

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, August 21, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

QUARTERLY ADJUSTMENT OF BASIC WAGE.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—As the rise in the cost of living has not been checked and it appears that the Premiers' Conference held last week to deal with this problem has failed, will the Government act with other Governments in making provision for the restoration of quarterly adjustments?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—As the honourable member's question involves policy I am not in a position to answer it at this stage.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Am I to understand that Cabinet has not discussed this matter? I believe that the Premier is to make a statement on it today and I think this Council is just as important as another place.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—A conference was held in Canberra last week. The Premier attended it and knows the full details and, as the matter affects the Treasury, I think it is logical that the main statement on it should be made in the other House.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—Is it the intention of the Government to make a pronouncement as to what flood relief assistance it proposes to grant to those unfortunate victims of the devastating floods in South Australia?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (for the Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN)—The Government has already announced that it will give assistance in hardship cases and is at present conferring with Commonwealth Government regarding assistance for rehabilitation.

WHEAT SALES.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (on notice)—

1. Is it a fact that the Australian Wheat Board will not sell f.a.q. wheat to merchants for resale to the poultry industry?

2. Is the Minister aware that wheat has been sold at a weight as low as 56 lb. to the bushel?

3. If so, what price was charged for such wheat?

4. What was the dockage charged to the grower for wheat of this weight?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (for the Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN)—The State Superintendent of the Australian Wheat Board reports:—

1. Yes.

2. No. but it is understood that 19A Pool feed wheat ranging from 59 lb. to 54 lb. per bushel (average 56½ lb.) will be sold shortly.

3. Price fixed by Australian Wheat Board for this wheat is a discount of 6d. per bushel on f.a.q. wheat price. The Board's State Superintendent recently asked his Board to increase the discount.

4. Final return from 19A Pool to growers will be on basis of realization.

HIDE AND LEATHER INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 292.)

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—This is a short measure that repeals legislation the operation of which has been suspended for some time. During the war and immediately afterwards it became necessary to control the sale of hides to ensure sufficient supplies to meet the demands of the home market. At this time there was a considerable world shortage of hides with the result that the overseas market price was considerably higher than the local price with the natural consequence that hides were being exported in order to gain the higher price. This led to an acute shortage of leather in Australia, with its direct effect upon the price of leather goods and footwear. The Commonwealth Government therefore found it necessary to enact National Security Regulations giving it power to regulate the sale of hides. In 1948 legislation was passed in this State to continue the control previously administered by the Commonwealth. In that year the Commonwealth Government, in consultation with the States, apparently agreed that the control should continue for a further period. The legislation in operation at that time gave power to the board set up under it to control and administer the sale of hides both for home consumption and for export. It issued licences to persons to deal in hides, and had authority over their acquisition and disposal, and could impose penalties for unauthorized dealing in their sale; it also set a quota for the export market and for home consumption. The legislation at that time was necessary because of the circumstances. These controls did ensure a reasonable supply for the home manufacturer of leather goods,

and had the effect of keeping the price of leather goods, including footwear, at a reasonable level.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Does the honourable member really believe that?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—If the honourable member does not believe that was the effect, he should investigate the position more closely than he has done. There would not have been any hides on the local market but for this legislation. They would have been exported to the detriment of the home manufacturer, and even of the fighting forces, because owing to the acute shortage of leather no leather goods would have been manufactured. Where would we have got the necessary supplies of leather to meet the needs of the fighting forces? The Commonwealth and the State Governments realized the necessity for this legislation and its continuation in 1948. It must have had an effect on the price of goods finally manufactured from the hides. Even today, when that shortage no longer exists and it is no longer necessary to re-enact the legislation controlling the sale of hides, we still pay exorbitant prices for footwear.

In 1955 it was found that leather supplies were such that the legislation could be discontinued and the Act was suspended. I agree with the explanation given by the Minister in his second reading that undoubtedly there were outstanding claims to be met by the board set up under this legislation before its affairs could be wound up, and therefore instead of this legislation being repealed in 1954 the best course was considered to suspend it until the winding up of any demands outstanding to the board and the finalization of its affairs. Apparently the board has completed its function and all claims have been met, and therefore there is no need to continue the legislation. I therefore support the second reading.

• The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND WRONGS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 293.)

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—I support the second reading of the Bill, the object of which I understand is to provide for a uniform period of three years in which claims can be made for negligence as the result of an accident. Another portion of

the Bill provides for a similar period in which action can be started in the event of a fatal accident. I consider the legislation a step in the right direction, because uniformity will be to the advantage of the community as a whole. If I understand the intentions of the Bill correctly, it will create an anomaly in another measure in that it grants a concession to one section of the community to the disadvantage of another. I wondered whether the Attorney-General, as Minister of Industry, had given any thought to the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act which, in my opinion, are in line with some of the provisions of this Bill. Section 30 of that Act provides:—

Proceedings for the recovery under this Act of compensation for any injury shall not be maintained unless the claim for compensation with respect to such accident has been made within six months from the occurrence of the accident causing the injury, or in the case of death, within six months from the time of death: Provided that the failure to make a claim within the period above specified shall not be a bar to the maintenance of such proceedings if it is found that the failure was occasioned by mistake, absence from the State of South Australia, or other reasonable cause.

A person who meets with an accident away from industry has three years in which to commence action for damages without any provisos at all, but a person in industry is limited to six months, with the provisos contained in the Act. I do not think there is any reason why the difference should exist. Alternative remedies are set out in section 69 (2) of the Workmen's Compensation Act for a man who has been compensated for an accident. That section provides that where a workman has received compensation under the Act in respect of an accident he shall not bring an action against the employer for damages in respect of the same accident unless within six months after he received compensation, or if more than one payment of compensation was made, within six months after he received the first such payment, he gave the employer written notice of his intention to bring that action. Parliament evidently thought at that time that it was an unjust law to apply to those in industry, so in 1955 the following proviso was added:—

Provided that failure to give notice within the said period shall not be a bar to the maintenance of the action if the court finds that the failure was occasioned by mistake, absence from the State, or other reasonable cause.

I fail to see why a person who meets with an accident in the street will have the right under

this Bill to begin an action for compensation at any time within the following three years whereas the employee in industry has only six months, with the proviso.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—But one is insured and the other is not.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—I do not know why there is this difference. There might be a very good reason for it.

The Hon. C. D. Rôwe—There is.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—There might be. I do not expect Sir Frank Perry to agree with me, because he is an employer and I represent employees.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—That does not alter the justice of the case.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—Irrespective of interjections, I will put my views in my own way. Unless there is some very good reason why there should be a difference and unless I am told about it I will air my views and seek remedies. Recently I had the unpleasant task of informing a person that he could not take action for negligence under the Workmen's Compensation Act because the six months' time limit had expired. I do not know whose fault it was that it was exceeded. The person concerned was employed as a brickmaker in the country. When the accident occurred the medical practitioner felt that the injured leg could be cured, but after 15 months' medical care the leg had to be amputated. He received his weekly payments, but because he had exceeded the six months' limit was unable to take action for compensation. I am not criticizing anyone, because this occurred before the last amendment to the Act, but I have mentioned it to show how the man was deprived of compensation because of the short time limit. Although I support the second reading, I ask that the Minister indicate why a person in industry should have only six months in which to commence an action.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LAW OF PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 294.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—As my knowledge is at a very low ebb in legal matters such as those contained in this Bill I shall leave the criticism, if any, to others who know more about them. I congratulate Mr. Shard and Sir Arthur Rymill on their election to this Chamber. Their

knowledge will be very beneficial in matters such as this and the previous measures. I extend my welcome to both these gentlemen.

The Minister in introducing this Bill gave a brief explanation with regard to powers of appointment and distribution of property. Over a period of many years there have been complications and arguments resulting in quite a number of legal actions for the settlement of wills, and I think it is the desire of the Government to make this legislation more workable. The Bill reproduces English legislation by bringing the South Australian law into line with the English law. Clause 3 enacts and inserts in the principal Act the validation of appointments where objects are excluded or take illusory shares. The Act was amended in 1945 to make provision for assurances to aliens. That was the only amendment, which indicates that very little legislation has been introduced over a period of many years to correct what is now considered to be an anomaly. This is therefore very important legislation. I will listen attentively to those persons who have been trained in the law, and will content myself at present with supporting the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ROYAL STYLE AND TITLES BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 15. Page 294.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1) —Before proceeding I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back into this Chamber the Honourable Frank Condon, Leader of the Opposition. I know I speak for all when I say that we are happy to see him amongst us again and taking the active part in the affairs of this House that he has done during the years he has had the honour to represent Central No. 1 in Parliament.

This Bill brings into line the titles that will be used in connection with Her Majesty in this State, and in effect introduces the same designation as that introduced by the Commonwealth Parliament in 1953. With the advent of representative government to the peoples of the various parts of the British Empire, the changes that have taken place make it necessary for this type of legislation throughout the Dominions. Canada was the first part of the Empire to receive responsible government. After responsible government, Canada became a Dominion because of the now famous report of Lord Durham in 1839

when he was Governor of Canada. Following the upsurge of the feelings of the people who had been governed from the Home Office in London, Lord Durham presented that report, and from it followed the granting of Dominion status to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa. We also have the Republic of India, which is quite British in its views and leanings.

In dealing with these titles in connection with the Monarchy we are apt to talk of these things glibly, and to consider them redundant and not meaning anything to us in the ordinary course of our lives. But I am reminded of the statement made by Sir Winston Churchill, who incidentally does not hold the same political opinions as I do. He expressed the opinion of those people who believed in a free democracy. In a speech which he made on November 16, 1948, he said:—

Our ancient Monarchy renders inestimable services to our country and to all the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations. Above the ebb and flow of party strife, the rise and fall of ministries and individuals, the changes of public opinion or public fortune, the British Monarchy presides ancient, calm, and supreme within its functions over all the treasures that have been saved from the past and all the glories we write in the annals of our country.

I think that expresses the view of every member of this House, and indicates that whilst we do have a Monarchy and pay our respects to that Monarchy of Great Britain, it is nevertheless a limited Monarchy. By virtue of the powers of representative government and the status of a Dominion we still have the right to govern our own internal affairs without any interference, let or hindrance from the Monarchy as at present established. Those conditions have not always obtained. Years ago the Monarchy was the supreme governing body over the people of Great Britain and the other dependencies under the Crown. With the turn of the century and the upsurge of representative government those things have been changed. Whilst it is a fact that all laws passed in this House are subject to the approval of His Excellency the Governor as the representative of Her Majesty, we still have the power to pass our own legislation. With the passing of the Statute of Westminster we received greater powers as a Dominion. It did not commit Australia to take part in any war if it did not deem it right to do so. We should be quite proud of the fact that we are under the auspices of the British Monarchy and yet are able to enjoy to the full

the real essence of the British democracy as we know it. I support the Bill.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MOTOR PARKING).

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Local Government), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act, 1934-54. Read a first time.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to provide the necessary powers to enable municipal councils to introduce the parking meter system in streets within their areas. The parking meter system as a method of controlling the parking of vehicles in streets is now widely used in many cities, including some Australian cities. The system employed is that, in the streets in which the meters are installed, stands for vehicles are appointed and each stand is supplied with a parking meter. The motorist who wishes to leave his car in a metered space, is expected to insert a coin in the meter which indicates the time during which he is entitled to the parking space. If he overstays the time, then he is guilty of an offence. Thus, the motorist is precluded from using the street as a parking spot for his car for an indefinite period unless he is prepared to pay the appropriate fee. The legislation has been asked for by the Adelaide City Council which is of opinion that the parking meter system will materially assist in the parking problem in the city streets. The Bill, however, proposes to confer the powers in question upon all municipal councils.

The Bill provides that municipal councils may make by-laws setting up the parking meter system. The by-laws may appoint any public street, road or place as a metered space for the standing of vehicles and may provide for the erection of parking meters at these stands. The by-laws will fix the charges to be paid for the use of any streets and otherwise control the use of the stands. The by-laws may impose penalties for breaches of the by-laws. It is provided that the by-laws may provide that the council may, by resolution, from time to time declare the streets to which the parking meter system is to apply and the number of vehicles which may use any particular metered spaces. This provision is necessary to provide for proper administration. As the council gains experience, it will probably be necessary to make changes in the places where the

meters are installed. This should be capable of being done expeditiously and without the necessity of altering the by-laws. However, the Bill provides that the parking meter charges are to be fixed by by-law and thus be subject to Parliamentary control.

The Bill also provides for a change in the manner in which these by-laws will be promulgated. The Local Government Act provides that council by-laws are first to be submitted to the Crown Solicitor and then laid before Parliament. After this they are submitted to the Governor for confirmation and eventually published in the *Gazette* when they come into force. The result of this procedure is that there is a considerable lapse in time between the making of a by-law by the council and the time it comes into operation. Particularly is this the case if the by-law is made during the Parliamentary recess.

It is considered that, as regards these parking meter by-laws, the same procedure should be followed as that provided by section 38 of the Acts Interpretation Act for regulations and other subordinate legislation. It is therefore provided by the Bill that these parking meters by-laws should, after being made by the council, be submitted to the Crown Solicitor for the usual certificate of validity. They will then be submitted to the Governor for confirmation and, if confirmed, be published in the *Gazette*. The by-laws will then be tabled in Parliament and be subject to disallowance in the usual manner but they will come into operation as from the time of publication in the *Gazette* or from such later date as is fixed in the by-law.

The Bill provides that every metered space is to be marked out on the street by the council and that the council is not to be under any liability by reason of the use of any metered space. It is also provided that in any proceedings against the owner or driver of a vehicle for a contravention of the by-law, if proof is given that a vehicle was parked contrary to the by-law, the owner or driver shall be deemed to have left it there unless he satisfies the court to the contrary. A provision of this kind is necessary for the effective administration of a parking meter scheme as otherwise the council, in order to prosecute successfully a person for leaving his car in a metered space without paying the requisite fee, would have to produce evidence that the defendant actually left the car there. Obviously, unless the person charged admitted the fact, this evidence could only be forth-

coming if an inspector or other person actually saw the defendant leave his car at the place in question. It is therefore considered that an evidentiary provision of this nature is essential for the operation of the scheme and that it does not impose an undue burden on owners and drivers of vehicles. The Adelaide City Council has formed the opinion that, in addition to providing this system of parking in streets, the council should endeavour to provide what are called "off kerb" parking facilities by means of parking stations and the like on land of the council.

Accordingly, the Bill authorizes a municipal council to construct and provide car parks, parking stations, garages and the like and gives the council power to manage them and to make charges for their use.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—What about district councils?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—There is nothing in this Bill relating to district councils. The by-law making power is extended to include the power to make by-laws relating to the management of premises of this kind but the ordinary rules now provided in the Local Government Act as to the promulgation of by-laws will apply. Section 382 of the Local Government Act provides that a council may lease land so that, if thought fit by the council, the council could, after providing a parking station or similar premises, lease it to others for the purpose of being used for the parking of vehicles.

Thus, the effect of the Bill is to give to municipal councils the power necessary to institute a parking meter system and to authorize a municipal council to establish off kerb parking facilities. The Bill does not restrict the council in the application of the revenue it might recover from the parking meter system. The view of the Government is that the application of this revenue should be left to the discretion of the council.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Are the councils limited as to the streets in which meters may be installed?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The streets may be varied at the discretion of the councils by resolution. Fees, however, must be referred to Parliament. I commend the Bill to the consideration of members and in view of its urgency hope that it will be dealt with in the ensuing week.

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

COUNCIL BY-LAWS: UNSIGHTLY CHATTELS AND STRUCTURES.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—I move—

That By-law No. 25 of the District Council of Stirling, laid on the table of this Council on May 8, 1956, By-law No. 29 of the District Council of Tumbly Bay, laid on the table of this Council on May 8, 1956, By-law No. 58 of the Corporation of Woodville, laid on the table of this Council on May 15, 1956, By-law No. 41 of the Corporation of Brighton, laid on the table of this Council on August 14, 1956, By-law No. 26 of the District Council of Minlaton, laid on the table of this Council on August 14, 1956, and By-law No. 36 of the District Council of Salisbury, laid on the table of this Council on August 14, 1956, all dealing with unsightly chattels and structures, be disallowed.

These by-laws are an outcome of the amendment of the Act in 1952 when the following paragraph was inserted in section 667 of the principal Act:—

48a. For enabling the council by notice in writing to require the owner or occupier of any land within the municipality or any township within the district to remove therefrom any unsightly chattels or unsightly structure the presence of which is likely to affect adversely the value of adjoining land or which is prejudicial to the interests of the public and for enabling the council on default of compliance by the owner or occupier to remove the chattel or structure and to recover the cost thereby incurred from the owner or occupier . . .

Evidently somebody did not like the term “unsightly chattel or structure,” and, although I cannot find in the debates any particular reason why the amendment was moved, the Act was further amended in 1955 when one or two of the objectionable words were removed from the section. It now reads:—

. . . any chattel or structure which the council is of the opinion is unsightly and the presence of which . . . is likely to affect adversely the value of adjoining land . . .

The Subordinate Legislation Committee discussed this by-law very carefully and felt that, although the councils were acting within their powers under the Act, they were going a bit too far. Their action in trying to remove such unsightly things as collections of old motor cars is commendable but the committee felt that they were going a bit too far in entering upon a person's property if he would not remove the unsightly chattels. This is criticism of the Act rather than the by-law, but the committee was unanimously of the opinion that the by-law should be disallowed.

I reported this to the Government which also felt that the councils were going a bit too far in these by-laws, and it promised to introduce a model by-law for the guidance

of councils. This will reach us in due course, but I have seen the draft of it and it clearly defines what is meant by a chattel. It is expected that all councils will approve the by-law, which will remove any objections regarding unsightly chattels and structures. The committee received a strong letter from the S.A.J.C. because it was afraid that the by-law would include its racing stables at Morphettville racecourse which had been there for many years. Undoubtedly, vested interests have grown up around them and there was the fear that at the whim of the local council an order might be made for their demolition. It was such facts that made the committee feel that too much power was being vested in the councils and it therefore agreed that the by-laws should be disallowed.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

[*Sitting suspended from 2.58 p.m. to 4.47 p.m.*]

APPROPRIATION (FLOOD RELIEF) BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Attorney-General)—
I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Members are all aware of the damage and hardship which is being caused along the Murray River by the devastating floods which are being experienced. The local people and the local authorities have been working and organizing people to assist with protective work, but the full measure of protection necessary has been quite outside the resources of those people on the river. It has therefore been essential for the Government to expend funds on this very necessary work.

The Governor's Appropriation Fund limits the amount which the Government can spend for this purpose to £100,000, and, so that the assistance being given by the Government can be carried on without interruption, it is necessary for £300,000 to be provided by Parliament for expenditure on prevention, reduction, control and alleviation of damage, hardship and loss sustained from the Murray floods.

Parliamentary authority for the expenditure of this sum will enable the Government to continue assisting the people on the river to fight these disastrous floods and to alleviate hardship where necessary. The Government has appointed three committees to handle these

matters. One committee will supervise flood protection work in conjunction with the local people and recommend to the Government the financial assistance to be made to local authorities from time to time so that their worthy efforts in fighting the floods will not be interrupted; and a second committee will supervise the removal of dairy herds from flooded pastures and arrange fresh pastures. The third committee will be His Honor Judge Paine, who will make recommendations in all cases for assistance to relieve personal hardship.

I think the reasons for this Bill are obvious to all members. The explanation I have given, though brief, is fairly comprehensive. Members will realize the necessity for Government funds to be made available to assist in connection with this matter, and I would appreciate it if the Bill could be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I think we all agree with this Bill in principle. It is many years since we in South Australia have had to meet a situation such as this. We should pay a tribute to those people who are doing so much in this struggle against the flood, voluntarily in many cases. They are to be congratulated and encouraged in their work. Some years ago we had a flood and as a member of the Public Works Standing Committee I visited various localities affected. A considerable amount of money was spent on that occasion. As a result of advice given by experts and other people with experience we made a number of recommendations, but it now appears that what was accomplished then was not sufficient.

I applaud the action of the Waterside Workers' Federation in devoting their time in order to assist those people who are in this unfortunate position. We all sympathize with those who are facing dangers and hardships in these flooded areas. The Opposition heartily supports the Bill, and in doing so we trust that things will not be as bad as expected. The settlers in these areas are the pioneers of this State; they have been there many years and probably have lost everything. I am pleased that the Government has appointed a committee to assist those unfortunate people who have suffered so heavily. I have very much pleasure on the one hand, and regret on the other, that Parliament is called upon to meet this position. I trust that we never have another occasion such as this and that the people on the river will not have to face these trials and troubles again.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE (Midland)—Mr. Condon has truly said that this Bill has the unqualified sympathy and support of us all. I am very sorry that my colleagues, Mr. Story and Mr. Cowan, are not here to lend their support to it. They are themselves lending practical support in the flooded areas.

A few years ago we had a very disastrous bush fire in the pastoral areas, and it was my lot then to take an active part in the attempted control of that fire. There is a great deal of difference between a bush fire and a flood. In that fire the volunteers worked day and night but mostly at night because the conditions were very trying because of an intense heatwave. With a bush fire you may have an element of luck on your side; a heavy shower of rain can quench the fire or a change of wind or the construction of a fire break can put it out. It is also possible to measure the probable extent of the fire, and, furthermore, whatever damage is done is soon restored. It would be difficult to tell the burnt country from the unburnt country in the area where this fire took place, and the country has suffered no permanent damage from it.

With flooding, however, no chance piece of luck can help, and no change of wind or heavy shower of rain or anything else is any good. The progress of the flood is very slow but absolutely inevitable, and one can neither assess the extent of the damage nor its cost. I think we can freely say that the damage will run into millions of pounds. Many people will be ruined because their holdings will be completely flooded and it may be years before the land can be brought back into production. Floods are incomparably more serious than a bush fire for those reasons. Marvellous work is being done by the local volunteers, and it is very heartening to see the response from people of all sections of the community who give their spare time and work very hard in work which they are not used to doing. I am told that volunteers came from all parts of the State to help wherever they could, and that is evidence of the widespread sympathy felt by all people for those who are suffering on the river.

In addressing ourselves to this Bill I realize that time is the essence of the contract, and this is not an occasion to make long speeches. We all heartily agree with this Bill which will enable the Government to dip into its pocket to the extent of £300,000, although we realize that this is only the current expense. Unfortunately, greater funds will be needed before the

job is finished. I do not think it is possible to even measure the ultimate peak of the flood, because water seems to be coming down afresh from different floods and the snow waters have still to come. This £300,000 can only be a drop in the total amount that will be required. I understand that the Lord Mayor's fund is going to get away to a very good start. Quite a number of companies and organizations are subscribing what I think is a reasonably adequate figure. I am sure the Lord Mayor will be gratified with the response at tomorrow's meeting and will be surprised at the tremendous amount of money that will come in from the general public. Another good work is the arrangement by private people and various organizations for the billeting of children who have to be removed from the danger area. I understand that this matter is well in hand.

I can only endorse Mr. Condon's remarks in saying that this measure will have the whole-hearted support of every member of Parliament and we must realize that sooner or later we will be called upon to vote further appropriations for the same cause. I hope, too, that the disaster will not be as great as we fear it will be, although at the moment it certainly appears that the situation will become more serious even than it is today. I support the measure.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—In supporting the appropriation of the sum of £300,000 towards the amelioration of flood damage I would like to pay a tribute to the magnificent fight that has been put up by the settlers in the various areas on the River Murray. Although it seemed in many instances that the people were fighting an unequal battle from the start they have stuck to the task of protecting their homes and holdings. I appreciate also the work of those who have travelled long distances to support the settlers in their heroic stand.

I am pleased that the Government has come forward at this early stage in the disaster—and that it is a national disaster there can be no doubt—and taken the lead in ameliorating measures. The sum provided for in this measure is to be made available at once, but far more will have to be met before the rehabilitation of the settlers can be achieved. Many of those who are subjected to this terrific strain are returned soldiers, many of them of the first war, and in many instances they have lost or will have lost their all. We recall, too, that life along the river has not been such as to enable the settlers to build

up huge fortunes, whether they be on dairy blocks or fruit blocks. They have experienced the various difficulties associated with primary production—small returns and low prices for their products at various times—so that they have not been able to provide themselves with big sums against a disaster of this magnitude.

I commend the Government's action in setting up the three committees to take control of what has to be done. We are still hopeful that some of the areas may yet be saved. There were about 30,000 dairy cattle in the dairy settlements, about half of which are already under water. It must be quite obvious to anyone who gives the question some thought that there will be a big call upon the good nature of the public in assisting to depasture the cows that have been removed from the reclaimed areas so that the settlers will be able to keep their stock until such time as they are able to reoccupy their holdings. Some 15,000 cattle already have lost their pastures, and it will take, on ordinary pasture land, quite a lot of country to meet the requirements of these cattle. The fact that a committee has been appointed to attempt to make some provision for depasturing cattle should assure the success of the venture.

There will be need, too, for relief for the settlers who in many instances have lost, not only their possessions, but their means of livelihood, and consequently it will be necessary that we provide for them until they can go back to their holdings and earn their living. I hope that the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund will be the success that is expected of it, and I am sure that no stone will be left unturned to make it so. I support this measure in the hope that the suffering of those concerned may not be too great.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—I realize the sincerity of our desire to help these people who are faced with very great loss; it is an absolute tragedy that is not to be measured by the length of any speech a member may make, nor, by the same token, are we to gauge our appreciation of the wonderful effort that has been made by the people—not only the residents of the districts concerned, although they have shouldered the major share—but others who have given their time and attention in the shape of manpower and material to aid these people who are so sorely up against it. As one who has seen at first hand what they have faced and are still likely to face I can only say that I have the greatest admiration for them all. I fully agree that

anything that we vote today must be merely a preliminary instalment of the greater assistance these people must have, and therefore I am sure that we will wholeheartedly and willingly give our consent for the Government to spend the amount mentioned in this Bill. I support the Bill.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—Having visited Renmark last Saturday and spent some hours there to see at first hand the disaster which has overcome that part of South Australia and other settlements along the river I wholeheartedly support the Bill. I wish to refer to the wonderful organization in existence at Renmark and the manner in which the people—the women as well—are shouldering their tasks. On Saturday there were 400 people at lunch at the Renmark Hall and 600 to tea. Mr. Katekar, who is head of the local committee, when advised of the willingness of people in the metropolitan area to take children who had to be evacuated, said that that was the very last thing they were going to do; they were going to hang on to their children as long as they possibly could. However, conditions have become much worse since Saturday evening and I fear the worst for the bridge. When we passed over it the waves were actually coming over the approach road.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Do you mean the main bridge across the river?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I am referring to the road bridge which has an approach embankment of about a quarter of a mile. I was informed that most of the settlers at Renmark own the freehold of their properties. They are mostly first war settlers and many single unit properties were purchased for them. I trust that the amount we are voting in this Bill will be subsidized pound for pound by the Federal Government because finance is what is needed to help these people. Many have already lost everything and many more, I fear, will lose everything when the other levies go—because I fear they will go as the seepage extends back behind the levies for several chains. Even in the Renmark main street the water is seeping up through the ground right against the footpath.

The opportunity was given us to fly over the other districts affected on the way up to Renmark because we had the representative of the A.N.A. company over from Melbourne and wished to show him the extent of the floods. The committees that have been formed have a very important part to perform, but when we know that such men as Judge

Paine, who has had long experience in assisting people in distress, is in charge of affairs we know that they could not be in better hands. We cannot do much by talking; it is action that is needed and I am sure that the whole of South Australia will be wholeheartedly behind the victims of this disaster.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—I do not think we should allow this Bill to be debated only by country members for I am sure that the whole of South Australia feels drawn together in this national calamity. We all regret the circumstances that make this legislation necessary and I would like to commend the Government for its promptitude in acting as it has done. I am glad that it has set up committees to handle this very big task in a proper way. I notice that one of the clauses refers to work to be done under the Minister of Lands; for instance, the question of prevention. That is a very debatable thing and while I know that it is not speeches we want but action to make this sum of money available, the question of prevention will require a great deal of thought before any action is taken. However, I am in full sympathy with the substance of the Bill and feel, as everyone does, tremendous sympathy for the people who are losing the whole of their life's work. All that we can do will not be too much.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I would like to add a few words, having just returned from Renmark and had the opportunity of flying low over the areas lower down as far as Swan Reach. The expanse of water which one views from the air is terrific, and it is very sad to see the amount of destruction already evident. Some houses are completely submerged, others have roofs only just showing, and others are marooned. The reason more than any other that I rise to speak is to commend the people for the work they have achieved. They have erected approximately 20 miles of levees, and although they may be showing signs of exhaustion through hard work and loss of sleep their character is such that they will not recognize defeat.

The river today was 31ft. 5in. and I think the 1870 flood was 28ft. 9in. It will give some idea of the picture today when I tell you that the water is lapping the two bridges standing side by side. The road bridge has been raised by placing a steel mesh over the surface and filling with a foot or so of rubble. The waves are splashing over it and the waters are also lapping menacingly against

the railway bridge. This is holding the water back and consequently providing a bigger rise in the river further back near the No. 3 pumping station and Angove's distillery. We read in the press of the breach which took place there, that the position seemed hopeless and that the distillery would be submerged. However, it is still there with about 14ft. of water putting a tremendous pressure on the banks.

There is also a danger spot on the north side of the pumping station because it has a channel behind it, which means that there is that extra height of earth for the water to seep through. The Engineer-in-Chief has already forwarded sheet piling to strengthen it, as that is one of the vulnerable spots. A tremendous amount of voluntary aid has come from long distances. For instance, tip trucks from as far away as Bordertown and heavy earth moving equipment from Burra. I think the save made at the distillery was due firstly to the personal efforts of members of the crash gang, who threw themselves into the breaches and by human strength held back the water.

Great assistance has been given by the power machinery which has been generously donated. In this case it was Mr. Growan and his bulldozer he took from Burra which saved the position. He said, "Leave this job to me and I will do it," and he did it, and this is now possibly the most expansive bank yet erected up there. Had it not been for the modern equipment made available and the determination of the people there is not the least doubt that Renmark would not exist today. All sections of the public have been working long hours, including the womenfolk, who have been feeding 400 mouths at a time under improvised

conditions in the hall. It did not matter who it was, the spirit was the same—"We are going to win," and all I can say is that if anyone deserves to win, Renmark does.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Appropriation."

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—In such hurried legislation as this it might be possible to make mistakes. I refer particularly to the words "prevention, reduction, control and alleviation of damage" We are on the receiving end of the river. The waters are coming from other States and the prevention of future floods will have to be started at the other end of the river, therefore, it would be a nationwide scheme. I can, for instance, envisage the establishment of afforestation along the river and also the removal of silt from the channel. Surely, South Australia will not be committed to the whole cost of prevention. I think the word "prevention" is rather badly chosen.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Attorney-General)—The purpose of the Bill is simply to make money immediately available to meet immediate circumstances. We are all cognisant of the wider issues mentioned by the honourable member, and no doubt they will receive consideration in due course.

Clause passed.

Title passed. Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.28 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, August 28, at 2 p.m.