

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, October 3, 1956.

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

NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Minister of Health), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Nurses Registration Act, 1920-1954. Read a first time.

LAW OF PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill extends the Prices Act for another year so that it will apply to transactions taking place before January 1, 1958. The justification for this Bill is much the same as that which has existed for previous similar Bills. The Government adheres to the policy of not imposing unnecessary controls, but information in the possession of the Government clearly indicates that there is still a strong case in South Australia for the continuance of price control in the interests of the public.

In the commerce of this State there is not at present sufficient free competition to protect consumers against excessive prices. Price fixing arrangements of various kinds are common and effective. A trader who endeavours to charge less than the price determined by his trade association may often find himself in difficulties, *e.g.*, he may find his supplies cut off. Generally speaking, the trade associations are able to prevent price reductions.

The decision of the Arbitration Court granting an increase of 10s. per week in the basic wage has made the necessity for continuing price control in South Australia as great as ever. Without price control it is obvious that the increased costs occasioned by the Court's decision could result in indiscriminate increases in prices and rates for many essential goods and services. Under price control, however, the public, and the primary producer in particular, is assured of not having to pay more for essential goods and services unless an increase is fully justified.

Reasonable prices and rates for essential goods and services are also important if South Australia's industrial progress is to continue, as this State is largely dependent on markets outside South Australia and is at an added disadvantage in that a great deal of the material used is produced outside the State, *e.g.*, iron and steel. It is essential, therefore, that local costs be kept as low as possible. Every increase in prices reduces the saving potential of the public and consequently reduces the funds available through savings for investment in capital works which is one of the State's greatest needs at the present time. In the last 12 months the South Australian Prices Department has become the investigating body on an Australia-wide basis for a number of the largest industries in Australia whose headquarters are situated in the eastern States. The decisions being given by the South Australian Prices Department are being accepted by other State authorities and by the companies concerned in the States where price control is not operating and being applied on an Australia-wide basis.

The decisions being given are not only protecting consumers in this State, but are likewise protecting consumer interests throughout Australia. Many of these industries to whom it is most important that uniform Australia-wide maximum price structures are not departed from, have expressed their appreciation of the decisions which embraced re-selling prices also as they, in common with this Government, are well aware that without some stabilizing brake on the various re-selling organizations through which their products are marketed, the position could get well out of hand and prejudice their own objective of their manufactured products reaching the consumer at the lowest possible price consistent with fair and reasonable returns to all parties concerned.

That these arrangements are most satisfactory is evidenced by the increasing trend of late with which interstate manufacturers are recognizing the position by voluntarily approaching the department with a view to having a maximum price structure determined for their products in this State, and then applying the approval in other States. Import restrictions which are now in operation will undoubtedly create shortages on many commodities and this is already noticeable on some items, *e.g.*, shirting material and corduroy velvet.

Although numerous goods and services are not subject to price control at present, any of these goods and services could be quickly

brought under control should evidence indicating exploitation be found. The fact that this is so tends to act as a "brake" on exploitation and overcharging for decontrolled goods and services in most cases. A notable exception was clothing, which was recontrolled in July, 1955, after a period of decontrol covering the three previous years. The action by the Government to recontrol clothing prices was only taken after repeated requests for co-operation had been made by the Prices Commissioner to certain sections of the trade without success. Checks by the Prices Department during the latter period of decontrol disclosed that many traders were operating on excessive margins, in some cases as much as 42 per cent above the previously controlled margins.

Some of the consumer savings and price reductions due to price control are as follows:—Tea: Investigation by the Prices Department in February of this year resulted in a reduction of 4d. per lb. with a saving of £50,000 per annum to South Australian consumers. Other States immediately reduced tea prices by amounts varying from 2d. to 4d. per lb. This meant a saving to consumers in other States of £450,000 per annum, which would not have eventuated without the original action being taken by South Australia. A later investigation by the Prices Department in July resulted in a further reduction of 2d. a lb. making a total reduction of 6d. per lb. with a consequent total saving of £75,000 per annum to South Australia consumers.

Timber: As a result of negotiations with timber merchants a consumer saving of £14,000 per annum was implemented and the South Australian Housing Trust enjoyed a major proportion of the saving.

Firewood: The price of cut mallee in Victoria recently increased by 20s. a ton to £7 15s. In South Australia an increase of 5s. only was warranted to make a price of £4 18s. a ton.

Domestic Brushware: Reduction in wholesale margin saved consumers £22,500 per annum.

Blankets: Re-control of clothing saved consumers approximately £13,500 per annum on blankets.

Men's Shirts: The lower retail margin on men's shirts means a saving of £24,000 per annum.

Nylon Stockings: The saving on this commodity exceeds £35,000 per annum.

Terrazzo: The reduction in prices has meant a saving of £35,000 per annum.

Tyre and tubes: The reduction in June this year of 5 per cent in price of tyres and tubes meant a saving of £250,000 per annum to South Australian consumers, including a saving to primary producers of £110,000 per annum. In addition users were saved a further £258,000 in October, 1955, when the relief requested was partially refused.

Superphosphate (1955-1956 season): Primary producers were saved a total of £235,000 due to refusal of part or all of the applications from sections of this industry. In addition this industry would have sustained an added cost increase of £109,000 on sulphuric acid had it not been for this department. Saving on paint and allied products amounts to £100,000 per annum.

Refunds.—During the last 15 months the Prices Department was successful in obtaining no fewer than 793 refunds on overcharges totalling £29,042. The individual refunds which varied from a few shillings to hundreds of pounds have directly benefited many consumers, together with some industries and Government departments.

The cost of administering price control compared with benefits therefrom is indicated by the following:—For the year ended June 30, 1956, the cost of administering price control in this State was £78,082, which is equivalent to 1s. 11d. a head of population. When it is realized that, in addition to the immeasurable benefits of price control to the public, one single investigation only by the Prices Department recently saved the South Australian Government well over £150,000 per annum, it will be appreciated that price control is a cheap investment. It must also be appreciated that in 1954 (latest figures available) there were 51,056 persons in South Australia in receipt of a pension, not including some 20,000 war service pensioners, all of whom are fully dependent upon their fixed incomes. This minority group is justly entitled to all the protection which can be given to it.

Although there have been many price increases there have also been a number of price reductions in the last 15 months. The following are some of the items which have been reduced in price by the department over this period:—

- (1) Tea—two reductions;
- (2) Tyres and tubes—5 per cent.
- (3) Oats and oatmeal;
- (4) Clothing—wide range of items varying from 2½ to 20 per cent, averaging 7½ per cent;

- (5) Footwear, mainly children's—1s. to 1s. 6d. a pair;
- (6) Meat (beef)—two reductions aggregating from 4d. to 6d. a lb.;
- (7) Sago and tapioca—3d. a lb.;
- (8) Terrazzo flooring—10 per cent;
- (9) Ladies' hairdressing charges—10 per cent;
- (10) Malleable pipe fittings;
- (11) Kit bags and school cases;
- (12) Brewers' grains sold to dairy farmers—a saving of £4,500;
- (13) Sundry items of canned goods;
- (14) Brooms, whisks, mops, brushes (domestic)—5 per cent;
- (15) Repairs and overhauls—tractors and road graders, etc.

Comparative Prices—

Retail meat prices in Adelaide are between 4d. to 6d. a lb. lower for both beef and mutton than in Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth, although market prices in these cities are similar to Adelaide. That shows that the producers are not being robbed to provide those reduced prices. Paint prices in South Australia although varying, average overall 4s. a gallon lower than all other States in the Commonwealth. Paint is controlled only in South Australia.

The Government continues to receive numerous complaints of overcharging from the public and has been able, in a number of cases, to effect substantial reductions and obtain refunds, and the mere fact that the price control exists tends to prevent much overcharging which would otherwise occur. While the living wage remains pegged as at present it would be unjust to abandon price control. The control is especially valuable and necessary on the items of food and clothing which enter into the C series index and it has been found from experience that if there were no control the prices of those articles would rise substantially. The fact that traders are making satisfactory profits very often does not prevent them from increasing their prices, if they feel that they can do so without a falling off in their turnover. Finally, it may be said that price control has not worked any real hardship to anyone. The department has always been reasonable and willing to grant increases which are proved to be justified. For these reasons, which are based on actual information in the hands of the Government, it is proposed to extend the Act for a further year.

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

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Minister of Health)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill deals with two matters, namely—the control of radio-active substances in the interests of public health, and a general increase of penalties under the Health Act. During the last three years the health authorities of the Commonwealth and the Australian States have given close attention to the problem of ensuring that industries and mines in which radio-active materials and irradiating apparatus are produced or used will be conducted with proper regard to the public health. It is known that, with proper precautions, these activities can be conducted without risk to those engaged in them; the problem is to ensure that the persons concerned will understand the risks and take the steps necessary to deal with them.

As the result of conferences, all States have agreed to pass legislation on this subject which will enable an adequate code of regulations to be promulgated and policed. Western Australia and Tasmania have already passed their Acts and a Bill has been introduced in New South Wales. South Australia has some limited powers to deal with radiation by regulations under the Health Act, but these powers were not devised for that purpose and are not wide enough to enable the present proposals to be carried out.

The Bill inserts a new part in the principal Act providing for two things. The first is the creation of a committee to be called the Radiological Advisory Committee which will act as the Government's adviser in connection with radio-active substances. The other proposal is that the Governor should be given power to make regulations on the recommendation of the committee for the general control and regulation of the possession, use, sale and disposal of radio-active substances and the possession and use of irradiating apparatus. If these proposals are adopted South Australia will be in a position to draft a uniform code of precautions and to vary it from time to time as new developments take place.

The proposed committee will consist of not more than six persons. They will hold office for three years, and if the Government so determines may receive fees and travelling allowances. The duty of the committee will be to advise the Minister as to the making and contents of regulations respecting radio-active

substances and irradiating apparatus and to advise on other problems concerning these things.

The topics on which regulations can be made are set out in detail in the new section 146q on pages 3 and 4 of the Bill. The regulations may provide for a system of licensing persons to possess, use, sell or dispose of radio-active substances, and to use irradiating apparatus. Provision may also be made for securing the safe disposal of radio-active waste products and rules may be laid down as to the construction and conversion of buildings to be used in connection with radio-active substances. Persons who are exposed to the risk of disease from such substances may be required to undergo periodical medical examinations. The use of radio-active substances and irradiating apparatus may also be regulated, and the use of any particular substances prohibited. Where necessary, regulations may be made binding the Crown or any specified authorities of the Crown. It is also provided that the Director-General of Public Health may be given ancillary powers for the purposes of administering the regulations. The powers given by the Bill are, within their field, fairly extensive, but this is necessary in view of the constant developments in connection with atomic power and the increasing production of dangerous substances as a result of atomic fission. The regulations will, of course, be laid before Parliament and be subject to disallowance.

Clause 4 proposes a general increase in the penalties fixed by the principal Act. This increase has been asked for by the Central Board of Health. Almost all the penalties in the Health Act were fixed in 1898 or earlier and are now too low. The alteration of the purchasing power of money since 1898 would justify an increase of nearly 300 per cent in all of them. However, the Government has not adopted a uniform increase in all cases, but has considered each offence separately and endeavoured to assess a reasonable maximum penalty having regard to the nature of the offence and the present value of money. The Bill increases the majority of the penalties by 150 per cent but some increases are greater and others less than this. The £5 penalties are raised either to £10 or £20 according to the seriousness of the offence. Most of the £10 penalties are increased to £25 and the £20 penalties to £50. In two cases existing penalties of £50 are increased to £100. Several of the penalties are not altered at all because they are considered adequate at present.

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

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 2. Page 788.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I find myself in accord with the provisions of this Bill which is for the purpose of increasing the stamp duty on cheques. It is a pity that prior to the last elections the Government did not inform the public that it intended to increase fees in quite a number of directions as it has done during this session.

The Hon. E. Anthony—We had not had the Murray River floods then.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is a different matter. The Government knew about this legislation prior to the elections. It is estimated that the increased revenue will amount to £80,000. In 1954-55 revenue from stamp duty increased by £175,253 over the previous year, most of which was derived from conveyances, transfers and mortgages. Receipts from stamp duties in 1955 were £1,367,179, which was a very tidy sum. I am sorry that we have not the Auditor-General's report before us, because I always find that a very valuable document when dealing with matters such as this. I understand it will be available tomorrow and some members will have the opportunity of perusing it and expressing their opinions on this and other matters. Nothing can be said other than that the Government wants to increase revenue. I suppose it has gone into the matter very carefully and decided that stamp duties can be increased. I know there are quite a number of items that could not stand increases, and probably this is one to which there will be the least opposition. I support the second reading.

The Hon. J. L. COWAN (Southern)—I support the Bill, but do so with the hope that it will not become one of those Bills that comes before this Council every year or every other year. It is only about two years since a Bill was before this Council to increase the stamp duty on cheques. The Bill is indicative of the fact that a State Government under the present system of general taxation is forced to explore every avenue to obtain revenue in order to balance its Budget. I believe it would be better for a State Government to have its full powers of taxation restored to it in order that it might receive in another way the amount it requires for the financing of State affairs. It would not then be necessary to add a penny here and there in order to obtain a few more thousand pounds to augment its revenue.

I am of opinion that stamp duty on cheques and receipts and on the transfer of land and

such transactions was originally introduced in order to make these transactions legally binding, and not for the specific purpose of raising revenue. We are departing from that state of affairs and making these transactions revenue-producing ones, and I hope that it will not be necessary for State Governments to go on in this way. South Australia, in particular, should have its powers of general taxation returned to it.

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

WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 2. Page 789.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—Honourable members have often heard me speak on this important question. My complaint today is that the Government is proposing to increase water rates when the people are not in a position to pay increases. Although we have experienced many good years our finances have drifted year after year. It is not so very long ago that the metropolitan water district showed a profit of just under 11 per cent, but today that has been wiped out and it shows a fairly large deficit.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin—We have been spending a lot of money on water supplies.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I realize that. I am not opposing the Bill, because I think the Government has been very lenient over a number of years, but the time is not opportune. We should have considered recommendations which were made on this particular matter years ago and from time to time. I am fully convinced that if full taxing powers had been restored to South Australia water rates would have been much higher than they are today. My reason for saying that is that we would have had to meet increased costs, and I think we are getting a fairer deal today from the Commonwealth Government than we would get if the State had its own taxing powers. Twelve months before the Federal Government took over uniform taxation the Liberal Government in South Australia had a surplus of £1,250,000, but it never made any attempt to reduce taxation.

We are better off under Federal taxation than we were under State taxation. At present the Act enables the Minister to fix minimum water rates, but provides that he may not fix a minimum rate in excess of 5s. for vacant land to which water is not laid, and

15s. for other land. These charges were fixed 24 years ago. This State has made wonderful progress during the last 15 years in water conservation. Scheme after scheme has been introduced, each of which has added to the value of land, but nothing has been done by the Government to enable it to recoup its losses. This Bill is long overdue; the Government has been very lenient in relation to water rates. Many people in the country have installed their own system for obtaining water, and they object to their neighbours getting water, but when water schemes are introduced they are the first to cry out. Many people have allowed their windmills and dams to get out of order because of this.

Increased population has meant that people want a water supply, but unfortunately sewerage work is not as far advanced as water schemes. If the schemes that have been recommended were all constructed, I do not think there would be enough water for them. The fact that we are making provision for other schemes in the future shows that South Australia is advancing, but we cannot go on losing money year after year.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—The greatest losses occur in country water districts.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Water supplies constitute a service to the country, and I believe the metropolitan area should assist country districts in this respect. Water is available in the metropolitan area at the turn of a tap for 24 hours a day, but in some country areas people have to cart water. If we want people to go into the country we must provide amenities for them. In the 1955 Auditor-General's report, under the heading "Working Operations," the following appeared:—

The aggregate financial result for 1954-55 of all the Waterworks undertakings throughout the State, after providing for depreciation and interest, was a deficit of £1,225,923.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Most of it debt charges.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—We are handicapped by high interest rates. Greater earnings have resulted in greater deficits. The commissioning of the Adelaide-Mannum pipeline added £320,000 to the annual cost of water supplies. This scheme has already cost nearly £10,000,000, although the original estimate was £5,000,000. The retrogression of country water districts was caused by higher costs not being matched by increased rates on country lands, and higher interest rates. Only three water districts earned sufficient to meet working

expenses. They were the Adelaide scheme, the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline—the return from each of which was less than 1 per cent on funds employed, whereas 8 per cent and 7 per cent respectively should have been earned to meet working expenses—and the Barossa scheme, which returned 1.4 per cent, although 2.9 per cent would have been necessary to meet working costs.

I said earlier that the Government is increasing rates when the public is not in a position to pay, and this is borne out by the Auditor-General's 1955 report, which stated that rate arrears for 1955 were greater than they have been for several years and that they were twice those of the previous year. People cannot pay higher rates without reducing their living standard.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—I do not think the standard is low, do you?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is lower than it has been for years. We have boasted in the past that our workers are the best in Australia, yet the authorities do not permit them to be paid as much as people in other States. Wages are fixed, prices have increased, and standards have been lowered week after week. I support the second reading.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY (Central No. 2)—In 1932 Parliament fixed a minimum rate of 5s. for a vacant block and 15s. for other land. Now we are asked to give the Government a free hand in fixing the rates. There is no intimation in this Bill as to the amount that will be raised or of the difficulty that may be faced by the enforcement of this payment. It would have been appreciated had the Government indicated what the position would be. It is difficult for the ordinary member to ascertain that information unless he has access to the books of the Engineering and Water Supply Department. I should think that if the rates were increased to 45s. no-one would object, but there is no forecast as to what the figure will be. In 1932 there was probably a glut of land for building purposes and a charge of 5s. a block in those days was sufficient. Undoubtedly, land can now be readily sold and so no hardship would be entailed in having the charge on unoccupied land increased three times that mentioned in the Act, which would be in accord with today's money values.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Wages have not increased by 300 per cent since 1932.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Yes they have. If people wish to have vacant land around their property, or to hold it for specu-

lation, they should not object to increased water rates. The capital cost of laying water mains must be met. I think we can trust the Minister to fix a reasonable rate on vacant land, despite the fact that a service is not given by the main. I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—This is another instance where it has been found necessary to increase a charge to bring in additional revenue to provide somewhere near the cost of the public facility provided. The provision of a water supply results in indirect benefits. In many of our country areas in the earlier years every surplus which the man on the land received had to be ploughed back for further development, and consequently any expense which could be carried by the taxpayers generally was justifiable. However, the position is somewhat altered now in that much of our land has reached a higher state of production, therefore, increased rates are justified. The reasons for the increases are set out in the Auditor-General's report for the year ended June 30, 1955. The report referred to the increased deficit in the Adelaide water district and costs of providing water facilities. Among other things the report has the following to say regarding the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline and the Adelaide water district generally:—

Apart from the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, there were other increases in expenses arising from marginal increases in salaries and wages, increased provision for depreciation, and increased interest charges due to greater loan capital employed and an increase in the rate of interest charged.

This has made a review of charges for public facilities necessary. I agree with Sir Frank Perry's remarks concerning there being no charge fixed in the Bill, whereas under the 1932 legislation the charge was laid down. The Minister will have the power to fix the rate, I have no misgivings that he will impose an excessive rate, but with the altered circumstances it may be desirable not to tie him down to a definite figure. It may be necessary in the near future to increase water rates even further. I believe that the people are in a better position to meet these increased charges than they were in 1932. Possibly the Government had that in mind in presenting the Bill.

As to increased rates on vacant land, we frequently see an advertisement in the press offering blocks of land for sale in which it is stressed as a feature that water is available nearby. This undoubtedly increases the value of the land. Those who enjoy the benefits

of such services should be expected to pay at least something towards the cost of their provision and maintenance. The financial returns from our water schemes have deteriorated considerably. I think that the Bill is justified, and I support it in the realization that we must attempt to collect somewhere near the cost of the services enjoyed by the community.

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

HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 2. Page 792.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I think that every honourable member will agree that housing has become one of our major social problems. This applies not only in Australia, as the position is also acute in other countries. I read in today's press that there is a shortage of 3,000 homes in the Capital Territory. In 1942-43 the Commonwealth Government established a Housing Commission, which made a survey of the housing needs at that time and the anticipated needs of the post-war period when soldiers would be discharged and would need houses. It was on the basis of that report that the Federal Government asked the States to take part in the first housing agreement since the establishment of Federation. The original agreement provided for moneys to be loaned to the States and for economic rents to be charged. It was further agreed that the Commonwealth would meet any deficiency in the economic rent charged for the houses. In order to get behind that agreement made between the Chifley Government and the States the State Government submitted an enabling Bill for the Savings Bank to lend the Government about £2,000,000 at 2 per cent interest. The Opposition takes full responsibility for having supported the measure, but it does not take the responsibility for the Government not carrying out the full provisions of the Federal agreement. This Government cannot bask in the reflected glory of the efficiency of the Housing Trust as it attempts to do from time to time.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—The Trust provided the cheapest rents in the Commonwealth.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The Housing Trust has not the lowest rents in South Australia today, although I agree that since its inauguration it has carried out an admirable policy. The efficiency of the Trust, and

particularly the General Manager (Mr. Ramsay) with his business and organizing ability, has no doubt saved this State many thousands of pounds. His has been a colossal job because this Government has set up the Housing Trust as the main authority for building homes in this State and taken away the State Bank's functions of constructing and selling homes.

It was originally intended that the Housing Trust would build homes for rental purposes only, but now it has taken over the functions of the State Bank, leaving that bank only the function of lending money under the Homes Act. This Government allocates only a certain amount of money to the State Bank by way of guarantee to enable it to advance money for the purchase of homes. I pay a tribute to the Housing Trust because every honourable member appreciates the work it is doing.

Some years ago the Opposition in this Council and in another place submitted various proposals to the Government in order to assist the Housing Trust, one of which was the setting up of a Building Commission to ensure that all the building resources of this State would be marshalled in an effort to catch up with the urgent demands of people desiring homes for rental or purchase. The prosperity of any country or State is gauged by the contentment of its people, and we have found a clamour today from young people and some of the less fortunate ones in the middle aged group. With the tying up of financial resources by the Commonwealth Government a person desiring to purchase a home would need about £1,500 to £1,700 as deposit, and there are not many people today who can afford that much money as deposit on a four or five-roomed home. The Commonwealth Government is not carrying out the original intention of the agreement.

Honourable members may become weary of my reminding them of the inroads made into our sovereign rights to govern with regard to loans. It is well-known that the Commonwealth controls the loan market and stipulates the amounts to be raised by way of loans. I remind members, however, that semi-Government instrumentalities such as the Greater Brisbane Council, the Victorian Water Board, the New South Wales Water Board and the Electricity Trust of South Australia, which are all carrying on essential services, can go on the open market outside the Financial Agreement and in many cases increase the interest rate beyond that payable on Commonwealth bonds. The time has arrived when this Government should exercise the rights now being utilized by these

semi-Government instrumentalities, and carry on the affairs of the State as the people expect it to do.

It is interesting to note that under the housing programme of the New South Wales Labor Government a tenant, after he has been in occupation for a period of, I think, three years, is given credit for the rent he has paid which becomes a deposit if he desires to purchase his home. Such a policy makes for greater contentment in the community, and provides a great barrier against the various isms which are attempting to gain ground in Australia today.

The original agreement provided for an interest rate of 3 per cent. This new agreement provides for a rate of 4 per cent, and the one redeeming feature about that is that it would have been in the vicinity of 5 to 5½ per cent if it had been based on the bond rate. That is one of the features which makes the Opposition support the measure, because it will not become a burden to the same extent as if the rate had been 5 or 5½ per cent. However, the 1 per cent increase will mean an increase in rents. The rent of a house costing £2,500 will be increased by approximately 10s. a week, and while that increase in rent is taking place there has been no increase in the take-home pay envelope of the worker because wages have been pegged since 1953. The new agreement will mean an overall increase of 7s. a week on all Housing Trust homes.

It is interesting to note that the Trust will soon be the virtual controllers of 40,000 homes, and they are to be commended on that effort. It is regrettable that the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Bank Board have restricted the amount of loan moneys to be made available for building homes. If a medical practitioner or a dentist desires to build consulting rooms he cannot borrow the money, except in certain circumstances at a high rate of interest, and probably from some private lender.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—They are not homes.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Doctors' and dentists' rooms are essential because these professional men provide services to the community. They only have their skill to sell and no mass produced goods. They are penalized to the extent that under this agreement they are precluded from getting any financial support at all. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MOTOR PARKING).

In Committee.

(Continued from October 2. Page 796.)

Clause 2 "Enactment of Part XXIIIA of principal Act."

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I ask leave to withdraw my original amendment.

Leave granted and amendment withdrawn.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I move—

At the end of new section 475g to insert the following subsection:—

(4) If any such car park, parking station, garage or other place is provided on parklands, the land comprised therein shall not be enclosed so as to prevent access by the public and no building, petrol pump, or similar structure shall be constructed in connection therewith.

There were three amendments, one by the Minister of Local Government, one by Mr. Anthony and one by myself which was the amendment before the Chair. The Minister, Mr. Anthony, Sir Arthur Rymill, the Parliamentary Draftsman and I met this morning and unanimously agreed to submit this amendment in lieu of the other amendments on the files.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Local Government)—I think members made it quite clear that they had some doubts about the protection of the parklands, and as I indicated in my reply, I would not be satisfied until the position was clarified. Out of that arose the three amendments, some interesting remarks made yesterday, and the tidying up of the amendments. The Government has pleasure in accepting this amendment.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—The amendment provides what we are aiming for, but I do not know that its verbiage is very good. It sets out that something is to be provided, and then states what is not to be provided. It seems to me that it could have been better expressed.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I took a similar view, but the Parliamentary Draftsman pointed out to me that the amendment is similar to the verbiage of the Bill. There is power now to do all things set out in the early part of the amendment, and the second part restricts the power. I support the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clause (3) and title passed.

Bill reported with an amendment and Committee's report adopted.

LOTTERY AND GAMING (FLOOD RELIEF) BILL.

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

The Hon. Sir LYELL MCEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill enables a special race meeting to be held for the purpose of raising money for the Lord Mayor's Murray River Relief Fund. When this fund was inaugurated, the principal associations connected with racing held a meeting without delay to decide in what way they could best assist the fund. The meeting was attended by representatives of racing clubs throughout the State, and of bookmakers, owners and trainers. An initial gift of about £3,500 from the associations was immediately guaranteed, and the meeting decided to ask for permission to hold a special race meeting in the metropolitan area on Melbourne Cup day, November 6, to raise additional money.

A committee, called the Combined Racing Flood Appeal Fund Committee, was formed to co-ordinate the efforts of the various bodies concerned. The Government agreed to introduce a Bill to permit the extra day's racing. Subsequently it was suggested that in addition to the net proceeds from the race meeting the betting taxes and the totalizator duty collected in respect of races held at the meeting should also be made available for the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund. The Government readily agreed to this proposal.

This Bill contains the legislation necessary to carry out the scheme. It enables the totalizator to be used at one special race meeting this year, and also provides that the totalizator duty, winning bets tax, and betting commission, collected in respect of the meeting will be paid to the Combined Racing Flood Appeal Committee for contribution to the Lord Mayor's Flood Relief Fund. The amount to be so paid will include the taxes on all bets made at the special race meeting, whether on local races or others, and also the taxes on bets made in registered premises on races run at the special meeting. As the meeting provided for should prove remunerative and assist a very worthy cause, I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of members.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill, and I congratulate the clubs on their approach to the Government in order to assist a very worthy cause. I appreciate the

action of the Government in introducing the measure, because this meeting will bring in a considerable amount of money for the Murray people. The generosity of racing clubs has become well-known over the years. The Government should be congratulated for not taking any winnings taxes or totalizator duty from this meeting. Because of this decision, practically all the money raised will go to the appeal. I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. J. L. COWAN (Southern)—In supporting this Bill, I commend the metropolitan and country racing clubs for the live interest they have taken in this appeal. As soon as it was evident that damage and losses would be considerable, the racing clubs conferred and decided it was their duty to contribute something to help the unfortunate people who suffered losses. As a result of that meeting each racing club decided to contribute, and their contributions have amounted to £4,000. They felt that they would like to go further, and decided to ask for permission to hold a special race meeting in the metropolitan area, the proceeds of which would go to the fund. This could not be done without the sanction of the Government, as a totalizator licence was necessary. Not only has the Government agreed to grant the licence, but also to contribute the taxes it is entitled to receive, which I believe will amount to about £7,000.

This race meeting should benefit the fund by about £15,000, which everyone must admit is a worthwhile effort. Many of the officials who will be required to take an active part in this meeting have agreed to give their services without charge. They are to be commended for this, because their action will reduce the cost of running the meeting. I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of members, and assure them that the money that will be forthcoming from the meeting will help people who are in a serious position because of the effects of the devastating flood.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland)—I support the Bill, and am pleased that racing clubs and the sporting fraternity generally are supporting this very worthy cause. The money raised for the Lord Mayor's Flood Relief Fund will, I am sure, be worthily applied under the guidance of Judge Paine. We should do anything we can to assist the people who have been good enough to give up their time to provide this entertainment for the racing public to help people who have been affected by this national disaster.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—I support the Bill and commend those responsible for it. I pay a tribute not only to the racing clubs, but to trotting clubs, the Football League and other sporting bodies for their continued interest in charities. I was particularly pleased that on this occasion the Government acquiesced in the desires of the racing clubs to raise funds to assist the distressed Murray settlers. The Football League recently made a wonderful effort on behalf of the Smallacombe fund to assist an injured footballer. I hope that the Government's action on this occasion is the forerunner of its making it easier for sporting bodies to raise money in certain directions. It is no easy matter to raise money for charity. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—I also support the Bill, the object of which is to enable money to be raised to assist the rehabilitation of the Murray settlers who have been involved in one of the most calamitous tragedies in our history. I have seen the effects of the flood. It will take a considerable sum to repair the damage. The destruction along the lower Murray is particularly severe. At Mannum practically 50 per cent of the business people will suffer severe losses because of the flooding of their premises. Many of the homes will not be again habitable, and will have to be replaced. As a result the losses will be enormous. I travelled over the flooded area in a "duck" and at places the roadway was 15ft. below, with telephone poles just showing. Many homes, some of them new, have been totally destroyed, and others have only roofs protruding. On one property at Mypolonga, containing 48 rows of orange trees, only 23 are out of the water. Somewhere to the front of the trees was the house, but all that could be seen nearby was the wheel of a windmill, and it was still spinning.

The pumping station was 15ft. below the normal water level. That gives some idea of the magnitude of the flood, which is the greatest tragedy in our history. Up to this time the record flood was that of 1888, but the present flood is even greater. Losses involved will amount to millions of pounds.

The gesture of the racing clubs to assist the Lord Mayor's Flood Relief Appeal is to be commended, and I hope that not only the racing fraternity but other members of the community will assist to make the meeting a success. I also trust that the Federal Government will give immediate attention to the Premier's appeal for financial assistance and provide a great proportion of the £8,000,000 surplus which it has recorded toward relief along the Murray.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—I am pleased to associate myself with the remarks of previous speakers. I visited Renmark when the flood was at its worst, and after having seen the pictures kindly shown last night by the member for Ridley (Mr. Stott) depicting flood damage along the Murray one could not but be impressed with the seriousness of the situation. The flood is the worst in our history. The commendable gesture of the racing clubs in holding a charity meeting to raise funds to help the distressed settlers is greatly appreciated. The racing clubs, trotting clubs, the Football League and the owners of speed boats, as a result of their efforts, raise about £12,000 each year for the funds of the R.S.L. I trust that the proposed race meeting will be a huge success.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.54 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, October 4, at 2 p.m.