.

Canners this year also dealt another blow to growers by taking only a very small portion of the apricots and freestone peaches available on the assumption that the British market would not be able to absorb all the

supplies. That has been proved quite false, and there is a likelihood that both our domestic and export markets will be short of both kinds of fruit this year. My belief is that the time is opportune for the establishment of a co-operative cannery similar to those operating in Victoria and New South Wales where handsome profits are made. Growers receive an ample bonus and are assured that their fruit is properly treated and exported to enable them to retain their markets. I therefore urge the Government to seriously consider making capital available on a long-term loan basis at the appropriate time, and I consider the appropriate time is when growers make an approach to the Government for assistance. This is one instance where an industry could be established in the country, and the nearer that industry is established to the source of supply the better, because we have proved that fruit canned direct from the property is a much better product than when carted hundreds of miles before being treated.

The dried fruit grower has been most unfortunate because he has not experienced a boom price period. Most primary industries either during the war or in the post-war years, received boom prices which enabled them to build up reserves and thus withstand financial knocks. During the war, price control ruled rigidly on dried fruit sold for the home market. For the export market a price was negotiated between the Federal Government and the British Ministry of Food. The industry and its leaders were reluctant to force up the price to its main overseas market, Great Britain, because after all she was making a terrific sacrifice. I compliment the leaders of the industry on their attitude in not forcing the British buyer to pay more for the fruit than was necessary, but unfortunately other primary industries did not view the position quite the same and today we find the dried fruit industry in a very pitiable position.

I shall submit figures to give honourable members a chance to compare the position. In 1940 the price of sultanas was £32 a ton net to the grower. It cost him £22 to produce that ton of fruit. In 1950 the price to the grower was £72 a ton, and it cost £71 to produce it. In 1952 the grower received £82 a ton and it cost him £97 a ton to produce. In 1955 the expected realization of the crop as an average to the grower will be £75 a ton, and it will cost over £100 a ton to produce. The cost of production is something over which the grower has little control;

hessian, spraying material, machinery, wages, packing charges and a host of other items are beyond his control.

The industry has had to shoulder additional burdens this season in finding markets for the increased tonnages of lemons, brought about firstly by increased plantings on war service land settlement areas and the inability of wine makers to take their usual quotas of gordo grapes which, when dried, become the lemons, owing to severe overproduction of wine, and secondly, by the inability of canneries to handle the apricot and freestone peach crop fully. The growers endeavoured to dry them, but with disastrous results, because bad weather resulted in a low standard, and there was very little or no return. These problems, coupled with the worst seasonal conditions in the history of the industry, have placed a great strain on the financial organizations associated with the industry. The absence of any subsidizing or stabilization scheme places this industry at a disadvantage in competing with the United States of America, Turkey, and Greece, our main competitors on the United Kingdom market, which is the most important market for the dried fruit industry. All these countries are heavily subsidized by their Governments.

The South Australian Government, acting with the Federal Government, has developed some very fine areas for the production of dried fruit. From 1918 to 1924 there was a mild boom when people who had created a fine industry by their ingenuity and labour received something a little better than they had been used to. About 1920 the Government planted large areas of land on the River Murray for settling returned soldiers and just after that period, when the vines came into bearing, there was a great over-production of dried fruits throughout the area. World markets were flooded, land worth £300 an acre fell in a matter of days to £100 an acre and the whole industry faced ruin. It was then that the States got together and endeavoured to stabilize the industry. The point I make is that the time is ripe and the pattern is shaping for history to repeat itself because of the large areas that have been brought in under war service land settlement schemes. I do not grudge any ex-serviceman being settled on the land but there is a responsibility on the people who repatriate them to see that they have a secure living and assured markets. I ask this Government to get wholeheartedly behind a move of the Australian Dried Fruits Association to make the Federal Government

interested in bringing about a stabilized dried fruits industry. This Government can play a very great part in saving the huge write-offs that took place and could have been avoided after the first world war and which we hope will be avoided now by a stabilization scheme.

Honourable members have been tolerant and have listened to me with great attention, and before I resume my seat I would like to add a very personal note. I find it hard to express, but the very great sympathy and understanding that members have shown to me and to my wife have been very much appreciated. I am also appreciative of the way in which I have been received into this House.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—It gives me considerable pleasure to have the privilege of seconding this motion, and I thank the Government for the opportunity to do so. The speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor introduced a comprehensive programme and we thank him for the way in which he delivered it. I congratulate Mr. Story on his election to this House and also on the way in which he introduced the motion. I express to him and to his wife our sympathy in their bereavement, and I hope that his stay amongst us will be a very happy one. He will be an acquisition to this place because he is a direct representative of the fruit and wine industry on the river, and is a man of great ability. I congratulate him on his efforts today. His Excellency mentioned the passing of two of our members in recent months. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the late Hon. Reginald Rudall for the work he carried on in South Australia. It is difficult to assess what his loss will mean to this State. As Minister of Lands, he launched a campaign for development of under-developed land in a manner that very few men could have done so as to be acceptable to the people of this State, in that it involved almost an acquisition of their lands. The way in which he carried out this work was a great credit to him and I would like to express my thanks for what he has done in this House. In my first few weeks here he was very sympathetic and helpful to me, and I feel a very great loss in his passing. Mr. Dunks was a man of very high ideals. He was of genial disposition and without any doubt was a consistent advocate of the principles in which he believed. I am sure these two gentlemen will be missed from these two Houses. I am pleased at the appointment of the Honourable Mr. Rowe as Attorney-General. We all agree that he has contributed more than his share in debates, scrutinizing Bills and

looking after his district. His appointment is richly deserved, and I congratulate him on it. I am sure that members who are working in that district will agree that the work that he has done since his election has been outstanding.

His Excellency mentioned the prosperity of this State. From a comparative point of view, it is something that gives a great deal of satisfaction. This State has not been richly endowed in agricultural and pastoral lands. Our tracts of good land are rare and areas of good rainfall are very sparse, but our pioneers achieved success despite our climatic conditions, mainly by assiduous application of industry to the soil. Although they have experienced hard times they have conquered and done well, so it is a matter of extra satisfaction that they have triumphed over the extra disabilities they faced and have put the industry in its present sound position. South Australian farmers are recognized throughout the Commonwealth as good farmers and I think that is largely because they have had to farm land under difficult circumstances.

We have found recently the same movement with regard to our industrial life. Our manufacturers have branched out in a way that we did not hope or expect years ago. This State was looked upon as a primary producing State because it lacked fuel supplies. What fuel we have discovered has been a long way from the centres of population, but in spite of these disabilities we have been blessed with a sound working population and have not been troubled with strikes to any great degree. With the co-operation of all sections of the community we have been able to develop this State and make it very prosperous. We have been governed by sound administrators who have been able to exercise great vision and bring projects to successful fruition. I feel that even honourable members of the Labor Party will agree that we are in this happy position because of the good leadership we have had and the co-operation that has existed between employees and manufacturers. I would perhaps be wise to point out that if we are to retain that prosperity we must maintain the good relationships in industry that we have so far enjoyed; we must be prepared to give good service for good pay; we must remember that our economy is a very finely balanced mechanism and any industrial dispute, any drought or any major upheaval of any description can easily alter the balance so that we would lose the prosperity that we have been able to build up.

I should like to say a few words with regard to the deplorable losses suffered by settlers through the bush fires of recent months. Nearly all those fires occurred in areas occupied by constituents whom I represent. Fruit-growers saw a life's work completely destroyed in a few hours, and it will take nearly another lifetime to restore that work. Many people in the South-East saw their homes and fences completely razed in a few minutes and this should cause us to think for a moment on the hardships they suffered. I offer to all those sufferers my sincere sympathy, and express thanks to those who rallied to their assistance and helped them fight those fires. Normally the fighting of a bush fire is a matter of a few hours. On this occasion it extended over weeks, and many settlers were engaged almost flat out day after day in an endeavour, not only to put out the fires, but in one case in the South-East, the very land itself. We are grateful to all those who co-operated in the endeavour to subdue those fires and I would be unworthy if I did not mention the Government for the part it played. As soon as it became evident that local activity could not quench the peat fires in the South-East the Government sent down big machinery and placed the organization of the Engineering & Water Supply Department at the disposal of the people in order to complete the job started by local volunteers. Over and above those we have to thank the general public who responded so spontaneously and magnificently by contributing to the fund for the rehabilitation of the people who lost so heavily, and I hope that they will be enabled to restore their properties even more rapidly than we could have hoped by virtue of the great generosity of the general public.

I hope that we will have some bush fire legislation before us during the Session. The time is past when we can permit travellers to light fires alongside roads or in the bush during the summer for boiling their kettles and cooking meals. It is unpleasant to have to restrict people who get enjoyment from camping out, but in the interests of the community at large we must take firm steps to prevent the lighting of fires in country areas during the summer. Bush fire legislation is always difficult in as much as conditions vary so widely throughout the State and what is necessary in one locality may be quite insufficient or inadequate in others. I hope that we may be able to reach the stage where we can at least offer better safeguards to country people.

The progress of land settlement, of which His Excellency gave us some particulars, is very pleasing. The fact that 844 soldier settlers are on their blocks is a tribute to the work of the Lands Development Executive and other bodies who have co-operated in the preparation of land for settlement. There are, as well, 87 blocks in the course of preparation and, better still, those settlers already on their land are in a sound financial position. As one passes through these areas it is evident that the settlers are doing well for they have built good outbuildings and greatly improved their properties since taking them over, and it is very pleasing to note that they are doing so well. Many soldier settler properties in the South-East are probably at least the equal of some places that have been worked for a great number of years, which is a fine tribute to these men. In the Loxton area, which our new colleague knows so well, one cannot but be impressed by the manner in which new orchards have literally sprung up in the last few years. One would hardly credit that this could happen on what were open paddocks only six or seven years ago. Of course there is some dissatisfaction among soldier settlers; it is impossible that every settler should be given an equal opportunity with his neighbour, and from time to time it has become evident. However, in almost every case I think the Lands Department has considered the difficulties sympathetically and provided what satisfaction it was possible to give.

While recognizing what the Government has done in the matter of land settlement we must not fail to acknowledge the efforts of others. The work of the A.M.P. Society in this direction is really magnificent. It has completed the improvement of quite a number of farms and has a great many more in the course of preparation, but in addition to the work of the A.M.P. many private people have also undertaken developmental work on a fairly large scale.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—What does it cost to put a man on that land?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I think the A.M.P. is finding that to put a man on land in that locality—and that may be taken as a fair estimate—takes a little over £20,000. That is a large sum for a settler to be responsible for unless he gets a good property at a reasonable outlay. Land has become dear through a number of circumstances. Labour has been very scarce and consequently

high prices have been paid for contracts for clearing and development. It is a matter of conjecture whether prices can go any higher in developmental costs and still afford opportunities for success. We must be very careful not to carry out too much developmental work at a time when it forces the price of land too high. There must be repercussions if we do that and at this stage, when there is a tendency for interest rates to rise and while there is still a rising tendency in wages and all those things necessary for the development of the land, it is time to take stock of the situation and make sure that we do not develop land to a stage where it will not be profitable. Already I believe there will be some trouble with regard to the very high cost of development, for we already note the tendency for the price of wheat and barley to fall. Wool prices have come down although they are still very satisfactory.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—The wheat price is guaranteed, so that will be all right.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—It is guaranteed only within a certain ambit. We do not know whether it will be 10s. or 12s. a bushel. We have read prophecies that lamb will be 6d. to 9d. a lb. cheaper in the coming spring. These things should cause us some concern and we should take stock of our prospects for the further development of land for agricultural purposes. I am not suggesting that we should stop all development, for we must progress, but we should try to keep as near as possible to a basis that gives an assurance of reasonable prosperity.

The £6,000,000 that the Government proposes to spend on roads gives us a great deal of satisfaction. I drive on our roads considerably and I am very impressed with the improvement that is taking place on our main roads, on our district roads up to a point, and particularly on the roads in the newly settled areas.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—The roads are better in the South-East, are they not?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I know them better than the roads elsewhere and I can say that they have improved almost beyond comprehension in the last few years. I hope that we will have a continuation of this process because a good road of access is perhaps one of the greatest factors in cheapening cost of production and development. I am pleased for that reason that we are getting a widening of the ambit of our roads programme and a betterment of our main roads.

A thing that causes me some concern is the plight of the dairy farmers adjacent to Murray Bridge who rely for their hay in winter on transport from outlying districts. The only satisfactory way to cart hay is to put it on a lorry in the paddock and deliver it direct to where it is required. If it has to be loaded first on to a lorry, then unloaded on to railway trucks and again loaded on to motor lorries, by the time it is delivered it has become loose hay at best and very difficult to cart. In recent years the Transport Control Board has done its best to force this hay traffic on to the railways, and I would like the Government to have a really good look at this problem to see whether it is possible to allow hay to be carted by road and not be subjected to the 10 per cent surcharge imposed by the Transport Control Board. Hay is dear enough when delivered to Murray Bridge without people having to pay an extra 10 per cent freight to the Transport Control Board for permission to cart it by road. I should like the Government to consider that aspect. I appreciate the difficulties the board is in and that its job is to make the railways pay and keep the roads from being unduly damaged.

The question of the unequal distribution of population is often discussed in Parliament and in country areas. About 62 per cent of the population lives in the metropolitan area. We should do everything possible to improve that position. Water is one of the commodities essential if we are to build up country towns. To a large extent the Government has met this need, there being very few of the larger country towns without a water supply. Many years ago sewerage treatment works were virtually promised to the larger country towns, but have not yet eventuated. About 12 years ago councils were circularized by the Minister of Works concerning their willingness to accept sewerage schemes within their areas. These people have waited all these years, but have got no further. The day has passed when it is easy to obtain people to undertake the task of removing sewage. Many of our country areas are not suited for septic tanks, and all the people can do is to live in hope that the Government will some day proceed with sewerage schemes. There is an urgency for such schemes to be established in the bigger country towns. I appreciate the need for new hospitals and schools in the metropolitan area, but if we are to encourage people who retire from their farms to live in their local towns they must be provided with improved amenities. Sewerage

is one of the necessities that is not available. I hope that the Government will consider the urgency of the problem.

Increased subsidies for country hospitals made available by the Government are very acceptable. It has generously subscribed toward the new hospital at Keith and the local people have also freely supported it. However, it is difficult to run a small country hospital on patients' fees alone. In country districts it will be found that women's auxiliaries and working committees raise funds by local activities. I agree that when people are well they should be prepared to contribute to these hospitals so that services will be available in the event of their own sickness. I have no quarrel with these local efforts, but it is still difficult for the hospitals to balance their budgets. I hope the Government will subsidize country hospitals to an even greater extent, although I appreciate it cannot afford to spend money *ad libitum* everywhere, but when country people make an effort to sustain their local hospital, further assistance from the Government would be very acceptable. The Keith Hospital had a credit balance when it opened, but month by month the funds are disappearing and the day must come when it will be unable to pay its way. That frequently applies in country towns. I particularly stress the appreciation of country people for the excellent work being done by the Minister of Health. He knows almost everything about each individual hospital—more than one could be expected to know. He knows their difficulties and what is being done to meet them.

My speech would be incomplete if I said nothing about the Housing Trust, which is to build 3,300 homes this year. Country people are gratified because of its activities in their areas, and have nothing but praise for it. I have often thought it would have been better had it not reverted to some poor quality type houses as it did at one stage, but it is now lifting the quality to as high a level as is possible within its powers having regard to the availability of manpower and materials. It is building homes on farms and in country towns and providing flats for elderly people, and the public generally are very appreciative of its work.

The Electricity Trust is also extending its operations to many country areas, one extension being in the South-East. For a long time I have been associated with electricity projects in country towns, and it has been found that the bigger a scheme grows the

more it is expected to grow. Everyone wants to be connected with the supply and the project grows until it is too big for the local council to handle. It would be a step in the right direction for the trust to take over as many of these undertakings as it could as soon as it could. I know it cannot all be done at once. I commend the trust for its excellent work. I think I was correct in my action when I voted on the proposal to hand the operations of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company over to the trust. The Government met the position honourably and generously by allowing those subscribers of the company who so desired to keep their money within the scheme. The trust is doing a very big job, and I will be glad when it can take over from local councils the responsibility for supplying electricity and extend its activities throughout the State.

The Department of Agriculture has lifted agriculture out of the doldrums in recent years. I pay a tribute to Sir George Jenkins for what he did as Minister of Agriculture. He set a very fine example, one which will not be readily forgotten by country people. His successor, the Hon. A. W. Christian, is also doing fine work. The establishment of the departmental extension service is a good one. We have many people undertaking farming operations who have not been accustomed to this work hitherto. Then there are many soldier settlers who have transferred to a new type of farming under new conditions. Problems will arise from time to time, and the Department of Agriculture is the one authority which can best help not only to solve these problems but prevent settlers from getting into troubles which could be avoided. I am pleased that the department proposes to widen its extension services. If the Rural Youth Scheme can popularize country life it will be very valuable indeed.

Recently, the Theatre Royal in Hindley Street was sold and if it is used for commercial purposes it will certainly be a big loss to the cultural life of the State. We have not the opportunities here to encourage visits from the best overseas artists and not as many visit Adelaide as the other capital cities. The best artists in the world should be available to us, as they are in Sydney and Melbourne. I ask the Government to consider setting up a national theatre in Adelaide. In country districts, as the result of local effort, the first project is generally to erect a hall for social activities and entertainment, but it seems that

we in South Australia are in need of something which will serve the whole community. At present it is difficult, when there is a good opera or ballet, for country people to get a seat, and that position will be worsened by the sale of the Theatre Royal. For the benefit of the culture of the people it is desirable that the Government should, when finances permit, seriously consider the establishment of a

national theatre and thus contribute in large measure to cultural development here. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.30 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, May 25, at 2 p.m.