

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Tuesday, October 9, 1956.

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

**QUESTIONS.****PENSIONERS' FARES.**

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (on notice)—Is it the intention of the Government to consider granting concessional fares to Social Services pensioners on Government trains and buses similar to those granted in Western Australia?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The financial position of the Railways does not permit further concessions being granted.

**HENLEY BEACH-GRANGE RAILWAY LINE.**

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (on notice)—

1. Has the Government considered the petition presented recently to the Minister of Railways on behalf of 700 persons opposed to the closing of the Grange to Henley Beach Railway?

2. If so, is it the intention of the Government to afford interested persons a further opportunity of tendering evidence on the proposal?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The replies are:—

1. The Government has noted the petition presented recently to the Minister of Railways and has forwarded it to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council for consideration. The latter body, it will be recalled, was constituted by Parliament to deal with specific problems of this nature.

2. This matter has also been referred to the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council and a reply has been received as follows:—

The petitioners have given no reasons in support of their request made to the Government that the proposal to discontinue the train service between Henley Beach and Grange be not proceeded with. The Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council does not know of any circumstances justifying it in hearing fresh evidence. It considers it has already heard all material evidence.

**LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Attorney-General), obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Courts Act, 1926-47.

**WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Read a third time and passed.

**PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 4. Page 884.)

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY (Central No. 2)—We have become familiar with legislation on price control for in the past seven years each session Bills have come before us for the purpose of extending the operation of the Act. Prior to 1948 price control was a function of the Commonwealth Government but it became a function of State Governments after the referendum that was taken at that time to determine the issue. Altogether prices legislation has been in operation since about 1940, a period of 16 years during which various industries and occupations have been subject to it. In the passage of time, however, changes have occurred and we find that Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania have abandoned it, and those States contain by far the majority of the population of Australia. In Western Australia there has been a period in which price control has not operated, although I understand that the Government is considering the introduction of another measure. Queensland and South Australia are the only States, therefore, that have consistently maintained price control, and in South Australia it has diminished considerably as not nearly so many articles are now controlled as in years gone by. It is evident that the authorities consider that the prices charged for many articles in common use are satisfactory—

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—But the Act has operated as a deterrent.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—It is true that if the Government thinks there has been any flagrant overcharging the goods in question can be brought within the scope of the Act again, but the majority of the States have recognized that price control is no longer necessary—or, perhaps, to be perfectly fair, I should say no longer workable. I appreciate that the Chief Secretary in introducing the Bill endeavoured to indicate by results and argument that price control was effective in this State; so many continuation Bills are brought forward with the simple statement that the Government wishes to carry them on for another 12 months with little or no argument to support them.

I am sure all members appreciate the trouble taken by the Chief Secretary in endeavouring to give arguments in favour of a continuation of price control, and indicating how it has benefited the people of this State. He gave three main reasons for continuing this legislation; that prices affect the C series index,

that price control assists South Australian industries and that pensioners and people on fixed incomes benefit from it because it keeps the price of certain articles under control.

With regard to the first reason, I think everyone desires that prices should be as low as possible. Wages have been fixed on the C series index figures and it has always puzzled me why the members of the Opposition, who talk incessantly about the basic wage and other wage conditions, do not realize this.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—What do you mean by that?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—The greater part of the speeches made by the honourable member and his associates are associated with that.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you believe in wage justice?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Of course I do. The C series figures have controlled the basic wage in the past. It is true that adjustments are not now made quarterly, but the Arbitration Court uses them in deciding what the wage should be. We should be fair to every section of the community. The C series index is a measuring stick, and shortening that measuring stick is not doing justice to everyone if other items are allowed to run on. If price control is necessary, it should apply to most things. It is not fair to pick out a few items, seek to lower their prices by artificial means, and to accept them as a measuring stick for the basic wage. I am surprised that this is not stressed more often by those who talk so much about the basic wage.

It is very laudable to assist South Australian industries, but if there is a lower wage in South Australia our industries are better able to compete, although, of course, this may lead us into a false position. I feel that the third reason for continuing price control—to assist those on pensions and fixed incomes—is the only reasonable argument, and it is only so when it applies to groceries or other items of household expenditure. However, price control goes much further than that. Although it is reasonable and desirable that these people should pay lower prices, I am afraid that ultimately it will make no difference.

The Chief Secretary instanced the price of iron and steel. That was an unfortunate choice because the price is the same throughout Australia, so there is no advantage in fixing the price of these goods. The price is fixed by the company concerned at what it regards as a reasonable level.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Wasn't the Minister referring to the goods manufactured from iron and steel?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—He instanced the possibility of iron and steel coming from other States, but the price is the same in each capital city. The Government further claims that price control is necessary because trade organizations fix both wholesale and retail prices. That tendency, known as orderly marketing, has grown over the years and has been discussed in this Chamber many times. We have had it for wheat, barley and other things. If the Government fixes prices there is a tendency for trade associations and big companies to do likewise. The practice has grown up for the manufacturer to fix both the wholesale and retail prices. That applies not only in Australia, but is a world-wide development which has developed because of taxation, labour and other conditions which have forced them to combine and fix prices.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—It results in cartels, too.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Yes. It can be argued that mass production results in lower prices to the community. I am afraid that the Government's attitude on the legislation is not altogether unnecessary. There are times when organizations, including nationally controlled organizations, tend to fix wholesale and retail prices, despite the method of disposal of the articles by the retailer. I have experienced a little of it, and it is most undesirable. If I were in authority I am afraid I would have something in the legislature which would deal with that kind of thing. In one case with which I was associated, the supplies were stopped by a certain nationally controlled company, not because their goods were not being paid for, but because they were not sold at the price stipulated. Actually, they were sold under different trading methods, and were sold in other States at a lower price.

Occasionally one sees that those who have the power are prepared to use it, in some cases to their own advantage but to the detriment of the public. That is not desirable, and some type of legislation should be on the Statute Book to prevent it. There is a tendency for a certain amount of price fixing to the advantage of those associated with an article, and this can, under certain conditions, be detrimental to the public and to those who are seeking to sell their products as cheaply as possible under fair trading conditions.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin—What ultimately broke it down?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I think in this case a threat of action by the Government helped. The average person is acquisitive and desirous of making the best profits he can, and using his energies to the best advantage, and in a competitive world he undermines and eventually stops the class of price fixing I have instanced. Fair prices as low as possible in the interests of the producer and the consumer is the ideal thing, but there are many difficulties in reaching this point. For instance, there are varying costs of manufacture of the same article, different methods of merchandising are adopted and there are varying charges for rents and services; therefore, the party which attempts to fix the price is up against a difficult problem—so difficult that I think the Prices Department has reached the opinion that it is impossible.

Very few of the prices fixed as a selling price and published in the *Government Gazette* are based on the cost of production and selling. We find that the department sets about fixing prices by judging from the balance-sheets. That is not price fixing, but profit control, and that is what it has developed into. Price control has undoubtedly reached the point where the difference in the costs of manufacture is ignored and the price fixed on the basis of the profits of the company or the individual made during the preceding year.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Would the honourable member agree to a Prices Commission being set up?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—No. I am trying to show that the Prices Commissioner is merely a profit fixing authority, and that price fixing legislation is not being applied as it was intended to be. We know that there is a right of appeal to the Minister against a decision of the Commissioner, because that was provided in the Act, and I thought that the Minister would have occupied that position and not sought to work it from both ends. I do not know how it is done, but I have heard it expressed in this Chamber that when an increase is involved the Prices Commissioner announces it, and when there is a decrease the Premier announces it. Price control in many cases does not allow an increased profit, and that is one of the unfair things about it. The increase granted is not a percentage increase, and we find that the profit on an article costing £1 in 1939 is the same as the profit on a £3 article sold in 1956. That is not fair nor reasonable.

I have heard the opinion expressed that an appellant company or firm has not been able

to approach the Minister with a feeling that the Minister is adjudicating between the Prices Commissioner and the trader concerned. I am not saying that that is so, but I think the feeling is that the Minister is not playing the part he should. The idea expressed in the Act of the right of appeal from the Commissioner to the Minister does not operate, which is regrettable.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Didn't the honourable member vote for the original Bill?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Yes, I think I did.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—You gave all the powers that were necessary to the Prices Commissioner.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Price control in 1940 was a vastly different proposition from what it is in 1956. I know that the Prices Commissioner can fix varying prices according to the individual concerned, and if one individual has a very heavy increase in rent, for instance, as against another the Commissioner can differentiate when fixing his price. I know of a hairdressing establishment in the centre of the city where the owner was very concerned when he was threatened with increased rent. He approached the Prices Commissioner who conceded his right to an increased price, which the trade did not get. There is a big difficulty in fixing prices. A concern in King William or Rundle Street paying a very high rental is in a very different position from one in the suburbs, yet the rates for hairdressing, hair cutting and shaving do not take that into consideration. That is not correct price fixing, because under it some do very well and others face hardship.

I have been a member of a committee which was endeavouring to increase the production of bricks in South Australia. That task has been accomplished to a certain extent, but ever since my association with the brickmaking industry there has been dissatisfaction with price control. The Commissioner has fixed a reasonable price for the common brick but a high price for the handmade one, forcing the brickmakers to produce the lower grade brick. As a result the Prices Commissioner has been very rigid with that industry, and the manufacturers are very dissatisfied. I think they have some reason for complaint; they have had several increases in wages and fuel costs, but it is two or three years since an alteration has been made in the price of bricks.

Either the price fixed in 1953 was wrong or the manufacturers should have been granted increases since that date. The price of bricks and the cost of manufacture have not been studied, but the balance sheets of these manufacturers have been. The brickmakers have not brought the actual values of their assets into their balance sheets and consequently, although the Prices Commissioner claims that they are making 5 per cent or 6 per cent, they argue that if their assets were brought in at present-day values their profits would show as only about 2 per cent on capital, and this is a source of intense dissatisfaction to them. Whether or not that adjustment can be made I do not know, but it seems to me that if the price fixed in 1953 was correctly based on the cost of manufacture the present-day price should carry an adjustment for costs that have risen since. The brickmakers appear to have solid grounds for complaint, and again I say that this is not price fixing but profit control.

Even in the brickmaking industry conditions are not the same in all cases; some bricks are made in the hills from shale, and others are made in the Brompton area from alluvial clay. Both types are made by different methods yet both are sold at the same price.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Does anyone in the department know anything about brickmaking?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I presume so. A man cannot hold the position of Prices Commissioner without some knowledge, and if he does not have it he can get it easily enough. I do not say that the Prices Commissioner does not know these things, but I think he is not acting on the principles of price control as much as on profit control to suit the conditions he desires to bring about.

I have been approached, as I know other members have been, regarding the control of chemists' dispensing prices. On the case put forward by the chemists it would seem that the figure of 1s. 6d., as determined by the Prices Commissioner is 5s. 10d. as reckoned by the chemists. This was put before the Prices Commissioner with no results, but it seems to me that the difference between 1s. 6d. and 5s. 10d. is quite unreasonable. The chemists submitted evidence in support of their contention but the Prices Commissioner gave no explanation of his reason for adhering to the old price of 1s. 6d., and the chemists are very dissatisfied with his decision. Chemists are required to have a University training—

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—I suppose you know that some of the suggested increases were the equivalent of £3 10s. an hour.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—According to the statement they submitted the figure was 29s. 5d. an hour and they supplied arguments in support of that figure. I understand that at the chemists' time was put down at 5s. 4d. or in one case 6s. 4d. for a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -hour, but in the main it was 5s. 10d. for prescriptions taking an average of 10 to 12 minutes to make up. Whichever figure is right—the 1s. 6d. or the 5s. 10d.—surely some explanation should have been given.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Doesn't the chemist get something for knowing how to do it?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—That is provided for in his salary and it comes to a fairly high figure at 29s. 5d. an hour. However, it must be recognized that he must be a well qualified man and that expenses, wastage, breakage and profit are tied up in that 29s. 5d. The aim of the chemists guild is to have a court of appeal set up. Although that seems to be reasonable I do not think they will get far with it. However, if the Prices Department is to remain in existence and retain the confidence of the public and those who have to appeal to it it ought to be prepared to give reasons why it does not agree with the price increases sought.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Even when the Commissioner runs up against a blank wall when making inquiries?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—We cannot expect the Prices Commissioner to give a decision until a case is proved. I submit that despite the best intentions of the Government its attempt at price control is not meeting the case as it thinks it does. Price control by the very nature and extent of its operations must lead to inefficiency; one type of trader scores off it whereas another is victimized. It is far better to allow prices to find their own level by competition. I feel that that is the only means by which prices can be controlled. There is an inherent desire in people to improve the status of the business with which they are associated, but the more we have price control the more will we kill the desire to improve conditions, which is the only means by which prices can be reduced to the lowest point.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think that manufacturers get together and rig prices?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I have dealt with that. I think competition is the only thing that will prevent it. My political ideas are definitely against price control and all forms of control. I believe that the average individual has a sense of fairness, of the proper thing to do, and although there may be a few who would take advantage of the abolition of price control there are many who would still trade fairly. If they do not those who are able to tackle them by competition will do so, and that is the only method by which we will obtain what we all desire—a reduction in costs and an economy on a reasonably stable basis.

The Government has probably brought down this legislation again because of the danger that threatens the economy of the country. We all know of the Premiers' Conference that has been called and the circumstances that have led to it, and probably the Government thinks this is the way to deal with the situation, but I venture the opinion that although it may be a temporary palliative the only way to get our trading on a sound basis is to have reasonable competition, relying on the individual to do the fair thing by his neighbour. I therefore do not intend to vote for the Bill.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 4. Page 887.)

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—I support this Bill which I think is some improvement on the legislation of 10 or 11 years ago. The agreement which this measure ratifies is much better for South Australia than the previous agreement, which provided more essentially for rented houses, slum clearance and town planning and did not give the States the scope that they will have under this Bill.

The old agreement contained a provision allowing for rebating of rental in certain cases whereby the rent would be approximately one-fifth of the basic wage, or one day's pay. If that had been proceeded with it would have resulted in a loss, of which the Commonwealth was to pay three-fifths and the State two-fifths. During the debate on that Bill, Mr. Condon stressed the necessity of building houses more cheaply. At that stage the Housing Trust had built about 2,000 houses, the average rental for which was 15s. 11d. He mentioned

that the basic wage then was about £4 13s. Obviously we have not produced cheaper houses since then, which has been due to many things, such as shortages of materials and manpower. As a result, houses are now very much dearer in proportion to the basic wage than they were. The basic wage is now approximating three times as much as it was then, and if this Government had entered into the agreement on that basis, it would ultimately have sustained very great losses.

There are one or two very definite improvements in the proposed legislation. There is now no provision for rebates in rentals or for the losses that might accrue. The Housing Trust, which is a State authority, has been able to obtain Loan money and has not made any loss. This is a very much more desirable method of finance than that provided in the original legislation. Generally speaking, the agreement between the States and the Commonwealth is ratified, and the States must control their own destinies. However, they must agree with the Commonwealth with regard to the amount of money they borrow and the number of houses they build for rental and sale. A definite advantage under this Bill is that it is mandatory for the States to build at least 20 per cent of homes for purchase. To be eligible under this scheme an applicant must be on a low wage. That shows that the Commonwealth has developed an attitude more in keeping with the ideas of the States. I think we all agree that a man who owns something is a better citizen than one who does not, and owning his own home makes a man more interested in his job and in the State.

The money provided under the agreement will be available over and over again because, when homes are built and deposits or instalments are paid the money is returned to the fund and is available for further use. This measure is an advantage to the Government, the State and home builders in these days when the States are short of money. The fact that the Commonwealth provides the extra money at a slightly lower rate of interest than is paid on long term loans is a gesture. As the Commonwealth has other sources of income, it will not lose any money by providing this money to the State. I believe the Bill will be more advantageous to South Australia than previous agreements, and consequently I support it.

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

**NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 4. Page 881.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—As this Bill is not lengthy or contentious, it cannot give rise to any violent debate. It will meet changed circumstances and remove some of the anomalies in the Act. I pay a tribute to the nursing profession. There are about 5,000 trained nurses in South Australia and, although we have excellent surgeons and medical practitioners, many of their cases would not be so successful but for the skill of the nurses. It is a very noble profession, and those who apply themselves assiduously to it are doing a great service to the community.

Under the Act the Board was not permitted to take the 5s. yearly registration fee in advance; this Bill will enable that to be done. The Act provides that the Board shall remove from the register the name of any nurse who is two years in arrears with her registration fee, but this Bill gives a discretion to the Board on whether her name is removed. It also provides that any nurse who desires can have her name removed from the register by applying in writing. In 1954 the publication of the register cost £685, and a supplementary roll issued this year cost £160. Under this Bill it will not be mandatory for the Board to publish a register, and consequently there will be a saving of between £800 and £900. Another provision changes the name from the Australian Trained Nurses Association to the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (South Australian Branch). That gives it an over-all Commonwealth flavour. I support the second reading.

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

**HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

Continued from October 3. Page 836.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—It is not for me to criticize such a Bill when it has the support of the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Federal Council of the British Medical Association and the College of Radiologists. Dr. G. H. McQueen represented South Australia on the Medical Research Council and South Australian

representatives of the British Medical Association were Dr. L. R. Marron and Dr. C. C. F. Reiger.

Although the Bill is the result of a recommendation by medical men, that does not prevent me from making a few comments. All States have been asked to pass similar legislation, but it would have been more uniform had it been Commonwealth legislation, because although the objective may be identical, when it comes to the question of regulations, there are bound to be differences in the various States. The proposed committee will consist of not more than six persons who will hold office for three years, and if the Government so determines they will be paid fees and travelling expenses. Why not say straight out that they should be paid? The regulations may provide for a system of licensing persons, but on what basis? Regulations will have to be laid on the table of the House and be subject to disallowance, but when?

In 1949 a Bill was passed by the State Parliament relating to chiropractors, under which a chiropractor was entitled to use the X-ray only for the production of shadow photographs of the human spinal column. I should like the Minister of Health to assure me that the legislation now before us will in no way interfere with their practice.

The control of radio active substances is in the interests of public health. Close attention should be given to the problem to ensure that industries and mines in which radio active materials are handled are conducted with proper regard to public health. Control will be under an advisory committee. I looked carefully at the Bills which have been introduced in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania. The Tasmanian legislation was passed in 1954 and a Western Australian measure was introduced at the same time. The New South Wales Bill came before Parliament on July 17 last. As far as I know, Queensland and Victoria have not yet introduced Bills. The Medical Research Council agreed to this legislation in 1954. In the meantime radio activity has become a very important subject. Protection should be given not only to those engaged in mining radio active materials, but also to the health of the community. I have noticed in the press that it is claimed that radio activity has interfered with cattle in the Northern Territory.

I think that the position is serious enough to warrant every precaution being taken to protect the public against radio activity. In

New South Wales a regulation has been passed dealing with the possession, sale and use of radio active substances and the possession and use of certain apparatus capable of producing radio activity, and steps have been taken to constitute an advisory council and define its powers, authorities and duties. To be effective, this type of legislation must be uniform throughout Australia. Action has already been taken in other parts of the Commonwealth and in other countries, including the United Kingdom, to protect workers from the effects of radio active substances. However, very little has been done in the interests of those engaged in the production of uranium, and in this respect I think we have been a little lax. The Bill is the result of proper co-operation between the States, and its purposes are to afford the maximum protection against the harmful effects of radiation from X-ray apparatus and certain by-products of atomic fission.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—This Bill covers all those things, doesn't it?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Government will have the right to make regulations from time to time, but nobody knows what those regulations will be and there is a danger that they will not be uniform in all States. I think therefore that this should have been Commonwealth legislation. A Bill of this description was passed in Tasmania in 1954 and set up a radiological advisory council. It provided that persons in possession of radioactive substances and irradiating apparatus had to be licensed; provision was also made for exemptions and appeals, and penalties were stipulated for offences against the regulations.

It is well to remember that the costs of hospitals and public health services have doubled since 1950-51, and a contributing factor has been the need to provide increased hospital accommodation for the growing population of the State. Expenditure on public health last year was £113,000, which was 32 per cent higher than in 1954-55. The salaries paid as a result of the X-ray health survey amounted to £12,148, and the operating costs of the X-ray unit in the country and the metropolitan area was £14,329. The Department of Public Health is a very important one and covers a large field. The Health Act constitutes every municipal and district council a local board of health responsible to the central board for all matters of public health in its district. Anything we can do under this legislation will be to the advantage of all concerned, and therefore

I support the second reading of this important Bill and ask the Chief Secretary to clear up the points I have raised.

I cannot understand why the question of general penalties should arise in an important Bill such as this. The Government from time to time introduces amendments to the Health Act, and surely that would have been the time to deal with general penalties instead of introducing that subject in a Bill such as this. Honourable members know that I oppose heavy penalties in the majority of Bills, but in some Bills the penalties are not severe enough. There seems to be a tendency for the department to try to extract the last farthing out of everybody, and in this Bill we are proposing to increase penalties by as much as 300 per cent.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—People do not have to pay those fines unless they commit an offence.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I expect that everybody in this State has committed some offence at some time or the other, with the possible exception of my honourable friend, but that is not the point. These increases could have been made over a period of years, and people would not have felt the slight increases from time to time. Penalties have been increased after many years, and it is taking from people when they are not in a position to pay. A lot of people do not use the water services, but they still have to pay. In the majority of cases the penalties have been increased by 150 per cent. In some sections the penalty for a trifling offence has been raised from £5 to £10. I remember objecting in this Council a few years ago when the penalty for the offence of blowing a tin whistle was increased by 100 per cent.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—That can be obnoxious enough.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—In sections 95, 127, 128, 134, 137 and 139 the penalty has been increased from £5 to £20; in 13 other sections from £10 to £25; in 15 other sections from £20 to £50; and in sections 81 and 169 from £50 to £100. I am not objecting to fines being increased, but I say that we are making them too high. I have always taken this stand and I intend to continue taking it. Some of the offences are minor ones, and we are taking a serious step in increasing the penalties to the extent I have mentioned. Our excuse for doing that is that we have not done it since 1898. I hope that the first portion of this Bill will be carried, but we

should be as lenient as we possibly can with regard to penalties; I do not say that they should remain as they are, but they should not be increased to the ridiculous level proposed.

The Bill is a very important one and should have the support of every honourable member because it is an attempt on the part of the Government to protect the health of the people. In these times every precaution should be taken, irrespective of cost, to protect the people not only of South Australia but of the Commonwealth.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—I have pleasure in supporting this measure. As Mr. Condon has said, it is an important Bill, and if members read it carefully they will see how opportune it is. Civilization has passed through a good many ages. We have had the bronze age, the iron age, the gold age, and now we have come to the atomic age. South Australia is the place which has been chosen for many of the experiments in the atomic field, and a good many of the scientific people of the world have varying opinions on the repercussions of these atomic explosions. Many of them are not certain what effect the fall-out from these explosions will have upon the human race. The aftermath of the explosion at Hiroshima during the war is to be seen in spastic children and all kinds of deformities and defects, and even the medical profession has not been able to decide whether what has happened there could happen here. The Government in its wisdom has quite rightly decided to do what it can to protect the people of South Australia against any possible dissemination of this very terrible material.

I was disturbed when I first heard that radioactivity as a result of the last explosion at Maralinga had affected some

travelling cattle, but I was very glad to learn this morning that that statement had been denied, and I hope the denial is well based. It would be a terrible thing if cattle 400 miles away, as had been alleged, were seriously affected as a result of that explosion. It is true that the effects of the material, according to the geiger counters, had been discovered as far away as Inverell in New South Wales, which indicates how very serious this could be.

The Government is deserving of every possible support in its endeavours to protect the public from what might happen. There was some doubt whether the wind was favourable for the last explosion; it had been delayed for a considerable time, and when it finally took place some of the material drifted as far away as New South Wales. It is very important that the Government should attempt to protect the public from the effects of this blast.

The main part of this legislation will be contained in regulations, and the Bill sets out matters upon which the committee to be set up will make regulations. I hope that the States will have uniform regulations so that there will not be any confusion and that it will be made clear to the committee just what it has to regulate on. Some States have already passed regulations, and I hope those passed by the other States will be in line. There is little else one can say on this measure. It is tremendously important, therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.44 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, October 10, at 2 p.m.