

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, May 23, 1956.

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

QUESTION.**GUMMOSIS IN APRICOTS.**

The Hon. C. R. STORY—Has the Chief Secretary received a report from the Minister of Agriculture regarding my question of May 15 in relation to gummosis in apricots?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I have received a report to the effect that in recent months complete control measures with regard to apricot gummosis have been worked out. A departmental campaign was therefore commenced during the winter months, which is considered the most appropriate time. The intention of the campaign is to secure a realization by all apricot growers of the importance of burning dead apricot wood, and the carrying out of other recommended control measures if a reduction in the incidence of the disease is to be obtained. It is considered that the first action is to obtain the full co-operation of growers in the industry. If it becomes apparent that the effectiveness of a successful campaign is being nullified by the neglect of a small section of the community, consideration will be given to recommending the introduction of regulations.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from May 22. Page 153.)

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—I desire in the first place to associate myself with the expressions of sincere regret with regard to the death of two of our former colleagues, Mr. Arthur Christian and Mr. Don Michael, both gentlemen who deserved well of their State and who rendered wonderful services both to Parliament and out of it. I would also like to refer to the absence through illness of our esteemed friend, the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Frank Condon. I trust that his long continued illness will soon terminate and that we will have him back amongst us once again. We listen with great interest to Mr. Condon's contributions to the Address in Reply debate, particularly as he usually furnishes us with a good deal of valuable information with reference to public works which is very helpful to members and saves them a good deal of research. He is greatly missed and I

am sure we will all be glad to see his return. I would also mention the absence from among us of Sir Wallace Sandford. He gave many years of valuable service to this State and I am sure he also is very much missed. I trust that he will have many years in which to enjoy the leisure which retirement from political life will afford him.

Many opinions are expressed from time to time as to the value of the Address in Reply debate, but I say it is a very valuable debate, particularly to new members. It gives them an opportunity, not only of seeing what the Government has accomplished in the preceding year, but the legislation foreshadowed and which will have to be dealt with by members later. I sincerely and heartily congratulate the mover and seconder. We listened with very much interest to the contribution by Sir Arthur Rymill. I should say that, with his qualifications, he will be a very useful member of this Chamber, and I predict for him a long period of valuable political activity. Mr. Harry Edmonds, of course, is a seasoned member of Parliament who is very ardent in looking after the welfare of his district and he always makes a valuable contribution to this debate.

His Excellency's Speech was a long one and it took him exactly 40 minutes to deliver it. It would be quite impossible for any member to deal in detail with even a portion of the items referred to in such a long speech, so I have chosen what I think are one or two of the more important departments for comment. I draw attention first to the tremendous growth, not only in expense, but in numbers of the Education Department. I always contend that the education of our young people is the most important thing we have to deal with, and I would say that in South Australia we provide a very comprehensive education. The department is divided into the primary, secondary and technical branches with many sub-branches. In addition, the department takes in the University, Museum, Art Gallery and all the other educational institutions, so that its work is far-reaching and tremendously important. The latest report of the Auditor-General refers to the very great growth of expenditure in the department and mentions that £6,026,000 was provided for the year 1954-5, an increase of £3,000,000 compared with 1951-52. Teachers' salaries amount to about half that sum, and then there are buildings and equipment, the cost of which has more than doubled since 1951. The increase is noticeable in every section of the department. I do not say that it can be avoided. Teachers are hard to get. In South

Australia we suffer, as in the other States, from a bad legacy of the past, because the department was more or less regarded as the Cinderella amongst all the departments.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Don't you think it still is?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Not so much today. Teachers are better paid than formerly and their amenities are better, although far from perfect. In every way their environments have been improved and the emolument is certainly much better than it was. Many country teachers are badly housed, and that has continued over a number of years and is one reason why the recruitment of teachers is being retarded. Many young people will not go into the country, although the department does its best. It is a foolish and short-term view for parents to allow their children to go into dead-end jobs. Although they are well paid for the moment, one does not know how long such jobs will last. It is unfortunate that people do not see a little farther ahead. Parents should try to lead their children into avocations which will last a lifetime. I know the Government is doing its best to attract teachers to the Education Department.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think it could do more?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I do not know what more it could do. It has spent thousands of pounds to bring teachers from overseas. Some remain after completing their term of three years, whereas others return to their homeland. These things are very disconcerting to a department which is trying to keep up its standards. In the country over the last few years it has been the department's policy to close small schools, some of which were single teacher schools. I have my own view as to whether this practice has worked out as well as the department expected. It means that students have to be transported at Government expense to the nearest area school, and this costs the department about £500,000 a year. The department itself owns about 300 buses and in addition employs outside buses to provide transport. It also pays parents a travelling allowance if they drive their children to school, and in the aggregate this amounts to a fairly large sum. I am wondering whether parents are really pulling their weight in this regard.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—You would not expect the children to walk to school?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—It would not do some of them any harm if they did.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Walk five or 10 miles?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—In the past children used to walk three or four miles to and from school. I think we have now gone to the other extreme and are spoon-feeding the people instead of making them stand up to some of their responsibilities.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Have you told your electors that?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am telling them now. It is a tremendous burden for a population of under 1,000,000 to provide nearly £7,000,000 for education.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Much of it is capital expenditure.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Some of it is. I admit that many schools have been erected. An innovation is the provision of a number of portable school-rooms, but they are merely a makeshift. Since the war it has been difficult to get labour and materials to undertake construction, but it does not alter the fact that the Education Department has become a tremendous spending department. It provides very little revenue, therefore the figures will have to be carefully watched. I do not think the average taxpayer objects to expenditure on education so long as it is properly spent, but some of these things might with advantage be looked into to see whether we are spending this huge sum to the best advantage. I notice that in both secondary and technical schools the size of classes has been reduced. This is all to the good. Previously classes have been far too large for the average teacher.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—That is contrary to the report of the teachers themselves.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am speaking now of the average, and I would not say that the average is the best guide to take. In the metropolitan area a number of the schools are considerably understaffed and overcrowded, and some of the teachers are carrying a very heavy burden because of the big number of untrained teachers. These people have come into the department willingly due to a request made by the Minister because of a shortage of staff. As a result of their being inexperienced and untrained a good deal of the heavy work has fallen on trained teachers.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—That is lowering the educational standard.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—That is so, and I regret it very much. If this position lasts for very long there will be many children in this State who will miss out on a thorough grounding in their education. The department has done everything possible to fill the gap,

but it has not been able to do so without employing these untrained people.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—What would happen if all the private schools were closed? Would the Government be able to accommodate the children?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I agree that the denominational schools are doing a great job.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think they should have some assistance from the Government?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am not going into that. Thousands of children go to those schools, and they would have to go to State schools if the denominational schools did not exist.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—In principle you agree that some assistance should be given?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I think the Government is helping those schools. I know that at one time it provided a subsidy to them. In any case, the people who send their children to those schools enjoy taxation concessions. Mr. Bardolph has discussed this subject many times, but I am not going to go into it at the moment.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Do you agree with what I said?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I do not know that I agree entirely. The grant made to the University of Adelaide has increased tremendously. In 1951 it was £228,100, and it had increased to the large sum of £553,095 last year. I am not saying that the University is not spending the money properly, but it is a large sum.*

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Wait until you see this year's figures.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I know the University has expanded in the last few years. Years ago when I had experience of that institution only about six professors did most of the work there. Today the staff has probably quadrupled, but I doubt very much whether the number of students has increased correspondingly. Many professors farm out their jobs to senior lecturers today.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Do you think the grants are too big?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I am not going to commit myself to saying that, but I do ask whether the money is being wisely spent. The University is a huge institution; it is growing, and so is the expenditure on it. In addition to State schools we also have the responsibility of teaching children in the

Northern Territory, although we are certainly recouped by a Federal grant. The Education Department carries out this work by means of a very efficient correspondence school. It is a credit to the State, and I commend anyone interested to go along and see how it conducts its work.

It is very gratifying to know that, despite the prophecies made by some political friends in years gone by, the Forestry Department has not been a great sink for money which would never be justified.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Who said that?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I think the honourable member knows that. I can remember at one time a responsible Minister of the Crown wanted to sell the whole thing. Surely that was a fair indication that he had very little faith in it. However, the department has justified the claims that more optimistic people made for its future. It has contributed almost £500,000 to consolidated revenue, it is completely free of debt and it is a very large profit-making department. I am sure it must be gratifying to all taxpayers because, not only is it producing revenue, but it is also doing a great public work. The ascertained surplus for the last financial year from sales of timber derived from the full or partial exploration of plantations, after providing for all expenditure thereon, amounted to £230,513, of which £80,000 was appropriated and paid as a contribution to consolidated revenue. I think it is the first time for a number of years that the department has had sufficient money to carry anything over into consolidated revenue. Our State is poorly off in natural forests, but the planting programme carried out by this department is showing a handsome profit. It is also doing a tremendous amount of good in supplying all types of timber, both logs and milled, and in so doing it is saving us from heavy importations.

Experiments are being made into the suitability of *pinus radiata* for sleepers. There is nothing new about that, of course. Softwood sleepers were made here 40 years ago and used on the lighter lines. Some four or five years ago I saw some pine sleepers taken up after having been in the earth for 30 or 40 years. They were tested and were found to be as sound as the day they were laid.

The Hon. A. J. Melrose—What sort of timber were they?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Pine.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—Are you sure? There were no pines down there then. They were red gum.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—They were sleepers made from the native pines. The railways have been having the greatest difficulty in getting sleepers for their lines. Many years ago I brought to the notice of the department that reinforced concrete sleepers were being used in France and carrying very heavy traffic. When I was in France I went to see them being made at La Roche, about 300 miles from Paris. The Railways Department knows about them and has all the estimates, and I suggest to the Minister that if the department is still having difficulty getting sleepers he should give some serious thought to this. These sleepers are doing a good job in other countries, and perhaps our only difficulty would be the distance they would have to be transported. It would be one way of bridging the gap in the shortage of jarrah sleepers, and they would possibly be cheaper. I know they were being supplied for the French national railways.

I now wish to say something on this question of automation. I am pleased to see the Minister is looking ahead. He sees, as do all far-seeing people, that this question of automation is facing the world. I noticed an article in the *Advertiser* of May 19 headed "Automation Casts its Shadow." It read:—

There is an ogre close behind us all. It has a cast iron constitution, a cold heart of unemotional dials and meters, eyes that are red and green lights, metal hinges, instead of elbows, and an inscrutable, expressionless face with power sockets where it should have ears. That was the definition given by Mr. Douglas Lockwood, who wrote this article on the coming of automation.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think it is a bit exaggerated?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I think it is, but he is pointing out in journalistic fashion just what automation might mean to a community. I have noticed in newspapers from time to time that nearly every country in the world is considering the effect of automation upon industry. The Minister in his wisdom is attempting to make provision for the teaching of the generation which will be affected by it, and he is endeavouring to see that they are preparing themselves for living in a society where this is functioning. However, I do not think it is likely to strike Australia for a considerable time. We are far too small in population to be benefited by automation, but we will feel the effect of it when it is being practised in other countries. We have all watched the expansion of industry with considerable interest. We know how in England when the old mercantile system was in vogue we had what

we were pleased to term *laissez-faire*, followed by the trade union movement. This did a great deal of good for the workers of the world, but we have to see that it does not become a tyranny.

Automation, as I see it, is a type of supervision of the machine by a machine. The workers could naturally be very sceptical and suspicious of it, but I think it could be beneficial to them. When the industrial revolution started in the 18th century there was the same suspicion by the workers, because, quite naturally, they were afraid of losing their jobs. There were revolutions and the workers began to break up machinery, but eventually those very people who had come to scoff remained to praise, and instead of hundreds being employed in industry there were thousands. I think that will be the case with automation. It is an extraordinary thing, and personally I am not very enamoured of it, but I think it has to come. We have seen industry faced with all kinds of problems with regard to labour, such as the decrease of hours and the increase of costs, and in order to survive it has to try to introduce other means. There is nothing really new about it, and we have seen it coming in our time. There have been all kinds of innovations and short cuts, and this is an extension of what we have already seen. I support the motion.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midlands)—I join other members who have offered congratulations to the two new members in this Chamber. I would also like to add my congratulations to both those members on their contributions to this debate. Both gave us something which was quite thought-provoking and illuminating to this Chamber and to the public, and I think we can look forward to some very interesting debates in the future with these two members in our midst. I also convey to the relatives of the late Arthur Christian and Don Michael my sincere condolences, and I join with other members who have so eloquently expressed their tributes to the worth of those gentlemen. I would also mention the recent Honours List in which the names of two who have given much to this State appeared, namely, the Hon. Sir Malcolm McIntosh, K.B.E., and Sir George Ligertwood. I should like to go on record as having congratulated both of them on the high honour which Her Majesty has been pleased to bestow upon them.

In this debate one has the opportunity of traversing many subjects, but I do not wish to do that. I will endeavour to touch on

but a few, and I would like first to say that I was delighted to see His Excellency back in South Australia to deliver his speech in person because on the first occasion, when I entered this Parliament, he was enjoying a well earned holiday in England. I was pleased to have the opportunity of seeing him in this Chamber in person.

It would be quite wrong for any member to think that the Government could provide all the money necessary to achieve all the things suggested by members, but I also believe that members should have the right, as they have in this Chamber, to express their views on a variety of subjects and that the Government should give earnest attention to their suggestions. The statisticians tell us that this State is in a very good financial position, and well it might be because we have enjoyed in the primary industries, in the main, 11 outstanding seasons. In that period we have seen the production of wool and fat lambs at record heights and we learned from His Excellency's Speech that the wheat and barley crops were very satisfactory.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—But the Government cannot claim any credit for that.

The Hon. C. R. STORY—I was not saying anything about the Government, but was simply talking about the prosperity of the State. According to figures I have seen there is full employment of the workers, and they are in as good a position as workers in other States and probably in the world. We have seen secondary industries expanding and production maintained and, most important of all, we have a stable Government which is assisting in the development of our natural wealth in minerals and forests. With a set-up like that I can see no reason why this State should not be prosperous.

We noted from the Speech also that the Government intends to do everything in its power to see that this position is maintained and, although I agree with Mr. Bardolph that the Government does not do everything, it must be looked to to give a lead in the development of things of this nature. It is during times of comparative prosperity that we should pause to take stock. We should see that we develop the State so that our great credit earners overseas, our primary products, maintain their position and even improve it. Looking back over our history we note that periods of prosperity are almost always followed by unfavourable periods which counter-balance them, such as drought, bushfires, floods and erosion, and we should be prepared at a time like this to meet those

eventualities which undoubtedly will come again. In the recognized assured rainfall areas we can do a lot to ensure that this State's prosperity, if not completely maintained in bad times, is not greatly diminished and that production of the credit earners I have mentioned is kept at as high a level as possible.

I was pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that the Government is undertaking to bring water to some of the outside areas such as that through which the Morgan-Whyalla main passes, and Yorke Peninsula. The latter is virtually a gold mine to the revenue of this State, and I am pleased indeed to note that water is being taken to it. Although it may be in the high rainfall belt it is necessary for stock production that in dry seasons they should have an assured water supply. It is to the localities known as the Murray Mallee and the Murray Flats that I think the Government might very well look to take water because they are the first, in times of drought, really to go under. The light sandy soils erode very easily with wind, and an assured water supply is an absolute necessity. Our only real source of water runs adjacent to these areas in the River Murray, and with pipelines out into this dry country, which, in dry times, turns into nothing but a dust bowl, farmers would at least be assured that some portion of their land was safe by the sowing of pasture under irrigation. As a long range view I think the Government is bound to examine that question and see whether it is possible for a certain amount of pasture to be established on every one of those mallee farms.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—How much would that cost the farmers?

The Hon. C. R. STORY—Nothing in the long run because they would be getting something in times when normally they and people in the cities would be starving. The provision of natural cover on this barren country is something that we should look to so as to prevent erosion by wind in dry seasons. The reafforestation of our bare countryside should have every encouragement from the Government and I suggest that the farmers of South Australia take advantage of the facilities that prevail in the form of cheap trees, and plant their land in bands and belts, because in a dry, hot country such as ours stock should be provided with shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. It would be a most lucrative proposition for the farmers not of this, but of the next generation, when the trees could be harvested and replaced by young trees.

Having referred to the primary producers who have enjoyed 11 or 12 years prosperity, let me turn to the other group of people who have not been so fortunately placed in recent years. I refer especially to those engaged in the production of dried vine, canning and fresh fruits, and wine. Reference was made in the Governor's Speech to a stabilization scheme for the dried fruits industry, and with that I wholeheartedly agree. However, the scheme presented by the industry has proved to be unacceptable to the Federal Government. The officers of the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Department of Commerce and Agriculture, in conjunction with members of the Australian Dried Fruits Association, prepared a plan which it was thought would meet with the requirements of the Federal Government. Unfortunately, that plan was not accepted and another plan was prepared and submitted. Federal Cabinet was unable to see its way clear to accept the second plan, or at least amended it in such a way as to make it impracticable in the opinion of the Federal Council of the Australian Dried Fruits Association, which is, in effect, the Parliament of the industry.

The main points on which there was a variation of opinion were on the methods of the pooling of fruit. The A.D.F.A. asked that the three drying varieties, currants, sultanas, and lexiass, should be treated as separate entities and stabilized separately on a three pool system, but the Government insisted on single pooling. The cost of production of each of these three varieties is different and the quantities grown by growers are also different. One grower may be able to produce two of the varieties satisfactorily on his type of country, but not the third. Consequently, not all the growers grow the same proportion of these varieties, and so the industry requires to be stabilized on a separate basis. However, the Commonwealth Government said it was not prepared to do this and an attempt was made to work out a scheme whereby an average price would be paid for three varieties. There is a weakness in such a scheme. For instance, who would suggest that wheat, barley and oats could be pooled for the purpose of stabilization? They have different markets, different prices, different costs of production and are grown by entirely different people. A farmer may have a few dairy cattle, may grow some tobacco and wheat and have some fowls, all of which under the present schemes would make him entitled to a subsidy in certain circumstances. No one would suggest that if he also carried 5,000 sheep and was particularly prosperous he should

be cut out of any one of those subsidies. He could be in a particularly affluent position, but would still be eligible for the subsidies under the various schemes.

For some unknown reason the Commonwealth Government wanted to provide a single pool for the dried fruits mentioned, but this was not acceptable to growers. It is very difficult to understand the objections of the Government, especially as this industry has received more than its fair share of hard knocks, despite the fact it has played such an important part in providing food and has accepted ex-service-men into its ranks, which, in many ways has worked to its own detriment. It is hard to see why the Commonwealth Government has shown such callous disregard for an industry which I consider has played its part in assisting the prosperity of this country. Recently we have been privileged to have with us in South Australia Mr. C. F. Parsons, the manager of Overseas Farmers Dried Fruits Department, the distributor of most of our dried fruits in England. From his remarks it would appear that the outlook for our dried vine fruits overseas is the brightest for some time, but we still have to meet competition from subsidized countries on world markets. These people can sell their fruit at a much cheaper rate than Australia because we are on a high cost of production basis owing to the wages paid and the other things involved in our production costs. Actually, we are required to sell in competition against California, Greece and Turkey, where growers are highly subsidized by their Governments. We seem to have reached the stage where our dried fruits are again required on the overseas markets, and to people in the industry that is very important. At least it will enable them to quit their goods, even if at not terribly handsome prices. In recent times we have suffered one of the greatest disasters in the industry during an unfortunate period of 10 years of "downs." Seasonal conditions this year have been shocking. The crop promised to be the best for some time, and up to March, when the crop was harvested, the Murray irrigation areas had received only 50 points of rain, but from March until Easter nearly 5in. was recorded, which was more than the industry could take.

I am indebted to Mr. Edmonds for raising the question of dehydration in the fruit growing industry. I have heard many comments, not only from honourable members, but from outside, as to why the industry does not completely embrace dehydration to save it from the disabilities suffered from time to

time. When Mr. Cudmore was chairman of the Land Settlement Committee, it fully investigated the dehydration methods in the eastern States, and it was recommended that the C.S.I.R.O. should undertake an investigation to see what could be done to dehydrate the fruit direct from the vines to the packing houses, and so do away with racks and sun drying. When the Loxton area was being settled the C.S.I.R.O. carried out many experiments in the irrigation areas on that subject, and the finding was that although it might be desirable the industry could not stand the additional cost. Private dehydrators had been installed and it had been proved that they could be used successfully in times of stress when the fruit needed finishing off because of rain but no sun. However, the cost of erecting batteries of these dehydrators would be far more than the industry could stand at present.

Dehydration has been fully taxed in the river areas because of the incidence of green mould and white mould. It has been found that fruit on many of the racks which had been loaded in good weather had in the matter of a week become completely and utterly useless because of mould. As is well known, these fruits are harvested in the summer. Heat plus rain causes great humidity, and if the fruit is completely enclosed in sheds or roofed racks with permanent sides it will soon deteriorate and become mouldy. We have had instances this year of where rain fell on one morning and the light hessian curtains on the racks were dropped, and within 24 hours the mould had developed extensively in the fruit. One can imagine that in a permanent structure it is quite useless to try to protect fruit from such weather, so I hope an endeavour will be made to find an economic method of circulating air in the drying racks to keep the mould out during periods of high humidity.

The production of lexias is of interest to the people of South Australia because the raisin market here has always proved to be a very good one. At one stage we thought we would have for export about 5,000 tons of lexias this year, but owing to the adverse weather conditions the total will be only 500 tons. That gives some idea of the losses suffered in the industry. One member suggested to me the other day that I nearly made him cry last year when I referred to the position of the industry, but I have not noticed him this afternoon dab his eyes with his handkerchief, although one would think that was necessary after listening to me, and that the

industry, because of what I have related, should fold up completely and get out. I do not believe that. This industry has weathered many storms since 1887 when it started, and the people in it have grown almost immune to punishment. In such a period of prosperity I consider that the industry should have the right to look to some of our more fortunate friends, through the medium of the Commonwealth Government, for a little assistance to get it over the stile.

It does not stop me from thinking that the Commonwealth Government was quite wrong in knocking back the South Australian Government's recent recommendation that further areas should be opened for irrigation on the Murray. In the Hundred of Gordon, between Berri and Loxton, is a very large area which could be developed to the advantage not only of the State but of the Commonwealth by the production of canning fruits, something we lack in this State. Until we get sufficient canning fruits we cannot look forward to establishing co-operative canneries, thus putting our people on the same basis as those in the eastern States. It would be a short-sighted policy for the industry to completely fold up and say that it could not go any further in the development of these areas because it had experienced a couple of bad years.

The citrus industry has plenty of avenues available for development. It was mentioned in the Governor's Speech that this industry had found a ready market in New Zealand, but this is nothing new. We have supplied quality fruit and have beaten our competitors from South Africa and the United States of America. We are likely to hold this market. Vegetable growing could very well be undertaken in the upper Murray areas. At the moment, in money values, it is returning far more than is being returned from the dried fruits industry in some areas in the form of peas, which are sent to the Sydney and Melbourne markets. This activity can continue, because the areas are almost frost free and the land and water are available. Wherever possible, areas should be developed under private enterprise. I am quite sure that it is much better for the Government to spend money on providing pumps, pipelines and headworks and allowing people to go on the land rather than to embark on costly schemes wholly financed by the Government that will be an encumbrance for many years. If we are to retain our proportion under the River Murray agreement of water that is now running out

to the sea, we will have to do something about using it. I have suggested a few ways in which we might use it, and I hope that the Government will consider using more of that water to develop the dry lands and to provide water to those parts of the State that urgently need it.

I have been particularly grateful to the people responsible for the development of the Electricity Trust because it has given people in country areas some of the amenities and advantages usually reserved for those in the city. However, one or two matters in the policy of the trust might be looked into. To encourage primary and secondary industries we should endeavour to balance out a little more the cost of power to consumers in remote areas now away from the supply of electricity. Instead of imposing high surcharges on people who want to go ahead with plans, we might balance the whole lot out and so lower the surcharge, which is almost prohibitive in some cases. On the other hand some agree to take the power, and about 50 per cent of the people eventually carry the load because they have given an estimate of their requirements and are bound to use a certain amount of power. Some of them fall by the wayside and use only the cheap power available in the night-time, having to resort to tractors and other means for a supply in the daytime. It is time for a review of the general policy of the trust in this matter.

As we all know, the Motor Vehicles Department is a centralized body with its home on North Terrace, but I think the Government would be doing a good service to country people if it showed in a practical form a demonstration of decentralization. If, as in other States, this State were cut into regions, with agencies for registering motor vehicles and obtaining licences in the principal towns, it would be a great help to people in the country and would also provide the much needed space in the city for other Government offices that cannot be decentralized. It is quite practicable to provide these facilities.

The Hon. A. J. Melrose—It is done in Victoria.

The Hon. C. R. STORY—Yes, and also in New South Wales. In the South-East, Mount Gambier is the principal town, and if licences could be granted there the area would be simply zoned off and given a block of registrations with certain serial numbers for the district. It is almost impossible for a man who buys a new vehicle towards the end of the month and who receives a 10-day permit to get his registration disc back from the depart-

ment before his permit has expired. If that could be handled at police stations, as in Victoria, or in a district office of the Registrar, it would be far better for country residents, and it would be a decentralization of the department.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—It would double the cost.

The Hon. C. R. STORY—I do not know that it would. It would if the present staff were retained in the city, but if they were farmed out to the country I do not think it would double the cost. It would greatly facilitate the working of the department and it would also help people living in the country.

Recently I raised the matter of gummosis in apricots, something that is of great importance to producers in South Australia. We could well say that it is a cancerous scourge because it can be likened in many ways to cancer. It starts in one spot, and it cannot be arrested unless the whole limb is amputated. It is a serious plague that has been with us for a considerable time and, after a lot of investigation and hard work on the part of departmental officers, it has now been ascertained that the spores of the virus are contained in and on dead wood, that they are liberated with rain, and that they are wind borne to other healthy trees. One can see heaps of dead apricot wood when travelling around the country, particularly through the Barossa Valley, which is probably one of the worst affected areas in the State. Many growers have gone out of the industry because the effects of gummosis have been so bad. The wood has been thrown into heaps to be burnt, but all the time it has been liberating the virus which has affected neighbours' trees. As in all similar matters 95 per cent of the people co-operate fully by burning the wood and cleaning up prunings, but the other 5 per cent make such schemes impossible to work. I feel that it is absolutely necessary for the department to enact some legislation to force people to burn this wood, and also to provide a heavy penalty for not doing so. Only in that way will the areas not yet affected be protected. I offer those suggestions for the earnest consideration of the Minister because it is one of the most important things we have had to deal with for some time.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.21 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, May 24, at 2 p.m.